



Being Human Festival - Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Statement of Intent

The statement below is a starting point for our learning journey. We know that EDI is an area that continues to change as we become more aware of diverse issues and needs. All our EDI documents, processes and actions will continue to be reviewed regularly. If you have identified an area within which we could do better or would like to send us any other comments on our approach to EDI work, then please contact us at beinghuman@sas.ac.uk.

Being Human Festival activities aim to celebrate and demonstrate the ways in which the humanities inspire and enrich our everyday lives, help us to understand ourselves, our relationships with others, and the challenges we face in a changing world. The festival is supported by a core team at the School of Advanced Study, University of London, and each activity is run locally by humanities researchers and research organisations, in collaboration with community and cultural partners.

It is our intention that the festival represents a diverse programme of activities, each targeted to specific audiences, but overall providing something for everyone. Our activities are welcoming, sometimes challenging, and underpinned by mutual respect and dignity for all people. Inclusion of diverse groups and viewpoints is essential to our work, but so is ensuring the safety and value of anyone who might be marginalised, made vulnerable or otherwise systematically excluded by society.

As a festival we recognise that the structures which support our work need strengthening, improving, and expanding. We believe that the humanities as a sector needs to improve its diversity and equality, and that opportunities within the humanities are not currently accessible to everyone. We are committed to improving this in the ways we work. Being Human Festival is one way in which the humanities can be accessed more widely by society, help raise participation and awareness, and increase the value our society places on the humanities.

We will continue to strengthen our approaches to improving equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI), and to share our learning with the wider sector. We commit to the following actions:

- 1) We will invest in our staff and their professional development, ensuring they are given time to learn and reflect on inequity issues, and how this relates to their work for the festival.
- 2) We will ensure discussion of EDI issues are brought up in planning meetings, annual reviews, and reporting, and in doing so hold ourselves and the festival accountable for needed improvements.

- 3) We will continue to reflect on and improve our calls for contributions and application processes to ensure that diverse contributions and contributors are empowered and facilitated to be part of the programme each year.
- 4) We will continue to provide advice and guidance on EDI issues to all festival organisers and contributors, keeping basic commitments to accessibility at the forefront in the terms and conditions of taking part, and updating our training and toolkits regularly.
- 5) We will continue to work with festival organisers and contributors to help them reach well targeted audiences, in ways that are meaningful to those groups.
- 6) We will challenge festival organisers and contributors to improve their ideas of access and inclusion, providing advice and guidance where needed.
- 7) We will work with festival organisers and contributors to challenge inaccessibility and exclusion in venues by prioritising accessible venues and formats for the programme.
- 8) We will work with festival organisers to challenge marginalisation and exclusion in their activities. We will ensure festival organisers have access to regularly updated guidance for vetting contributors, choosing appropriate facilitation approaches for their content, and reviewing any considerations of possible offence and harm early on in activity design.

Doing this work well will require commitment from each of our festival organisers, and this is included in the terms and conditions of contribution to the festival programme. Each activity will also be subject to local guidance at their home institution, and any considerations required by the collaborating partners and venues. Nothing that Being Human is asking should contravene any local guidance, however, if you have any concerns, please do contact us at beinghuman@sas.ac.uk to discuss.

Who we are including:

The Equalities Act (2010) legally protects people from discrimination in the workplace and in wider society. The act focuses on 9 protected characteristics, namely: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion and belief, pregnancy and maternity, sex, and sexual orientation.

As well as ensuring we are inclusive of these protected characteristics, we acknowledge the diversity of factors which might lead to someone finding themselves excluded. This list is something we will revisit regularly to ensure we keep as relevant as possible. It currently includes: access to disposable income, access to the internet or digital devices, access to transport, care experience, caring responsibilities, educational achievement, living in rural areas, migration background, neurodiversity, physical size, prison/incarceration experience, regional characteristics including accents, socioeconomic status, variable housing status or homelessness.

Our commitment to sharing:

If this statement of intent is useful to you as part of your own EDI work and learning, then we are happy for you to take it as a starting point and amend to your own needs. If you do

this please ensure that others can benefit from your work too, and it would be great if you could let us know at beinghuman@sas.ac.uk.

*The original version of this statement was produced with Dr Charlotte Thorley. It was amended by the School of Advanced Study, University of London, in July 2024.