



SOME VOICES Action Plan

Our Action Plan will include, but will not be limited to;

- A commitment and plan to improve representation in our management team, members and audiences.
- Reaffirmation of our zero tolerance of harassment and bullying and reflecting that commitment in anti-racism training for Freelance Staff, Choir Leaders and Choir Rangers.
- Build community partnerships in our choir rehearsal locations; and the creation and implementation of an outreach initiative for 18-25 year olds.

A Catalyst for Change

During the 2020 Covid-19 pandemic Some Voices suspended usual rehearsals. During this time the Black Lives Matter movement took centre-stage in America highlighting brutality, inequality and systemic racism in the U.S policing system. Around the world people saw this as a call to action and many parts of society and businesses responded. Following a viral social media campaign in which Some Voices took part, we decided to use our time to lay out a statement along with short and long-term goals for tackling racism and other inequalities in our practices. The statement below was shared on all social media platforms and emailed to the mailing list along with a request for anyone with thoughts or ideas to share with us.

Some Voices Statement

Some Voices recognises that Black Lives Matter is a call to action.

As a company based in the music industry, we have a responsibility to acknowledge black culture and stand by all black musicians, artists, singers, Some Voices choir leaders and members in the fight against racism.

We are an anti-racist organisation and are taking this time to think proactively about how we can continue our work to make Some Voices the inclusive and accessible organisation it commits itself to being. This long-term and integral work takes time, thought and research, learning and unlearning, reading and discussion.

As a community-based choir we run an open-door policy (albeit currently virtual) and are asking friends of Some Voices to speak to us should they wish to contribute any thoughts or suggestions for actions.

Some Voices continue to support the Black Lives Matter movement and continues to educate ourselves on the wider issues around the Black Lives Matter movement, specifically looking at our role in the music and arts sector.

We have committed to producing a Action Plan including the ongoing listening to and reflecting on members' comments, ideas and suggestions.

If you you wish to contribute any thoughts or suggestions for actions please email us at hello@somevoices.co.uk

Now, and the future

Some Voices Equality Diversity and Inclusion journey started prior to 2020. Here's what we have done so far:

Member Accessibility Requirements: Members are asked to share any access needs (via all email communications, our website and the Membership Manager) so that the company is aware of needs for rehearsals (virtual and face to face), socials and the performances. We also include prior warnings for all our live performances for anyone that is sensitive to flashing or flickering lights

We have recently completed an audit of our digital channels and have made preliminary adjustments to those communications to ensure universal inclusivity. This work is ongoing.

Accessible Rehearsal Venues: We have a checklist to ensure all our venues are accessible. This includes ensuring appropriate bathroom facilities, entrances and exits; space for wheelchair users and identifying any accessibility issues in journeying to the venue on public transport.

Performance Venues: Some Voices work with venues as early as possible to put in place procedures and infrastructure to support those with access needs e.g. an accessible dressing room and bathroom close to the stage, a ramp for those that require it, chairs on stage for those that require them, additional flexibility around spacing/position if anxiety or claustrophobia are a factor. Due to the large capacity of Some Voices' performances we rely on the venue's Front of House teams to support audiences, but we do oversee any specific requests that come to us directly.

Equality Statement: Some Voices share their equality statement on every team member's email footer, in the members policy and on the members page.

Some Voices celebrates the individual and one of our values is inclusiveness. We do not discriminate on the basis of ethnicity, gender, sexuality or disability and pride ourselves on offering equal opportunity.

Zero-Tolerance Bullying / Harassment Statement:

We have reaffirmed our zero tolerance of harassment and bullying by rewriting our membership policy to include a safeguarding framework, clarification on what constitutes bullying and sexual harassment and signposted all reporting channels, both anonymous and not. All members agree to this SOME policy when signing up.

<https://www.somevoices.co.uk/membership-policy>.

Partnership Building and Raising Awareness: Some Voices has existing LGBTQ+ partnerships (Sink the Pink, Mighty Hoopla, AKT) and supports charities representing protected characteristics (such as CALM, Shine Cancer Support, APP, Lost Chord). Choir members nominate charities that have significance for them. Audiences are made aware of the charity at each gig - with a speech, signage and charity collection. Followers of Some Voices are made aware of charitable aims via social media, the website and emails.

Choir Rangers were introduced to be an extra pair of eyes at rehearsals - reporting back any issues that the Choir Leader may not spot due to their responsibilities to lead the entire group. Choir Rangers also offer a conduit for information - if new info is on the website or on email, we'll also let them know so that they can verbally draw people's attention to that

update. Choir Rangers are a familiar, consistent face for members at rehearsals and performances as well as welcoming new members.

Inclusion Advisory Group (IAG): Some Voices founded a new Inclusion Advisory Group in August 2020 consisting of voluntary members. The purpose of the IAG is to provide critical friendship to the senior management; to apply their personal experience and knowledge to support us in making positive changes across the organisation. Experienced members offer their specific knowledge of an area of EDI including introductions to networks, research or idea sharing.

Equal Opportunities Data Collection: A new monitoring process has been created for members, audiences and prospective job applicants. The first set of data (21% of Spring 2020 membership) revealed that 14% of members identify as BAME, 14% identify as LGTB and 13% consider themselves to have a disability or be affected by mental health. Some Voices is also researching the demographics to identify which groups are underrepresented.

Providing Context and Analysing: Some Voices has identified the need to research demographic information in order to provide context to their EDI work and have baseline data to compare membership equal opportunities data against. Some Voices has researched baseline data for Gender, Ethnic Background, Sexual Orientation, Disability and Age, all in Greater London and Newcastle.

We will combine the baseline data against Equal Opportunities data collated from surveys distributed to members to look at how well the activities are reflecting the demographics of the communities in which we work.

Going forward Some Voices will collect Equal Opportunities Monitoring Data for members, audiences and freelancers (choir leaders, management etc).

Internal Discussion: Prior to forming the IAG, Some Voices management discussed potential areas that could be developed.

- Ongoing checks of an agreed lexicon e.g. formulating a glossary of agreed terms
- Identifying the barriers to people joining Some Voices for example financial, social or physical; and finding cost-effective, practical ways of overcoming those.
- Identifying groups who are currently underrepresented and setting goals for improving inclusivity and fairness.
- Identifying ways in which Some Voices can engage with the community, build partnerships and improve visibility in rehearsal locations.
- Address how Choir Leaders, Choir Rangers and freelancers are recruited.
- Improve and develop Choir Leader and Choir Ranger training.
- Ensuring feedback/complaint procedures are clear so that Some Voices can identify any issues which need to be addressed.
- Working with venues to ensure the best possible experience for the choir and audiences.

Accountability

Although overall accountability for our Action Plan sits with the management team of Some Voices, in order for us to be successful, everyone who is part of Some Voices and what we do, are responsible for contributing.