



## Theatre and Drama within the Criminal Justice System

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# Anti-Racism: Statement of Intent and Vision



## Statement of Intent

Geese Theatre Company's work takes place at the intersection of two sectors: the arts and the criminal justice system. This means we are uniquely placed to have access to, observe, and influence in both spheres. The nature of our charitable remit means that we are regularly in contact with those that have committed offences; are at risk of committing offences; and the many agencies that work in those areas.

We operate in spaces that we recognise as institutionally racist or that work within a regime of systemic racism. We signed up to the *More Than A Moment* pledge not only because we want to support Black creatives working within these spaces but because we are committed to working with and challenging these criminal justice organisations and institutions: to have authentic conversations about discrimination and find new ways of working that are inclusive and intentionally antiracist.

Using a criminal justice lens, we are aware of the disparity between the number of Black people incarcerated and the number of Black people in the general population. According to the 2011 Census, just over 3% of the UK population were from Black ethnic groups whilst, according to the Government's national statistics, in 2020, 13% of the prison population were Black. The disparity becomes even more stark when you focus on the younger prison population, with 21% of all prisoners under 25 years old being Black and 32% of under 18-year-olds. Again, if we add in people who identify as of Mixed ethnicity then these statistics become even more shocking.

Our work exclusively focuses on those society has often discarded, forgotten or 'othered'. Although our focus is often on an exploration of choice, change and responsibility for the *individual*, we recognise the significant part that *social, cultural, economic* and *legal* pressures play in the lives of those that we meet, both inside and outside of the prison gates. Whilst we always aim to work in a trauma-informed way we are committed to increasing our understanding of the effects of racial trauma for anyone we work with.





From an artistic perspective we recognise that our workforce should not only reflect our commitment to the pledge but that we want to encourage and empower Black creatives within our sector. We have already made significant changes to our processes within the company but recognise that this is an ongoing conversation and cannot be solved with platitudes and short-term fixes. Our commitment to Anti-Racism means we pledge to keep educating ourselves, keep challenging ourselves and others and keep talking through the discomfort to make long-lasting changes in our organisation, in our work and at the intersection of arts and criminal justice.

### **Anti-Racism Vision:**

Geese Theatre Company will strive to create an environment:

- that allows anyone from the global majority who works with, for or alongside Geese to be free from experiences of racism in all its forms whilst engaging with the company.
- where everyone feels valued, supported, and has a space to be authentic and enabled to lift their mask without judgement, within boundaries.
- where practising micro-affirmations becomes standard, and informal conversations about race are the norm.
- where individuals are encouraged to practise allyship and where allyship is expected in all relevant situations.
- that encourages transparency through a shared language, including an awareness of the 4 'D's of white fragility (defend, deny, discredit, downplay) and where we continue to challenge and change our behaviour so that all feel welcome and included.

We recognise and acknowledge the need to have, and continue having, uncomfortable conversations about race and racial discrimination within the company and about the work. We will strive to make those conversations more commonplace with a hope that we can model this to the groups, agencies, and institutions we work with.

