

Women in Theatre Forum Report Part one

Developing strategies to improve
gender equality in theatre

An afternoon Forum at Trafalgar Studios, 2020

A Sphinx Theatre, University Women in the Arts
and December Group initiative

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH

The Writers' Guild of Great Britain | Equity | ERA 50:50 |
Black Womxn in Theatre | Stage Directors UK

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1 Preface

The following report brings together for the first time much of the major recent research on women in theatre – from Sphinx Theatre, University Women in the Arts, The Writers' Guild of Great Britain, Equity, ERA 50: 50, Black Womxn in Theatre, PIPA (Parents and Carers in Performing Arts), the December Group and Stage Directors UK.

This combined evidence suggests that gender inequality in theatre urgently needs to be addressed, with The Writers' Guild highlighting that this issue is sometimes dismissed as resolved when this is not the case.

In addition, since the Women in Theatre Forum at Trafalgar Studios in 2020, on which this report is based, the coronavirus pandemic has occurred, with much research around the world suggesting gender inequality is likely to increase without specific measures to address it (as covered in Women's Agenda, 2020, amongst other publications).

Furthermore, our own research has found zero references to women and gender inequality in the body of the Arts Council's next ten year strategy and that zero leadership positions on the Cultural Renewal Taskforce are occupied by women, with only three women on the taskforce as a whole.

These combined findings suggest that gender inequality in theatre, and in the arts more generally, is likely to increase unless specific measures are put in place to prevent this.

We urge the UK government, policy makers and arts organisations to use a gender lens in decision making (considering whether all decisions made will work for all genders) and also to ensure gender balanced decision-making teams to ensure that decisions for rebuilding post-pandemic work for all genders.

The following report lays out the evidence for this conclusion, followed by identifying key themes which have emerged from this research.

So far key themes include:

- Women are under-represented and facing challenges which need to be taken seriously and addressed.
- There is an issue with attitudes towards women in theatre which needs to be addressed.
- There is an issue with transparency which needs to be improved.
- Training of gatekeepers needs to occur.
- Policy and arts organisation changes are needed to lead to change.

This report will be followed by a second report, which will report on evidence from the industry and on Recommendations from both reports.

We urge policymaker and arts organisations to use a gender lens and gender-balanced teams to begin to address this research.

2 Introduction

2.1 Background

The Women in Theatre Forum was organised following Sphinx Theatre's year long research project with Jennifer Tuckett at the University of Cambridge in 2019. This project found shocking gender inequality in theatre via four reports making up the mixed methods project:

- **Research Report One:** What Share of the Cake 2019 - a quantitative report updating statistics on gender parity and equality in UK theatre.
- **Research Report Two:** Women Centre Stage - a qualitative report identifying key themes in terms of challenges and potential solutions emerging from the Women Centre Stage symposium which took place at the Hampstead Theatre in February 2019.
- **Research Report Three:** Women Centre Stage: Interviews - a qualitative report based on interviews conducted by Sphinx Theatre Company with ten Artistic Directors of NPO theatres in 2019.
- **Report Four:** Recommendations - this fourth and final report made recommendations for policymakers, funding organisations and the theatre industry based on findings from this year long research project to help improve gender parity and equality in UK theatre.

The Women in Theatre Forum was also inspired by the work of the December Group, a new group of women working in theatre, who began meeting with Arts Council England in December 2018 to advocate for gender equality in theatre and who are:

- President of Equity Maureen Beattie.
- Co-founder of ERA 50: 50 Polly Kemp.
- The first black female playwright to be produced at the National Theatre, Winsome Pinnock.
- Artistic Director of Sphinx Theatre, Sue Parrish.

- Director of Art School and University Women in the Arts, Literary Director at Sphinx Theatre and academic Jennifer Tuckett, who has most recently been conducting the world first major mixed methods research project into how to improve the transition for women from studying the arts to working in the arts at the University of Cambridge.
- The first female director at the National Theatre at the Southbank and playwright, Julia Pascal.
- Artistic Director of Watford Palace Theatre, Brigid Larmour.
- Artistic Director of Pitlochry Festival Theatre, Elizabeth Newman.
- Stage Directors UK's Jemma Gross.
- Former Graeae Literary Manager and playwright Chloe Todd Fordham.

The Forum was supported by Trafalgar Studios as hosts alongside Sphinx Theatre, University Women in the Art and the December Group, plus supported by partners The Writers' Guild of Great Britain, Equity, ERA 50: 50, The Stage, Stage Directors UK and funded by Arts Council England.

The intention of the event was to bring together and share the leading recent research with attendees, share industry experiences, and collect recommendations from research, the industry and attendees for a report to be published and distributed to policymakers, funders, theatres, awards bodies and other organisations working with the theatre industry following the Forum.

"We did get rid of the Divine Right of Kings, it is possible to think that Patriarchy will come to an end."

JUDE KELLY

Founder of WOW, from Women Centre Stage/
Sphinx Theatre Research Reports

2.2 The Women in Theatre Report

This Report is inspired by the Eclipse Report, which emerged from the Eclipse conference on developing strategies to combat racism in theatre which took place in 2001. This report summarises the discussions that took place at the Women in Theatre Forum and contains a number of recommendations, many of which, like with the Eclipse report, request action

2.3 Conference outcomes

As a direct result of the Women in Theatre Forum, Arts Council England has agreed to provide a written response to this report from Director of Strategy Michelle Dickson and an in person meeting with Sir Nicholas Serota, Chair of Arts Council England, and the December Group to discuss these issues. Sphinx Theatre has successfully secured Arts Council England funding for a pilot writers development programme for women in partnership with a consortium of 15 leading UK theatres. All speakers have agreed to read the report and ensure the report is distributed to all staff working for their organisations. Sphinx Theatre, University Women in the Arts, the December Group, The Writers' Guild of Great Britain, Equity, and Stage Directors UK will shortly launch the largest ever survey of women working in all roles of theatre, funded by Arts Council England. Strategies with theatres will be further developed and good practice will be shared.

2.4 Aims

The aims of the Women in Theatre Forum were:

- To share and bring together leading recent research on women in theatre.
- To share industry experiences of being women working in theatre.
- To share and develop recommendations on how to improve gender equality in theatre from researchers, the industry and attendees.
- To identify key themes emerging from the Forum.
- To explore ways of developing our understanding and knowledge of issues facing women in UK theatre.

2.5 Attendance

The event sold out with a considerable waiting list. Attendees were generally those working for theatres or working in freelance positions in the theatre industry.

from the funding bodies. The report additionally includes key themes emerging from the conference which have been obtained via a process of coding conducted by academic and Sphinx Research and Literary Director Jennifer Tuckett, who led on Sphinx's year long research project at the University of Cambridge in 2019.

The Women In Theatre Report will be sent to:

- Arts Council England (ACE)
- Senior management of theatres
- Chairs of the theatres' boards
- Theatrical Management Association (TMA)
- Independent Theatre Council (ITC)
- Society of London Theatres (SOLT)
- Equity
- Bectu
- Department of Culture Music and Sport (DCMS)
- All other conference attendees
- All theatres who received an invitation and did not attend.

The report will also be available on the Sphinx website www.sphinxtheatre.co.uk and University Women in the Arts website www.universitywomeninthearts.com

The conference was aimed at people working in the theatre industry, policymakers, funding bodies, freelancers, students and anyone interested in the position of women in theatre in the UK.

All NPO theatres were invited. Arts Council England was invited.

The Forum was supported by Arts Council England, Sphinx Theatre Company, University Women in the Arts, the December Group, Equity, The Writers' Guild of Great Britain, The Stage, ERA 50: 50, Stage Directors UK and was hosted by Trafalgar Studios.

Arts Council England's Director of Strategy Michelle Dickson attended but Director of Theatre Neil Darlison was not free to attend.

2.6 Format

2.6.1 Structure and content

The structure for the Forum was:

1. Welcome by Dame Rosemary Squire.
2. Panel One: The Research.
3. Panel Two: Industry Experiences.

When the conference was planned, it was decided that there should be separate panels for research and industry experience, in order to identify key themes repeated in research findings and industry experiences.

This proved to be a successful format as it facilitated valuable recommendations and key themes. Quotes from these panels are used within the reports.

Welcome speech

The Welcome speech was delivered by Dame Rosemary Squire, co-founder of the Ambassador Theatre Group and Trafalgar Entertainment.

Panel One

Panel One addressed the following questions.

- What research did your organisation do?
- Why?
- What were your research project's findings?
- What are your key recommendations based on this?

Participants in this panel discussion were:

Jennifer Tuckett (Chair and Research and Literary Director for Sphinx Theatre and Director, University Women in the Arts); **Julia Pascal** (theatre director and playwright, representing the December Group); **Lesley Gannon** (Assistant General Secretary, The Writers' Guild of Great Britain); **Kelly Burke** (Chair of the Women's Committee, Equity); **Cassie Raine** (Co-founder, PIPA); **Polly Kemp** (Co-founder, ERA 50: 50); **Titilola Dawudu** (Co-founder, Black Womxn in Theatre); **Lisa Spirling** (Artistic Director, Theatre 503; representing Stage Directors UK).

Panel Two

The panel two session included personal contributions from a range of leading female theatre practitioners: **Sue Parrish**, Artistic Director, Sphinx Theatre (Chair); **Caroline Barth**, Creative Learning Director at Derby Theatre; **Jodi-Alissa Bickerton**, Creative Learning Director at Graeae; **Gemma Bodinetz**, Artistic Director of the Liverpool Everyman and Playhouse; **Guleraana Mir**, playwright and Executive Director of The Thelmas; **Paulette Randall**, Theatre and Television Director; **Stephanie Sirr**, Chief Executive of Nottingham Playhouse.

2.6.2 Forum resolutions

Some clear resolutions emerged from Forum, which included the following:

- For the Arts Council to read and respond to this report.
- To launch the UK's biggest women in theatre survey following this report, in a partnership between Sphinx Theatre, University Women in the Arts, the December Group, Equity, The Writers' Guild of Great Britain, ERA 50: 50 and Stage Directors UK.
- For theatres to read and ensure their employees read this report to increase awareness of gender issues.
- To identify strategies and actions that could address these issues.

Other outcomes were:

- Shared learning from panelists and participants.
- Shared acknowledgement of the need for change.

3 Panel One: Research – Summary

3.1 Welcome by Dame Rosemary Squire

“Welcome everyone to Trafalgar Theatre, the West End home of experimental, cutting edge theatre, and thank you for coming to this Sphinx Forum event, WHAT SHARE OF THE CAKE? We are here to shine a light on the unequal level of public funding for women artists, and the endemic inequality still persisting across UK performing arts.

I am Dame Rosemary Squire, co-founder of Ambassadors Theatre Group and Trafalgar Entertainment, and a long- time campaigner for women’s equality in the theatre. In my organisations I have pioneered many schemes for supporting women working in our theatres.

Today’s Forum is a landmark meeting across the theatre professions, bringing together research on women’s representation from Sphinx Theatre, University Women in the Arts, ERA 50:50, Equity, Stage Directors UK, the Writer’s Guild, Black Womxn in Theatre, and PIPA (Parents and Carers in Performing Arts). Funding is fundamental in our subsidised sector, providing the crucial development ladder for our art form, from studio productions to the rigours of main stages in our repertory theatres and the West End, and earning fortunes for the Exchequer!

Our current hit in Studio 1 is the National Theatre production of A Taste of Honey, written in the fifties by a nineteen- year old from Salford, Shelagh Delaney, and honed by Joan Littlewood at Stratford East. Jeanette Winterson has written pertinently for today: ‘Women are so new to creativity in the arts. Not because women are not creative but because there has been no structure, no space, little education, less encouragement. In the UK we have had the vote for less than 100 years, and still in 2014, only one Russell Group University, Manchester, has a woman Vice Chancellor.’

We hope that by raising the endemic inequality of women in the performing arts today, as clearly demonstrated by the research, that the Arts Council will revise its shabby treatment of women in the new Ten Year Strategy. Unless there is a commitment enshrined in the Strategy women have no guarantee of support and attention.

We are delighted that Michelle Dickson, the Strategy Director from the Arts Council of England will be discussing Let’s Create Strategy with Jennifer Tuckett later on in the afternoon after the first panel which will be introduced by Jennifer Tuckett. All good wishes for a very enlightening and productive afternoon.”

3.2 Panel One: Summary

3.2.1 Sphinx Theatre and University Women in the Arts Research

What is it

Jennifer Tuckett, Research and Literary Director at Sphinx Theatre, discussed Sphinx's year long research project conducted with herself at the University of Cambridge in 2019 and subsequent developments up to the present day. The year long research project is made up of 4 reports:

- What Share of the Cake - a quantitative report, which updated statistics.
- Research Report 2 - a qualitative report which identified key themes in terms of challenges for women in theatre and strategies for overcoming these challenges emerging from last year's Women Centre Stage symposium at the Hampstead Theatre.
- Research Report 3 - a qualitative report on key themes emerging from interviews with 10 NPO artistic directors.
- And Report 4 on recommendations emerging from the year-long research project.

She also discussed how University Women in the Arts' world first research project into how to improve the transition for women from studying the arts to working in the arts, conducted by Jennifer at the University of Cambridge at the same time, supports Sphinx's findings.

Why it was conducted:

To update statistics on women in theatre and to use mixed methods to look at both what is happening (via the quantitative report) and why (via the qualitative reports).

Key Findings and Recommendations:

Some key findings from report one which were shared at the forum are:

1) The research project found in 2017/2018 31% of Artistic Directors of NPO theatres were female – this was an important finding as this compares to the Arts Council's figure of 46% of NPO Artistic Directors across arts forms being female.

Why this is significant is because a lot of the coverage reported 46% of theatre Artistic Directors were female when this was across arts forms and not for theatre which was 31%.

The project shared this finding with the Arts Council who have published more broken down figures in terms of each art form in this year's diversity report.

However, the project noticed some media coverage of the Arts Council's diversity report this year still reports on the figures across arts forms as being for theatres.

This suggests the Arts Council needs to break the figures even more down or more clearly so we can understand which figures are across arts forms and which figures are for each art form so problem areas can be identified.

2) The second finding shared from report one was the project's finding that female NPO theatre Artistic Directors controlled 21% of funding in the same time period.

This was a significant finding as it suggests the 31% of NPO Artistic Directors who are female are in control of theatres with smaller amounts of subsidy generally.

This raises the question of who we entrust big jobs to.

For example, research from University Women in the Arts at the University of Cambridge in 2019, which was set up to improve the transition for women from studying the arts to working in the arts, has found an issue with interviews with 34% of the current and former female arts students surveyed having experienced sexism or gender bias by potential employers at interviews.

This raises the question of the need for training on gender for those on interview panels as one way of rectifying this.

Secondly, this also raises the question of training for gatekeepers and those working in the industry more generally.

For example, research from the Equality Challenge Unit amongst other organisations has found women are having negative experiences in the workplace in terms of attitudes.

Research for University Women in the Arts at the University of Cambridge has supported this, for example quotes from participants in the University of Cambridge study include:

"I remember he would talk over us and we would nudge each other as if "is this for real?" We let him take some of our ideas and we would complain about it together... They're allowed to... because they're men.

Because they can. Because no one brings them up. If you're a woman, who's employed and working with a man, there is that shift in power.... If you've been allowed to do something for so long... he just does what he's always been able to get away with."
(Natalie, on her first job)

When I got a job working at a theatre, it was more men than women, hardly any people of colour. It was really hard... because the person leading it was a chauvinistic pig.... he was allowed to get away with it, no one challenged him... Speaking with people who worked with this individual, they have all said the same thing. That's the problem with privilege – he was a privileged man – he got away with. If it was a women, they would have been got rid of or scrutinized... I really do believe women get scrutinized so much more."
(Natalie)

"Also women can be our own worst enemy. We're so used to a platform full of men only allowing one or two women to share that we easily turn on each other..."
(Sarah)

So gender training both for those conducting interviews and for gatekeepers and all working in the industry also seems potentially helpful.

The other question the finding from the Sphinx year long research project raises is quotas.

Jennifer Tuckett has been doing a lot of research in Australia where quotas have made a difference in terms of gender equality in theatres and this is another possible solution.

3) The third and final area which was highlighted from Sphinx's Report One was the finding that 0.64% of NPO funding went to women's theatre companies between 2015 - 2018.

This compares to 1.51% going to disabled led NPOs and 1.97% going to BAME theatre companies in the same time period.

When this is combined with findings from Research Report 3, interviews with 10 NPO Artistic Directors in 2019, who all highlighted that gender is not focused on by the Arts Council in The Creative Case, this suggests gender may be being under considered.

So one recommendation would be that gender is given equal consideration alongside other under-represented groups.

And that research is better communicated.

For example, this was also a finding from University Women in the Arts at University of Cambridge - that research is not reaching the industry, for example most of the potential solutions identified in terms of research for improving the transition from studying to working in the arts were experienced by 20% or less of those surveyed.

4) Other points from the reports included a discussion of women being viewed as a risk (likely to increase in a risk-averse post-pandemic climate) which was identified by all 10 Artistic Directors interviewed for Report 3 as a reason for continued gender inequality. This adds weight to the need for the use of a gender lens and gender balanced teams in decision-making post-pandemic if gender inequality is not to increase:

Quotes from Artistic Directors to support this point included:

"There isn't enough money to make exciting commissions happen and there is pressure on the bottom line to deliver sure fire winners which often means extant texts, which often means male written."

"I would say that managing risk is a challenge for every theatre. There are things that I know that in the wider sphere wouldn't be a risk but here they would be. And that often is to do with contemporary new work that's not necessarily of a known quality."

"The challenge is we need a play that's recognizable, that we can get an audience in with.... and the repertoire's dominated by men. So it's how you change that."

3.2.2 The December Group

What is it

Julia Pascal, writer and director, introduced the December Group, stating:

"The December Group came out of an article I wrote for the Guardian in April 2018 which covered why is women's presence on the stage so minimal, directors, the fear of being blacklisted if you raise issues, why are we fearful of asking/demanding an equal presence on the stage. Theatre is the face of the nation, the Arts Council is public money, and therefore accountable, so we should not be ashamed of demanding an equal presence. Women as political activists is where the December Group comes from. Also from the economic area - we have the Equal Opportunities Commission but it doesn't have any meaning if you can't through the door to get the job. I was arguing for a quota system. We met with Nicholas Serota at the Arts Council."

Why it was conducted

The December Group collected the following data from sources including University Women in the Arts and Loughborough University's 2017 research project into gender and theatre:

<u>Artistic Directors</u>	<u>64% Men</u>
<u>Boards</u>	<u>67% Men</u>
<u>Performers</u>	<u>62% Men</u>
<u>Technical staff</u>	<u>67% Men</u>
<u>Olivier Awards</u>	<u>90% Men</u>
<u>Critics</u>	<u>90% Men</u>
<u>University Professors of Drama</u>	<u>73% Men</u>

Key findings and recommendations:

The following key findings and recommendations were presented by the December Group to the Arts Council at their meeting with Sir Nicholas Serota in December 2018:

1. All funding to be 50/50 by 2020.
2. All NPOs to commit to 50/50 representation by 2020.
3. Equal board representation should be a pre-condition for next NPO round of funding.
4. Unconscious bias should be recognised as a serious issue and tackled across employment and the repertoire.

5. Funding must be rebalanced to recognise the absence of women's stories.
6. All posts to be openly advertised.
7. Transparency in all areas off employment.
8. A system of paid mentors should be instituted.

Julia also shared key points from the December Group's analysis on the Arts Council new strategy document in terms of gender, which was conducted by academic Jennifer Tuckett in 2020:

1. An initial word search found women = 4 or 0 references (4 in introduction and conclusion but 0 in document).
2. In the body of the strategy document women are not mentioned in paragraphs when all other under-represented groups are.

For example: *"Specifically, we will ensure that our programmes meet the needs of those from lower socio-economic backgrounds, D/deaf or disabled people, and those from Black and minority ethnic backgrounds, who have traditionally had least access to our resources."*

"However, it is also the case that many creative practitioners and cultural workers, especially those from lower socio-economic backgrounds, D/deaf or disabled people, and those from Black and minority ethnic backgrounds, continue to struggle to develop and sustain financially viable careers. Unless we address this, the cultural sector will fail to achieve its potential, and the global competitiveness of this country's creative industries will come under threat."

This suggests gender inequality is not being considered equally alongside other areas of under-representation when evidence (including the combined evidence in this report) suggests that all areas of under-representation need to be addressed, particularly in a post-pandemic risk-averse climate where gender inequality is likely to increase as previously outlined.

3.2.3 The Writers' Guild of Great Britain

What is it

Lesley Gannon, Assistant General Secretary at The Writers' Guild of Great Britain, spoke about The Writers' Guild's "Equality Writes" 2018 research project and subsequent work up until 2020. The Writers' Guild of Great Britain is a TUC affiliated trade union representing writers across all forms.

Why it was done

Lesley stated that "we have lots of conversations with women writers across a whole range of different areas and the consistent message we were getting was that women's work was simply not getting commissioned, not getting put on, that they were finding it increasingly difficult. So we decided to start doing some formal research. Because as much as we were hearing this from our members, we were being told repeatedly that things were getting better so we decided to do some research."

Key findings

The research project looked at film and television particularly and found:

- 16% of working filmmakers were women.
- Only 14% of prime time television was written by women.
- 9% for comedy.
- 28% of television episodes by women.
- Nothing had changed at all in ten years – the graphic is a completely flat line, it shows things aren't getting better.

The research project heard the same things

- In film and TV women are less likely to have a big budget.
- Women are less likely to be able to work on multiple projects and more likely to get stuck in certain areas.
- Failure affects women's careers much more than men's career, men are getting another chance where for women failure tends to be the end.

The research project looked at why and found

- The expectation that people will work for free
- Many women have additional responsibilities so are less able to commit full time to work.
- Age seems to be a significant factor with women not able to launch a writing career until later but then finding many of the opportunities closed to them.
- The project found issues around transparency, the t word came through all of the time.
- The message came through that women often didn't feel that they had the information, that there was this network, that there was this boy's club that they couldn't always break into, they weren't always sure of where to look for some of the information.
- The project also found that when they did get that foot in the door, the experiences that many women had were quite negative and they weren't sure what to do with it, again this idea that speaking out marks the end.

Recommendations

- The WGGB worked with the WGGB Literary Managers Forum, putting together some information on where you could get some guidance on where to start, where to get that first foot in the door
- Unions can help as trade unions, to de-personalise the situation
- The WGGB have now launched on The Writers' Guild website "Report It" which anyone can use to tell the Guild if there's a problem, you don't have to be a member or give your name, but the Guild are starting to monitor what's happening, this means the WGGB can start to identify patterns and see if the same behaviours are affecting people.

- Collective action is very often the way in which we can address this.
- Contracts - understanding the importance and language of contracts can only help to address some of the issues the research project heard. These are fundamental business skills which are missing in a lot of arts education.
- We know there are things which are taken for granted in this career and admitting you don't know that is really difficult when women already feel patronised and left out.

- We're always pushing on transparency - there are no stupid questions- let's have more information on how we can demystify this, we hear a lot about mystification.
- Our big recommendation is transparency, more information, how are commissioning decisions made, what are commissions processes, what is the difference between a commission and competition, what are your rights when you're getting employed to write/perform/be involved in something. So for us our key recommendations are transparency and information.

3.2.4 Equity

What is it

Kelly Burke, Chair of Equity's Women's Committee, spoke about their 2019 collaboration with Royal Holloway, University of London, on the research project "Making an Appearance" which looked into the aesthetic labour undertaken by performers across the industry. Aesthetic labour encompasses the time, the money, the other resources one invests in one's appearance to be considered acceptable for work.

Why it was done

The report was principally considering performers' experience of getting work and what kind of aesthetic labour they performed in order to make themselves ready for auditions and to keep themselves in what one participant called "that perpetual state of readiness that is required because you're called for things at the drop of a hat". Aesthetic labour is something everyone participates in regardless of their profession and for performers it can be a really creative part of the work that is satisfying and empowering and important and actors are trading on their ability to physically transform. So a degree of aesthetic labour is taken for granted but where we get into murky territory is where we as an industry aren't looking carefully at what we're asking people to transform into and what the cost of that transformation is.

Key findings

The research showed 61% of performers spend at least half an hour and 25% spend over an hour getting ready for an audition. Over the course of a year that is the equivalent of 9 weeks work. That kind of work isn't compensated and isn't equally distributed.

72% of women and 71% of non-binary performers compared to 28% of men considered that their gender significantly increased the pressure on their appearance and therefore the resources they needed to maintain that state of perpetual readiness.

77% of performances said they felt pressured to look a particular way in order to get work.

Two thirds had been asked to make a change to their appearance in order to be considered for work.

33% had been asked to lose weight before an audition.

Over half of performers had tried losing weight for an audition, for example crash diets and pressure on body size and weight - this applied to all genders.

Mental health was flagged up, with over half of performers having had their appearance criticised in a work context. 76% of these people then said it changed their relationship with their body in terms of how they thought about themselves preparing for work.

There was strong reports that if you were young you had to be sexy and, as roles diminish as you get older for women the pressure to look youthful was very great and associated with great expense as well.

One respondent summed it up as "there's a lot of emotional cost in maintaining appearances and worrying about how I should look."

The criteria which was being set around how one should look was routinely arbitrary or unobtainable or imprecise like "beautiful".

Crucially, what we started to see was that the cost of aesthetic labour is far greater for some people than others and this creates a disparity in terms of who has meaningful access to the industry and who we then see reflected back at us.

Aesthetic labour becomes more expensive when its impacted by sex and other areas such as body type, and the effects on individuals well-being can be profound, and the effects on the health on the industry are profound.

Recommendations

Based on their research, Equity recommends:

- Employee protections - making it less culturally acceptable to impose, expect, request or imply someone should alter their appearance and also granting equal access to work across demographics and body types.
- Increasing communications and respect by giving performers clear and respectful breakdowns, sufficient time to prepare and reasonable expectations to meet so "beautiful" becomes less problematic.
- Wider representation in casting and trying to bend the industry towards a culture which doesn't rely so much on those narrow stereotypes around appearance and which is meaningfully representative.
- In the meantime, the biggest thing we can do is to insist on talking about it, to acknowledge it exists, to pay attention to it, and widen our own ideas around what we consider makes an acceptable romantic lead, best friend or mum.

3.2.5 PIPA (Parents and Carers in Performing Arts)

What is it

Cassie Raine, co-founder of PIPA, spoke about PIPA's research into parents and carers in the performing arts from 2019 to the present day.

Why it was done

When PIPA was first started, there was a lot of anecdotal evidence but no data. They set about a programme of research to understand what is fact and what is fiction.

Key findings

You can see a theme which runs through all their research which is the difference of the impact of caring responsibilities on men and women.

The majority of caring responsibilities fall to women.

79% of women reported that they were the primary carer (defined as doing more than 50% of the caring).

For men/fathers that statistic was 16%.

Women are also statistically more likely to have caring responsibilities for elders, parents, people with disabilities.

Caring UK identified that caring falls particularly on women in their 40s, 50s and 60s and 1 in 4 women aged 50 -64 has caring responsibilities for older and disabled loved ones.

Women are also more likely to be sandwich carers, when you have caring responsibilities for older relatives as well as younger relatives/children at the same time.

Half of all females with caring responsibilities said they had to change their work location because of childcare responsibilities, compared to 36% of men.

44% of women versus 23% of men, so nearly double, had to change their work role due to caring responsibilities, defined as changing jobs or employment structure.

8 out of 10 women reported that they worked freelance or part time (bringing with it less stability, often less financial security, and a lack of state support for people working freelance.)

8 out of 10 women had to turn down work due to parenting or caring responsibilities.

Part time work is a common solution when trying to balance caring responsibilities but it almost always comes without opportunities for promotion, decrease

in the level of responsibility, and little training or support to advance in your career.

Overall there is a pay penalty for carers – carers earn £3000 a year less (when your average wage in our sector is £23,000 that £3000 is significant, especially if, on top of that, you have caring responsibilities such as needing to pay for nursery etc.)

Recommendations

- PIPA has developed with their partners a Best Practice Charter - 10 guidelines supported by a monitoring evaluation framework and a toolkit to support organisations.
- Family friendly rehearsals - for example The Globe are doing only technical weeks during the day.
- Truncated rehearsals, when the rehearsal day is condensed between 10am – 5pm. This has to be done in line with Equity and be voted on (every time it has happened everyone has voted for it).
- Job shares at every level – executive, board, onstage, offstage.
- Roles are now being advertised as open to flexible working/job shares.
- Seeing additional resources such as creches at auditions.
- Champions – we have PIPA champions who are the first point of contact for any concerns.
- The above is the infrastructure we need to be established in order to increase access to work.
- Also it's about supporting men to meet their caring responsibilities so we can try to address that primary carer statistic, for example increasing paternity allowance (for example maternity allowance sends a very clear message about whose job it is to look after children).
- Supporting parents and carers is not the only solution for gender equality but it is a practical approach to removing one very real barrier.

3.2.6 ERA 50:50

What is it

Polly Kemp, co-founder and Director of ERA 50:50, (Equal Representation for Actresses) spoke about the organisation's work from 2015 to the present day, which is run predominately by working actresses. The organization works alongside the unions and other organisations which are working towards equality.

Why it was done

The organization was formed on the back of a Geena Davis report which came out in 2015, Elizabeth's Freestone's work which came out in 2012 and Purple Seven's work, alongside the release of the film "Suffragette" and the anniversary of women's vote for 100 years. There was a disconnect for us – there was all this research demonstrating there was a lack of equality for actresses but there was this celebration about how far women had come and our experience was that we weren't living that equality. In fact, if anything, particularly as we were getting older, it was going backwards for us.

The organization sprung out of a single text sent by actress Elizabeth Berrington to her contacts in her phone, then a bunch of emails happened and then we had a meeting. This was all before Times Up. We had a meeting at Soho Theatre and it was a wide range of actresses who attended. And we talked about our shared experiences which was lack of parts, lack of agency, sexual harassment, although we couldn't talk about it in public, and, from that, Lizzie and I felt that we had a mandate to keep working. So I began to meet as many people as possible – including Anna Serner, the CEO of the Swedish Film Institute, we talked about what she had done to achieve parity in the film industry in Sweden, which she had done over two years merely by stating an intention, not even by making it policy; we talked to Equity; Oona King was very instrumental in helping us approach some of the big broadcasters and helping us to formulate our ideas.

Our first major thing was to present our findings from an actresses point of view to the industry and to do it in a way where we wouldn't be characterised as angry bitter failed actresses as in our number we had some very successful actresses, for example Olivia Coleman had been at our first meeting, Denise Gough, there were people there who were talking about things they had experienced at a very high level, which was shocking.

So, we had an event at Bafta where we presented other people's findings. We don't actually commission our own research - we were going to this year but because we are funded by purely by voluntary contributions we felt we weren't in a position to do it this year and Sphinx has done some amazing research and we felt our job is to amplify that.

And because we did a little bit of sprinkling of showbiz glam - we got Olivia to come along, we did it at Bafta, we spent a lot of money- we made it very entertaining whilst presenting findings such as:

- Women only make up 17% of crowd scenes in films
- Men write on average 65% part for men, 35% parts for women whereas women write 48% parts for men and 52% for women.
- Female led films have on average 20% lower production budgets and 33% higher box office returns.
- Women are paired on screen with men 20 years their senior, as opposed to the real world where a third of couples are 1 year apart in age and the average age difference is 2 – 3 years.
- In modern screenplays woman aged 42 – 65 are given just over 20% of the words allocated to their male counterparts in the same group.

As a result of that, the impact of that event was that a number of organisations went away and they did make it part of their policy in future to ensure that they were keeping an eye on the amount of women that they were employing.

Saskia Schuster was at that event and in tandem with the findings from WGGB she has created Comedy 50: 50, an initiative to encourage female comedy writers to get access to opportunities.

Recommendations

- I find it interesting that the Arts Council's data is aggregated data, because even the Fawcett Society managed to break it down.
- My problem with some data is we need to look at the categories specifically.
- We would recommend looking at hiring practices - as shown by Directors UK and WGGB, a lot of people are hired on who they know, closed networks and a lack of transparency.

- Business is accountable to audit boards, I feel that we don't audit or closely scrutinise the process by which we hire the freelance population, for example via Spotlight. There are ways production companies could begin to add in a process where they ask a casting director to look at that. More accountability/scrutiny will make people much more accountable.
- I believe that quotas is the only way forward, in line with the Fawcett Society.
- Measures to tackle unconscious bias is key – in the publishing of data and organisations going into organisations with tools to rectify the balance.
- Shared parental rights is key to equality, in our industry we're particularly remedial.
- In our industry, I've come across two cases of actresses losing jobs because of their pregnancy – I think that fuels a culture of fear and people don't know their rights.

- The only way you can get messages across is by holding people to account.

I live with a sense of unfairness – I was told at drama school there would be less work for me and I was threatened with being thrown out if I didn't lose weight. That's what I encountered and many of my contemporaries. That's what ERA 50:50 wants to do – to say there's a place you can come to, which is agile, and where we can help you move these issues into a public forum in a way that's acceptable to those we want to hold accountable.

3.2.7 Black Womxn in Theatre

What is it

Titilola Dawudu, co-founder of Black Womxn in Theatre, spoke about why the organization was set up in 2018 and their work up to the present day. Titilola is a writer, editor and producer.

Why it was done

Black Womxn in Theatre was set up because we felt that we had been erased in history. I'm here because of women like Paulette Randall, I wouldn't be able to do what I do if it wasn't for those women. Myself, Stella Kanu, Monique Baptise Brown and Anika Brown decided to form Black Womxn in Theatre to highlight and celebrate black womxn in theatre but also to tackle some of the frustrations, for example it's kind of hard for us to get funding to do research. So, a lot of our research has been qualitative, which I'll be talking about today, because black women, women of colour, are not always in these research studies and we have to be.

Findings and recommendations

Of the over 500 women who have been involved with Black Womxn in Theatre, some of the key issues these women have experienced include:

- I feel like I have to reel off my CV every day
- People are worried that appointing women of colour will diminish quality
- You'll get your work on because ACE are supporting BAME people
- I'm still not seeing myself in theatre
- I know I get paid lower than white women
- I'm complimented by older white men on my chocolate skin.

These are examples of what as black women we go through every day.

I've moved to Coventry, and there's no black women in leadership there.

We have to be in these conversations and we have to part of this research otherwise we'll be left out.

I never use BAME because our experiences are not the same.

In the Creative Case for Diversity, we're lumped together – people of colour are together with disability and socio-economic status. I have a real issue with that – what we're trying to do with Black Womxn in Theatre is address a lot of that.

For example, last year, we brought together 255 black women in theatre at the Globe Theatre to say we are contributors to the theatre industry.

The issue is we contribute to theatre but we are being erased.

The photo was really about taking up space – the question is a lot of the time who is doing the inviting, and a lot of the time it's white men.

So we decided to be the first to highlight the amazing black women.

We didn't get as much press as we should have because we put the x in womxn – a lot of angry white women said we were erasing women so a lot of the press was around that.

We're going on a retreat to plan for the future – a lot of what we do is behind the scenes work about mental health care, we need money behind us, it's important that as women of colour we have to be in these conversations.

It has to be about real change from the top.

I had a really terrible experience with a theatre where the male Artistic Director was a leach, he was really vile and I was only here because he'd had this knuckles rapped about diversity and that didn't make me feel great.

A lot of the time it's about "let me get in the door".

A lot of the time people misconstrue The Creative Case for Diversity, saying we should be grateful for The Creative Case for Diversity and a lot of our stuff is being put on the stage, but that's not true.

My mentor Stella Kanu is one of the very few black women who is an Executive Director.

If we're missing from research studies or conversations with the Arts Council, we're always going to remain invisible.

Let's be each other's advocates and be advocates for black women in theatre as well.

Go the extra mile to have us in the room and have us in the right conversations.

When things are successful people want to jump on the bandwagon but not initially.

It's on all of us to go that bit further.

3.2.8 Stage Directors UK

What is it

Lisa Spirling, Artistic Director of Theatre 503 and on the board of Stage Directors UK, spoke on behalf of Stage Directors UK's research in 2017 to investigate the gender split of directors being employed in Arts Council funded venues and Stage Directors UK findings since then, up to the present day, via their mentoring scheme. Stage Directors was set up to be a body for directors. It exists for advocacy and supporting directors.

Why it was done

Stage Directors UK membership is made up of 54% women, working in all sectors of the industry at all levels, and this statistic correlates with the UK theatre workforce gender review with a gender split of 56% of women. So we hoped for 50/50.

Findings and recommendations

- The research was separated by theatres but there's a set of theatres where you see 71% male, 78% male, 80% male, 100% male, 78, 70, 100, 83.3, 71, 71. Those are your big hitters.
- Then you have another set which is 50%.
- You have three theatres which are more female directors - Derby, New Vic, Theatre Royal Stratford - over that period of time.
- In terms of support, Stage Directors UK has handled disclosures of inappropriate physical intimacy, the use of physical size or volume to intimidate female members of the company, bullying of female directors by male colleagues, ghosting of those returning back from raising children, complaints from trans women of being undermined in the rehearsal room, female directors being paid less for the same work than men (Lisa is currently paid less than her predecessor at Theatre 503 and hasn't fought it - it's on her as well as the board), university students being sent on placements with known predatory males and told not to wear anything too short or too low cut by their lecturers, directors needing psychological counselling after abuse in work situations and being unable to afford therapy, being kept in the dark by boards (majority male boards) about things which directly affect their jobs, directly threatened with violence by production managers and on and on and on.
- One of the things which came out of their research is the need for mentoring and Stage Directors UK set up a paid mentoring scheme, funded by the Arts Council.
- To point out some of the things which are being asked for as part of that mentoring: demands of being a new parent and maintaining an income, how an early-mid-career director can strategically build relationships and a reputation as a director with regional venues; how do I rebuild my directing career and get past the issues with perceived credibility that I am experiencing; how do I make the transition from performer to director; I am working class and a parent and unable to follow normal routes into directing; how do I become an associate director for a large-scale NPO, do those associate roles even exist anymore; and how to do this whilst being neuro-divergent, working class and a lesbian; mid career director with a family returning to work to find her contacts are now four years out of date, unable to build on past successes; how to move on from the fringe; and the list goes on and on and on.
- Female directors really wanted female mentors.
- It was quite hard for SDUK to find quite a lot of those female mentors.
- Lots of questions about balancing work and parenting.
- Lots of social justice, unconscious bias, confidence in the room issues.
- In terms of the balance of women, there's more women than men, but in terms of the pyramid scheme of those leading those organisations, it's not women who are getting to direct on big scales; it's not women who get to do a big show, fail, get to direct again; how many shows people get to direct a year, more men than women; the thing for me which stands out is the amount of women who say "I'm done, I'm out of here" and how many women we're losing and how many women we've lost.
- Transparency is important - for example I remember suggesting we advertised all directing jobs and someone experienced turning to me and saying I wouldn't want to apply for a job, but you don't get to those established roles, like Artistic Director, without a body of work behind you. It's this chicken or egg of how you get to do that is my take away from today.

4 Key Themes

The following key themes emerging from the research were identified using a process of coding:

4.1 Women are under-represented and facing challenges which need to be addressed

All of the research supported the fact that women are facing under-representation and challenges which need to be addressed.

This contradicts statements which have been made by organisations in the past that women's representation has improved and no longer needs to be a priority.

For example, this was highlighted in The Writers' Guild of Great Britain's research who stated "Because as much as we were hearing this (of problems and under-representation) from our members, we were being told repeatedly that things were getting better so we decided to do some research."

Examples of under-representation and challenges faced by women include:

- Sphinx found only 31% of Artistic Directors are female who control 21% of the funding.
- University Women in the Arts found 34% of current or former female arts students had experienced sexism or gender bias at interviews.
- The December Group found 90% of Olivier Awards went to women.
- The Writers Guild (WGGB) found only 14% of prime time television is written by women.
- Equity found 72% of female performers feel pressurised to look a certain way in order to get a job.
- PIPA found 79% of women reported they were the primary carer.
- ERA 50: 50 found female led films have on average 20% lower production budgets and 33% higher box office returns.
- Black Womxn in Theatre found quotes such as "I'm still not seeing myself in theatre."
- Stage Directors UK found, in terms of directors, there's a set of theatres where you see 71% male, 78% male, 80% male, 100% male, 78, 70, 100, 83.3, 71, 71. Those are your big hitters.
- Both WGGB and Stage Directors UK found women are less likely to be given a second chance, if they fail, than men.

When the research reports did not focus solely on women, it is also important to note that, in the areas they were looking at, women were more likely to face challenges than men, for example:

- Equity found women are more likely to face challenges associated with aesthetic labour than men.
- PIPA found women are more likely to be impacted by caring responsibilities than men.
- As research (for example Women's Agenda in Australia) has found, post-pandemic, gender inequality is likely to increase, it is increasingly important to consider, rather than dismiss, the issue of women's under-representation and challenges.
- Furthermore, research by Jennifer Tuckett for this research report has found zero references to women and gender inequality in the body of the Arts Council's next ten year strategy and that zero leadership positions on the Cultural Renewal Taskforce are occupied by women, with only three women on the taskforce as a whole.
- These combined findings suggest that gender inequality in theatre, and in the arts more generally, is likely to increase unless this issue is taken seriously and specific measures are put in place to prevent this.

4.2 The issue of attitudes

The next key theme identified was the issue of attitudes, which needs to be addressed.

- For example, Sphinx found that 31% of Artistic Director control only 21% of NPO funding, suggesting female Artistic Directors are likely to be in the jobs with less subsidy.
- University Women in the Arts found female arts students were experiencing an issue of attitudes on courses, at interviews and in the workplace, for example "I remember he would talk over us and we would nudge each other as if "is this for real?" We let him take some of our ideas and we would complain about it together... They're allowed to... because they're men. Because they can. Because no one brings them up." (Natalie, on her first job).
- The Writers' Guild found that when women did get that foot in the door, the experiences that many women had were quite negative and they weren't sure what to do with it, again this idea that speaking out marks the end.

- Equity found 72% of female performers said they felt pressured to look a particular way in order to get work compared to 28% of male performers.
- ERA 50:50 found men write on average 65% part for men, 35% parts for women whereas women write 48% parts for men and 52% for women and Recommended that "measures to tackle unconscious bias is key – in the publishing of data and organisations going into organisations with tools to rectify the balance."
- Black Womxn in Theatre found quotes such as "I feel like I have to reel off my CV every day."
- Stage Directors UK found disclosures of inappropriate physical intimacy, the use of physical size or volume to intimidate female members of the company, bullying of female directors by male colleagues, ghosting of those returning back from raising children, complaints from trans women of being undermined in the rehearsal room, female directors being paid less for the same work than men, university students being sent on placements with known predatory males and told not to wear anything too short or too low cut by their lectures, directors needing psychological counselling after abuse in work situations and being unable to afford therapy, being kept in the dark by boards (majority male boards) about things which directly affect their jobs, directly threatened with violence by production managers and on and on and on.
- Both WGGB and Stage Directors UK found women are less likely to be given a second chance if they fail compared to men.
- As research shows women have been hit particularly hard by the pandemic, for example losing more jobs, having the greatest increase in childcare and caring responsibilities, being likely to see their wages decrease the most (University of Cambridge study on "Inequality in the Impact of the Coronavirus Shock", 2020) the issue of working to change attitudes and unconscious bias has become particularly important as we move into a risk-averse post-pandemic period (for example Kings College London recently found that women received less coverage than men in reports on the pandemic suggesting women are less likely to be viewed as experts). Furthermore, additional post-pandemic research for this report by academic Jennifer Tuckett has found that initial productions post-pandemic have a tendency towards being by well-known male writers (for example, Simon Stephens at the Donmar Warehouse and David Hare at the Bridge Theatre were two of the first post-pandemic productions to be announced). This

supports Jennifer Tuckett and Sphinx's research which found women are viewed as more of a box office risk and the danger of this increasing in risk-averse post-pandemic conditions. The issue of attitudes is particularly important in ensuring, with increased competition for jobs, women are not those missing out on jobs and that attitudes do not lead to increased gender inequality in the arts.

4.3 The need for transparency

A third key theme identified was the need for transparency.

- For example, Sphinx found the need for the Arts Council to break down their statistics in separate arts forms, citing as an example that a lot of the coverage reported 46% of theatre Artistic Directors were female when this was across arts forms and not for theatre which was 31%.
- The December Group found that unconscious bias should be recognised as a serious problem and tackled across employment and the repertoire.
- The Writers' Guild found "issues around transparency, the t word came through all of the time."
- Equity found "in the meantime, the biggest thing we can do is to insist on talking about it, to acknowledge it exists, to call attention to it, and widen our own ideas around what we consider makes an acceptable romantic lead, best friend or mum."
- PIPA has developed with their partners a Best Practice Charter, 10 guidelines supported by a monitoring evaluation framework and a toolkit to support organisations which increases transparency.
- ERA 50:50 recommended "looking at hiring practices – as shown by Directors UK and WGGB, a lot of people are hired on who they know, closed networks and a lack of transparency" and "measures to tackle unconscious bias is key – in the publishing of data and organisations going into organisations with tools to rectify the balance."
- Black Womxn in Theatre recommended "If we're missing from research studies or conversations with the Arts Council, we're always going to remain invisible."
- Stage Directors UK recommended "transparency is important – for example I remember suggesting we advertised all directing jobs and someone experienced turning to me and saying I wouldn't want to apply for a job, but you don't get to those established roles, like Artistic Director, without a body of work behind you. It's this chicken or egg of how you get to do that is my take away from today."

- This is supported by a recent study by LinkedIn which found men are more likely to be successful in securing jobs during the pandemic than women. This is also supported by additional post-pandemic research by academic Jennifer Tuckett for this report which found 40% of women are working part time compared to 13% of men according to official government figures. However, part time employment has particularly decreased during the pandemic according to figures from the office of national statistics. This is true for the arts as well as across the board, increasing the need for jobs to be advertised transparently and where possible with flexible working to prevent increased gender inequality (supported by the Women and Work APPG's recent recommendations as well).

4.4 The need for training of gatekeepers

A fourth key theme was the need for training of gatekeepers:

- For example, Sphinx highlighted this as a possible way to improve female Artistic Directors being more likely to be in the NPOs with less subsidy.
- University Women in the Arts found that research is not reaching the industry, for example most of the potential solutions identified in terms of research for improving the transition from studying to working in the arts were experienced by 20% or less of those surveyed.
- The December Group recommended "unconscious bias should be recognised as a serious issue and tackled across employment and the repertoire".
- The Writers' Guild found failure affects women's careers much more than men's career, men are getting another chance where for women failure tends to be the end.
- Equity found the criteria which was being set around how one should look was routinely arbitrary or unobtainable or imprecise like "beautiful."
- PIPA has developed with their partners a Best Practice Charter - 10 guidelines supported by a monitoring evaluation framework and a toolkit to support organisations.
- ERA 50: 50 recommended "measures to tackle unconscious bias is key - in the publishing of data and organisations going into organisations with tools to rectify the balance."
- Black Womxn in Theatre recommended "If we're missing from research studies or conversations with the Arts Council, we're always going to remain invisible."

- University Women in the Arts, PIPA and Stage Directors UK all recommended mentoring or champions.
- The need for the training of gatekeepers applies to theatres but also to Arts Council England and the Cultural Renewal Taskforce. For example, additional post-pandemic research by academic Jennifer Tuckett for this report has found women are not included in the body of the Arts Council England's next ten year strategy document, suggesting the need for training of gatekeepers on gender inequality at Arts Council England, and that the Cultural Renewal Taskforce is not gender-balanced, with zero of the taskforce's leadership roles occupied by women and only three women in total on the Cultural Renewal Taskforce. Training on the use of a gender lens in decision making and on the importance of gender-balanced teams to ensure decisions work for all genders would be beneficial in all these cases.

4.5. The need for policy and arts organisation changes

The fifth key theme which was identified was the need for policy and arts organisation changes.

- Sphinx research found that Arts Council figures for women across arts forms were being misunderstood and reported as being for theatre.
- University Women in the Arts was set up to improve the transitions for women from studying the arts to working in the arts as it found over 70% of arts students are female but only around 30% of many arts roles, for example playwright, director, are female, suggesting specific programmes would improve this transition.
- Sphinx found the need to pay equal attention to women as other under-represented groups, for example in The Creative Case.
- The December Group found women were not represented in the Arts Council's next ten year strategy, also suggesting the need to pay equal attention to women as other under-represented groups.
- Equity's research also supported the need for specific programmes or initiatives for women, stating "the message came through that women often didn't feel that they had the information, that there was this network, that there was this boy's club that they couldn't always break into, they weren't always sure of where to look for some of the information."
- The December Group recommended all funding to be 50/50 by 2020, all NPOs to commit to 50/50

representation by 2020 and equal board representation should be a pre-condition for next NPO round of funding.

- Equity's recommendations also highlighted the need for policy change, recommending the need for employee protections-making it less culturally acceptable to impose, expect, request or imply someone should alter their appearance and also granting equal access to work across demographics and body types.
- PIPA highlighted the impact of policy change and specific programmes, highlighting PIPA has developed with their partners a Best Practice Charter - 10 guidelines supported by a monitoring evaluation framework and a toolkit to support organisations.
- ERA 50: 50 recommended "I believe that quotas is the only way forward, in line with the Fawcett society" and "the only way you can get messages across is by holding people to account."
- Black Womxn in Theatre recommended "If we're missing from research studies or conversations with the Arts Council, we're always going to remain invisible.
- University Women in the Arts, PIPA and Stage Directors UK all recommended mentoring or champions.
- The need for policy changes in the arts is supported by the Women and Work APPG's recent recommendations of general policy changes post-pandemic to ensure gender inequality does not increase.

5. Conclusion and Acknowledgements

This research report is the first part in a two part report on the major Women in Theatre Forum, funded by Arts Council England. The second report reports on key themes from the industry panel at the Women in Theatre Forum and recommendations arising from the reports as a whole.

So far key themes identified include:

- Women are under-represented and facing challenges which need to be taken seriously and addressed.
- There is an issue with attitudes towards women in theatre which needs to be addressed.
- There is an issue with transparency which needs to be improved.
- Training of gatekeepers needs to occur.
- Policy and arts organisation changes are needed to lead to change.

As research shows that post-pandemic, gender inequality is likely to increase in a risk-averse post-pandemic culture (as reported by Women's Agenda, 2020, amongst others), we urge arts organisations, policy makers, funders and others to use a gender lens to consider if decisions and policies work for all genders and gender balanced teams to ensure that decisions and policies work for all genders.

Furthermore, our own additional post-pandemic research has found zero references to women and gender inequality in the body of the Arts Council's next ten year strategy and that zero leadership positions on the Cultural Renewal Taskforce are occupied by women, with only three women on the taskforce as a whole.

These combined findings suggest that gender inequality in theatre, and in the arts more generally, is likely to increase unless specific measures are put in place to prevent this.

We urge the UK government, policy makers and arts organisations to use a gender lens in decision making (considering whether all decisions made will work for all genders) and also to ensure gender balanced decision-making teams to ensure that decisions for rebuilding post-pandemic work for all genders."

Jennifer Tuckett is the researcher and author of these reports, which aim to improve awareness of gender parity and equality issues in UK theatre.

Jennifer is a researcher, writer, producer, consultant and academic and is currently Director of University Women in the Arts and Research and Literary Director of Sphinx Theatre, the UK's longest established women's theatre company. Her training includes the University of Cambridge, where she has most recently been conducting the world first major mixed methods research project into how to improve the transition for women from studying the arts to working in the arts, and Yale School of Drama, Yale University.