



# Equality Diversity and Inclusion Policy

## Introduction

Indepen-dance was established by Karen Anderson in 1996 founded on the principles of access, participation and integration to provide opportunity for all to fulfil their potential through dance. Our purpose was to provide specifically for individuals with disabilities and their carers, to enjoy a high quality arts provision and to improve their health, quality of life and opportunities. All our activities are offered to people with and with out disabilities enabling everyone to have the opportunity to learn from each other and share a creative experience.

The company has grown over the last 20 years from a small organisation and now provides a range of opportunities for individuals. These include:

- Weekly dance and creative classes across all age groups and tailored to meet the needs of individuals with specific disabilities.
- Outreach work in schools and local communities designed to help people understand and appreciate that having a disability is not a barrier to being able to express yourself creatively and that across the spectrum of ability people can have different levels of skill.
- Adult performance and youth dance companies that nurture the creative talents of individuals providing them with the opportunity of being part of the creative development process and being able to participate in public performances to diverse audiences at home and abroad.
- A small ensemble, IND4, that has developed individual's professional skill further both in creating and performing. This group have performed with other professional companies, including Scottish Ballet and have been part of a successful European programme, involving inclusive dance companies in Belgium, France and England.
- The company has developed international links and successfully ran an international festival in 2014 and plans another this year. This enables the company to learn from best practice at home and abroad and reciprocates by providing opportunities for other companies to learn from what we have achieved.
- Through public performances Indepen-dance reaches a diverse audience many of whom are not regular performance attenders.
- Indepen-dance pricing structure is designed to ensure that cost is not a barrier to participation, while ensuring that the company raises income independently to ensure long-term sustainability.
- Indepen-dance employs individuals with a disability, supporting them to understand the demands of the world of work. We have seen individuals grow in confidence and skill.
- Our participation in the Briggait development offers future opportunity for growth and expansion and has made other companies aware of the benefits of providing accessible and inclusive opportunities.

## **Our business plan**

Our current business plan builds on Indepen-dance's achievements to date and outlines the plans to achieve the artistic vision and to maintain the company's position as Scotland's Leading Inclusive Dance Company.

In summary, to achieve the artistic vision, Indepen-dance has identified and agreed to focus on the following future plan which contributes towards Creative Scotland's ambitions, priorities and the connecting themes as set out in Creative Scotland's 10 year business plan. The future plan includes:

- **The Core Programme** which provides a dance experience that will enhance and enrich the lives of people with disabilities and their carers, demonstrating how dance can improve the quality of people's lives, as regards health, self-awareness, self-confidence and creative expression
- **Performance Projects** which create performance opportunities for people with learning disabilities and continue to provide for their lifelong learning and develop a wider audience for inclusive dance and to build continuing awareness of the possibilities for people with learning disabilities to become involved in, and have access to, the arts, through performances.
- **Training Programme** to develop knowledge and experience and increase the provision of specialist dance and choreographers for people with disabilities in Scotland and Internationally through a strategic plan of workshops, master-classes and mentoring.
- **International Developments and Partnerships** to continue building links and artistic collaborations with individuals and organisations working in the same field in the UK and Internationally.
- **Education and Outreach** to promote an appreciation and understanding of Inclusive dance practice with local authorities, schools, colleges, universities and collaborate with organisations operating in the same field and sharing the same values and aims.

## **SWOT analysis of Company's approach to EDI**

In summary our findings are:

### **Strengths**

The company has demonstrated its aim of inclusiveness by encouraging individuals with diverse abilities to participate in creative dance and movement. We have provided a pathway for individuals with skill to develop their professionalism in dance. By employing individuals with a disability we have actively demonstrated our commitment to equality and diversity. We were recently a finalist for the S1 Jobs -Charity Employer Award. We know anecdotally that our activity increases confidence and well-being. Through our schools and outreach work in local communities, public performances and touring we have reached diverse audiences and contributed to an understanding that artistic activity can be available to all. We have established a well-regarded inclusive performance company IND4. We have provided an access route into other forms of arts provisions to individuals with a disability. Our members are confident about using the facilities in other arts venues e.g. Tramway and CCA.

### **Weaknesses**

We need to ensure that we communicate effectively to ensure that all those who may wish the choice of undertaking an activity as a dancer or volunteer are able to do so. We need more effective support to address challenges of employing disabled people. We are too reliant on anecdotal reporting and need to be better at collecting and analysing information on who currently participates and providing the evidence of what we do well. Although some of our participants come from ethnic minority communities we believe there is the potential to engage more effectively with different communities. We have an active and committed board and although each board member brings a set of skills that complement each other and adds value to the company we could be more diverse. We are exploring ways of supporting individuals with a disability to participate but want to ensure that the participation is meaningful for them and is not tokenism.

### **Opportunities**

We recognise that the current policy in the field of disability of personalisation and self-directed support offers individuals the opportunity of designing their support for living in new and innovative ways and that we can encourage people to consider the opportunities that come from participation in dance or other arts activity.

We are interested in taking further our collaboration with other art forms and specifically looking at how we would benefit from greater use of digital technology which we think provides an opportunity for individuals with a disability to participate in new and exciting ways in dance activity.

As a leader in the field of inclusive dance with a particular skill in working with individuals with a learning disability there is the opportunity for the Artistic Director and other relevant staff to provide support on training and development to other organisations; to influence policy development and to be involved in inclusive dance education.

The development of the Briggait offers a number of opportunities –fully accessible dance space that encourages participation; opportunities for collaboration with other dance companies and arts organisations; further potential opportunities for volunteering and employment; introducing company members and their carers to other arts opportunities.

### **Threats**

We recognise the need to be realistic in what we are able to achieve and ensuring that the company has the capacity to deal with new developments. Lack of funding curtails our ambition. A significant resource goes into ensuring we don't lose funding and we sustain and develop our income to match our expenditure and expectations. Similar funding challenges create problems for partners we work with or aim to work with, reducing the capacity for developing partnership work in the way we would want to. Poverty amongst disabled people limits participation.

### **EDI Objectives and priority areas for action**

Indepen-dance is an inclusive organisation and all protected groups are made welcome to participate in our activity. However as an organisation with a specific focus on disability including learning disability our priority is to increase access for this protected group. We have worked well with some ethnic groups but believe that a more focussed approach may increase participation from a number of communities offering opportunity specifically to ethnic diversity disabled individuals to participate in dance.

From an organisational perspective our main priority is to improve the collection of data on participants. This will help us to understand better who we are working with, provide the evidence of the effectiveness of our activity and allow us to identify gaps that will inform future action planning.

### **EDI action plan**

This plan tackles the current and immediate issues we wish to address – we recognise that some will be easily achieved and others will take longer to realise. We are committed to EDI and the intention to regularly review progress will allow us to acknowledge formally what we have achieved and set new targets and challenges for the organisation.

AIM	ACTION	MEASURE	TIMELINE	LEAD
<p>Establish a system of equal opportunity monitoring that gathers up to date information about employees, volunteers and participants in activity. This will include information on age, gender, disability, ethnicity and sexual orientation.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Devise a monitoring form that is simple to use with each of our activities.</li> <li>2. Brief staff, volunteers and members to understand the importance of collecting information.</li> <li>3. Automatically request monitoring information from each new start</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Relevant monitoring forms in place.</li> <li>2. Briefings taken place and record of staff participation recorded</li> <li>3. Form in active use.</li> <li>4. Information gathered and analysed to inform business planning.</li> </ol>	<p>To be completed over next year –in process of employing an admin and finance manager who will be responsible for this activity. This will be in place by March 2017</p>	<p>Admin and Finance manager</p>
<p>Review current communication methods to ensure that information is fully accessible. Staff have been trained in makaton and pictorial images are used on material to help individuals understand what is being offered. Printed material is made accessible through using relevant print sizes. We need to look at what we offer in different languages including braille and identify what is most effective and affordable. We also need to ensure we are making most effective use of social media.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. survey current membership to establish new options for effective communication.</li> <li>2. Identify communication methods used by other companies, specifically those working with individuals with a disability and from minority ethnic diversity communities.</li> <li>3. Research up to date information to ensure that we are aware of the most effective way of communicating with the diverse membership we work with. This would include both methods of communication and avenues of communication. Develop a communications resource pack</li> </ol>	<p>Up to date information available on effective communication with diverse groups and confirmed by participants through focus groups or other forms of feedback that it works.</p> <p>2. Evidence from increased participation that individuals have been able to access activity because information is more effective at reaching people.</p>	<p>Information collated over six months and priorities identifies. New methods of communication begin to be put in place and evidence of effectiveness comes from new people participating. New material produced by January 2017 and effectiveness measured in August 2017 – measure if it has increased participation and particularly from currently excluded groups.</p>	<p>Admin and Finance Manager (marketing officer)</p>

within the marketing plan that highlights ways to make information accessible;  
 4. Prioritise the actions that require to be taken to ensure that communication is effective.

<b>AIM</b>	<b>ACTION</b>	<b>MEASURE</b>	<b>TIMELINE</b>	<b>LEAD</b>
Engage with ethnic minority groups communities to raise awareness of Independence and to encourage participation in our activity	Engage with communities to explain what we offer. Seek opportunities to demonstrate what we do. This may be done in a variety of ways e.g. offering taster or demonstration sessions or invitation to performances. The preferred method will be discussed on an individual contact basis. Work with relevant groups to understand any barriers to participation and seek to mutually find ways of addressing these.	Minority ethnic groups involved in activity. This will be reported on the basis of numbers attending activity and minority ethnic groups with whom we have established contact.	Ongoing – work will be progressive and will take place over the next 1 – 3 years	Dance Development Manager
Review our current recruitment practices and demonstrate the benefits offered to the organisation from employing a diverse workforce.	1. Review current training and support system to ensure they are relevant to all employees. 2. Identify what needs to be done to achieve double tick award and make application. The Double Tick Award shows that we are an equal opportunities organisation who employs people with	1. New training and development programme in place which will include 4 sessions delivered over the course of the year. Training in policies and procedures for all employees, freelance staff and volunteers. Update all staff on an annual basis in policies and procedures and	1. July 2017 when we review our policies. Set next summer for the following year to be completed by April 2018. 2. Achieve	Admin and Finance Manager

	disabilities.	ensure all training is relevant to staff with a learning disability or other complex needs to adapt the session. Managers will be trained in double tick relevant fields.	double tick within a year. Apply by December of this year. Managers trained	
		2. Application for double tick successful.	3. Personal development plans in place by May 2017.	
Ensure our funding strategy reflects the need to encourage diversity with a particular emphasis on increasing participation from individuals with a disability and from diverse ethnic communities but no protected group will be excluded and that funding applications support broadening participation in activity.	Review funding strategy and identify what could be done to encourage more diverse participation. Research funds that specifically would support encouraging involvement of individuals with a disability and from minority ethnic groups.	New funding opportunities identified Two new funding opportunities applied to each year.	Ongoing over next 3 years	Artistic Director/Board
Develop partnerships with other organisations that reflect commitment to diversity with a specific focus on disability and diverse ethnic groups	1. Review current partnerships to ensure that they continue to be relevant to Company's aim of encouraging inclusion. 2. Consider options available for new partnerships.	1. Partnerships in place are relevant to Company 2. At least one new partnership identified each year and there is a commitment to exploring new ways of working.	Ongoing over next 3 years	Artistic Director/Dance Development Manager

Maximise the opportunities for participation in activity that come from the programmes of personalisation and self-directed support to increase involvement in activity.	Identify opportunities to ensure that people are aware of Independence as an option when they are considering options for support. This will be done through personal contact and relevant information in our published material and on social media.	Increase of 5% in participation from individuals making an active decision to participate as part of their support plan.	Ongoing over 3 years	Artistic Director/Board
Continue to be actively involved in the Briggait Creation Centre (BCC) to ensure that it develops opportunities for all	Ensure that Independence interests are considered in the developments and explore opportunities for collaboration to the benefit of all through ongoing participation in the working groups established to progress BCC.	1. Independence has influenced an accessible creative space that encourages individuals with diverse abilities to participate in activity. 2. Opportunities for employment and volunteering in new facility open to individuals with diverse abilities.	Ongoing over 3 years	Artistic Director
Review Board recruitment and membership to encourage more participation from ethnic diversities and from those with disabilities.	1. Explore ways of effectively supporting individuals with a disability to participate in governance using the expertise of individuals and organisations who have championed the involvement of disabled people in influencing and decision making. 2. Ensure membership of Board leads to long term sustainability	Proposals presented and agreed by AGM – this will identify both the preferred number of Board member, specific areas of expertise or interest or diversity that should be included and rationalising terms of appointment so that collective knowledge is not lost.	Proposals to AGM 2017	Board of Trustees

Expand the number of audiences at a community level who can experience inclusive dance.

Increase the opportunities for our companies (Young 1z, Adult Performance Company and Independ-dance 4) engaging professional audiences, and demonstrating high quality of work.

Explore the opportunities to use the expertise of Independ-dance 4 to reach new audiences that wouldn't regularly come to see our work – eg early years, or at care homes.

1. Develop opportunity for The Adult performance company community events over the course of the year.

2. Develop opportunities for IND4 to deliver performances to new audiences.

Feedback on performance that have taken place, informing how we move this particular agenda forward.

Two open class and rehearsals with adult performance company.

Four performances or/and workshops by IND 4.

Deadline  
September 2017

Artistic director,  
Dance  
Development  
Manager

Date reviewed dd/dd/yyyy  
Date due for renewal dd/dd/yyyy

