



## **WITHOUT WALLS EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION ACTION PLAN 2026 - 2027**

This EDI Action Plan builds on 2024 to 2026 commitments and reflects a strategic shift toward deeper structural equity; strengthened representation of Black and Working Class communities and embedded accountability across governance, programme and communications. It is formulated following review of Without Walls' current activity and the previous action plan; data gathered from across Without Walls' outputs and network interaction and Arts Council England Investment Principles and guidance for EDI Action Plan strategy.

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## 1. Strategic Rationale

Without Walls' 2026 - 27 Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan is rooted in a commitment to create meaningful social impact for marginalised communities through increased participation, leadership and influence within outdoor arts.

This Action Plan builds on 2024 - 2026 commitments and reflects a shift toward deeper structural equity; strengthened representation of Black communities and Deaf, Disabled and Neurodivergent communities, and the introduction of Working Class and lower socio-economic communities as an emerging monitored priority, with accountability across governance, programme and communications.

The strategy is built on the principle that engagement with artists and professionals from marginalised communities must enable those creatives and sector professionals not only to access opportunities, but to develop confidence, knowledge, skills, networks and influence that have long-term impact, on their own terms.

Across the Action Plan, this strategic commitment is delivered through five interconnected shifts:

**First, governance and leadership structures** are strengthened to ensure representation, accountability and equitable decision-making power. This includes clear demographic targets, embedded EDI expertise and transparent review mechanisms.

**Second, artistic commissioning and programme delivery** are framed as tools for equity and inclusion. Programme activity is aligned with the interests of the priority communities identified in this strategy, and selection processes serve to reduce structural bias and widen access.

**Third, professional and creative development** is positioned as a primary site of our equity intervention. Programmes such as Discover and Associates are framed as structural leadership pathways rather than one-off opportunities. These programmes prioritise co-design, practical transformation and long-term progression, with a particular focus in 2026-27 on Black and Deaf, Disabled and Neurodivergent practitioners. Working Class and lower socio-economic communities are introduced as a monitored priority within commissioning and open call processes this year, with dedicated development support and planned future investment.

**Fourth, organisational culture and workforce practices** are strengthened to ensure that inclusion continues to be embedded in recruitment, retention and internal decision-making.

**Finally, monitoring and evaluation** is positioned as learning-led as well as strategy-informed. A unified monitoring framework ensures robust demographic data and accurate longitudinal tracking. Impact is understood not only as activity delivered, but as evidence of transformation, progression and redistribution of influence.

This Action Plan is developed alongside Without Walls' Framework for Wellbeing and Safety in Public Space, which sets out Shared Commitments across the network for the care and safety of artists, audiences and workers in outdoor contexts. The two documents are intended to be read in conjunction.

The actions in this plan are tracked operationally through an Asana project maintained by the Head of Programme, which sets out delivery responsibilities, oversight accountability and who needs to be kept informed of progress. Ahead of each DIAG meeting, the Head of Programme will include a progress summary in the meeting report. Following each meeting, DIAG will produce an Insight and Action Brief setting out recommendations and any equity risks, to which the Head of Programme will respond formally within two weeks. Those responses are logged and reported to the Board.

Between meetings, DIAG members can raise urgent issues through a shared live document accessible to all members. Where an issue requires a prompt response from Without Walls, or where Without Walls needs to draw on DIAG's expertise between meetings, the Head of Programme will engage directly with members and ensure any decisions or actions are logged and shared with the full group.

## 2. Governance: Representative and Accountable Leadership

Without Walls will ensure governance structures reflect the diversity of England, with specific focus on Global Majority (GM) communities, Deaf, Disabled and Neurodivergent (DDN) communities and Working Class/Lower Socio-Economic (WC/LSE) communities.

Action	Success Metrics	Review Deadline	Accountable
Conduct governance diversity audit	Governance Diversity Audit completed and gaps in representation from those with lived experience identified	February 2027	Chief Executive
Appoint at least one new Board and/or AD member according to gaps in representation	Reach and/or maintain minimum 30% DDN Board representation	February 2027	Board
	Reach and/or maintain minimum 20% WC/LSE Board representation		
	Reach and/or maintain minimum 30% GM Board representation		
Redesign of DIAG format approved and implemented	DIAG Terms of Reference revised ahead of the November 2026 meeting to reflect the group's updated structure, accountability focus and relationship with leadership and Board.	Terms of Reference revised by November 2026	Head of Programme
	DIAG meets three times per year (June, November, February) in 2026-27, returning to four times per year in 2027-28	June 2026, November 2026, February 2027, May 2027, August 2027, November 2027	
	Three DIAG reports delivered and reviewed by Board		
Provide opportunities for WC/LSE,	Evaluation shows that Board shadowers have	Evaluation of 2025/26 Board	Chief Executive

GM, and/or DDN professionals to informally shadow the Without Walls Board or staff members.	improved knowledge and confidence of/in governance procedures	shadower completed - May 2026	
		Appointment of 2026/27 Board shadower - June 2026	
Deliver relevant equity, diversity and inclusion training which Board & AD members must attend, focusing on affecting structural change based on understanding of intersectional lived experience.	90% of board members who have attended training report improved understanding of intersectionality and of their role in building an equitable and inclusive culture for marginalised communities	2 x Board and AD training sessions delivered by April 2027	Chief Executive

### 3. Management and Communications: Embedding Inclusive Practice

Equity, diversity, inclusion and accessibility will be embedded operationally across the organisation both internally and in public-facing communications, developing meaningful inclusion of diverse staff, artists and audiences.

Action	Success Metrics	Review Deadline	Accountable
Create anti-racism and anti-ableism internal decision-making checklist	Commissioning, network and recruitment decisions reference checklists	Checklists distributed by September 2026 and use reviewed by March 2027	Head of Programme
Create new EDI statement referencing anti-racism, access and Working Class/Lower Socio-Economic (WC/LSE) inclusion commitments, including audio/video formats	EDI statement formats published on website	November 2026	Head of Programme
Continual review of use of language on our website, policy documents, and internal communications to reflect current best practice.	Language use is dynamically updated and reflects voice of people with lived, expert experience	Discussed at DIAG meeting in June 2026, November 2026 and February 2027	Head of Communications and Development
Recruit two Development Producers: one with a Global Majority (GM) focus (with particular attention to Black artists) and one with a Deaf, Disabled and Neurodivergent (DDN) focus.	Roles successfully recruited and providing direct support to artists from their priority communities, including mentoring on creative development and applications. Each Development Producer supports a minimum of 3 artists from their priority community.	Roles recruited by June 2026, postholder in place by end of September 2026, delivery of workplans across Q3 - Q4.	Head of Programme

<p>Recruit freelance EDI Consultant to support three areas of strategic and organisational work: an organisational culture review, staff and Board EDI training, and strategic development work including a governance equity audit and scoping toward a new EDI Strategy for the next funding period</p>	<p>Role successfully recruited. Organisational culture review completed by February 2027. Staff and Board training delivered by April 2027. Governance equity audit and strategic scoping completed ahead of the NPO application process.</p>	<p>Role recruited by end of August 2026, delivery of workplan across Q3- Q4 into 2027.</p>	<p>Chief Executive</p>
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## 4. Artistic Programme: Constructing Equitable Creative Pipelines

Without Walls' commissioning and development activity will demonstrate strategic inclusion of priority communities through structural redistribution of opportunities, ensuring equitable access to R&D, commissioning and touring through clear targets and transparent evaluation and reporting mechanisms.

Action	Success Metrics	Review Deadline	Accountable
EDI monitoring forms and application forms to include new inputs on Working Class/Lower Socio-Economic (WC/LSE) backgrounds and gender identity, revised inputs on Deaf, Disabled and Neurodivergent (DDN) experiences and revised inputs that avoid flattening out Global Majority (GM) backgrounds.	All application and monitoring forms capture granular demographic data across GM backgrounds, DDN experience, WC/LSE identification and gender identity	Application and Monitoring forms updated in May 2026	Head of Programme
Maintain minimum 30% of both R&D and commissioning opportunities are awarded to GM artists	Targets for inclusion in programmes met per output. If not met, rationale is logged and reported to the Chief Executive and Board	Target review completed December 2027	Head of Programme
50% of the 30% R&D and commissioning opportunities awarded to GM artists are awarded to Black artists			
Minimum 15% of R&D and commissioning opportunities awarded to artists/companies identifying as being from WC/LSE communities			

Minimum 15% of R&D and commissioning opportunities awarded to artists/companies identifying as being from LGBTQIA+ communities			
Minimum 30% of R&D and commissioning opportunities awarded to artists/companies identifying as DDN			
Selection processes are made more equitable to prevent unconscious bias and ensure fair process for each applicant while meeting positive inclusion targets. Learning from Discover 2026 to inform a review of Blueprint and Annual Programme selection processes in 2027.	A Development Producer and Without Walls Associate attend all stages of selection meetings, particularly the Annual Programme, to review processes for EDI considerations. Minimum 15% representation per priority group maintained across all selection panels. If not met, rationale is logged and reported to the Chief Executive and Board.	Rolling 2026-2027, with 2026 Blueprint open call review in August 2026 and 2027 Annual Programme open call review in January 2027	Head of Programme
Feedback provided to shortlisted applicants from target groups across all programmes and signposting to further opportunities and/or support	Feedback one-to-ones offered to 100% of applicants from target groups (not on request)	Rolling 2026-2027	Head of Programme
Partner with one organisation to deliver a Creative Lab for DDN artists in 2026.	Partnership Creative Lab for DDN artists delivered	Target date for Lab: January 2027	Head of Programme
Formalise and deliver the Without Walls partnership with Unlimited, supporting a disabled-led R&D commission through a matched-funding Partnership Award.	MOU agreed and signed. Unlimited Partnership Award open call live by autumn 2026. Award made to a disabled-led project by March 2027. Without Walls participates fully in the selection process including attending the	MOU signed June 2026. Award made March 2027.	Head of Programme

	final panel.		
Pilot a GM-led Festivals Associate Network Membership model, providing a touring subsidy framework to enable Mela and culturally specific outdoor festivals to programme Without Walls work and participate in the network.	Pilot launched with a minimum of two participating festivals in 2026-27. Each participating festival programmes at least one Without Walls show. Without Walls provides a touring subsidy of up to £2,500 per festival. Pilot reviewed in June 2028, with findings informing future network development and planning.	Pilot launched autumn 2026. Participating festivals confirmed by December 2026. Review completed June 2028.	Head of Festival Partnerships
One Mela or Carnival co-commission is identified every two years and supported by the Without Walls Creation and Touring programme.	Discussed by AD and included in Artistic Policy	By October 2026 Artistic Directorate Business Meeting	Head of Programme

## 5. Professional and Creative Development: Building Meaningful Pathways

Without Walls will strengthen progression pathways for marginalised and underrepresented creatives and cultural professionals, with a strategy rooted in the current diversity of the sector and the structural barriers that prevent fair inclusion in outdoor arts.

Without Walls has repositioned Discover as an access-led programme that strengthens participation and creative progression in outdoor arts. Prioritising depth of impact over breadth of reach, its aim is to enable participation for three target groups: Global Majority (GM) communities, with a particular focus on Black artists; Working Class and Lower Socio-Economic (WC/LSE) communities; and Deaf, Disabled and Neurodivergent (DDN) communities. The 2026 programme is the first year of the redesigned model.

The Associates Programme is Without Walls' professional leadership development pathway. In 2027-28, the programme will support one WC/LSE Associate through a deeply collaborative and co-designed placement focused on strengthening leadership confidence, skills and influence. The Associate will define their leadership ambitions, development gaps and personal goals at the outset, and the placement will be structured to support measurable growth in these areas. The programme will align with Without Walls' commitment to social transformation by increasing WC/LSE representation in leadership, decision-making and sector influence within outdoor arts.

<b>Discover</b>			
<b>Action</b>	<b>Success Metrics</b>	<b>Review Deadline</b>	<b>Accountable</b>
Support marginalised creatives seeking to take their practice into outdoor arts, focusing on Black, DDN and WC/LSE artists in 2026-2027 through Discover	90% participants identify as GM, WC/LSE, or DDN	Discover call out and participant selection by June 2026	Head of Programme
	Black and WC/LSE participation to be 35% of this, each, and tracked and reported separately as new target groups		
Discover operates according to a Theory of Change framework aligned with the EDI Action Plan	Reformatted Discover structure for 2026, building on learnings of the programme review completed in March 2026	April 2026	Head of Programme

Deliver Discover 2026 as a redesigned programme with a reduced cohort of 8 participants, prioritising depth of impact over breadth of reach	Minimum 80% of participants report more knowledge and confidence on the hard skills needed to develop career in outdoor arts	Discover runs July 2026 - October 2026 with festival visit to Freedom (Hull) in September 2026	Head of Programme
	Minimum 80% of participants report increased understanding of outdoor arts pathways and sector structures		
	Minimum 50% of participants apply for further development or sector opportunities within six months of programme completion		
Embed access-first design throughout the residency	Access and support worker provision at participant onboarding stage.	August 2026	Head of Programme
	Access riders sent and returned		
Embed codesigned formative evaluation with cohort	100% of participants complete evaluation process	October 2026	Head of Programme
	Minimum 80% report that evaluation processes felt relevant, reflective and useful to future development.		
Establish longitudinal development of cohorts	Establish a Discover alumni network with digital comms provided and in-person meet-ups held	November 2026	Head of Programme
	Deliver a six and twelve month check in with each cohort member post residency		

<b>Associate</b>			
<b>Action</b>	<b>Success Metrics</b>	<b>Review Deadline</b>	<b>Accountable</b>
Support one Associate placement per year in partnership with a network organisation.	2026-27 Associate based at Super Culture and is working at the intersection of creative health, inclusion and outdoor arts, engaging underrepresented communities including GM, neurodivergent and faith communities across Weston and North Somerset. The placement runs to February 2027 and is guided by a co-created workplan agreed between the Associate, Super Culture and Without Walls	Evaluation completed by January 2027	Head of Programme
Ensure Associate is equipped for a clearly defined next career step	At completion, Associate identifies readiness for clearly defined next career step	February 2027	Head of Programme
Ensure future Associate placement has meaningful engagement with and experience of leadership activity	Develop a Leadership Development Plan template to identify key personal attributes (i.e leadership identity and aspirations; areas of low confidence; target development areas; desired career progression route)	Completed by December 2026	Head of Programme
Confirm programme design and priority focus for the 2027-28 placement	Programme design for 2027-28 placement reviewed and confirmed, including priority focus, host organisation and structured elements. Review to be completed ahead of recruitment launch.	Programme design confirmed December 2026. Recruitment launches February 2027.	Head of Programme
Conduct longitudinal progression follow-up to assess career trajectory	Associate's progression is tracked at six, 12 and 24 months following completion, using qualitative measures that capture how the	Rolling	Head of Programme

	programme has equipped participants with skills, networks and confidence for their career development. Geographic context and local opportunities are considered as part of this.		
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## 6. Recruitment, Retention and Workforce Culture: Creating Intentional, Inclusive Cultures

Without Walls will proactively create and endorse workforce cultures that facilitate the equitable recruitment, retention, progression and care of diverse staff.

Action	Success Metrics	Review Deadline	Accountable
Conduct workforce audit, noting seniority demographics, pay scales and retention across marginalised workers	Ensure 85% of network partners complete anonymised diversity audit	Audit by October 2027, summary and SMART actions by December 2027	Chief Executive
	Complete a review of the audit with SMART actions for improving EDI within the staff team		
Deliver inclusive workplace policy and culture training for Senior Management Team (SMT), Board and network partners	70% of attendees report the training was useful and gave them confidence to create safe and inclusive cultures at work	November 2026	Chief Executive
	People with lived experience of marginalisation regularly contribute to or lead discussions and report feeling heard and valued		
Assess current workplace culture and accessibility provision, noting staff satisfaction and learnings	Commission external audit of access and inclusive culture at Without Walls	December 2026	Chief Executive
Implementation of access riders for all staff	100% of staff have received optional access riders	September 2026	Operations Manager
Professional development training pathways provided for non-senior staff	At least two professional development opportunities offered to a minimum of three non-senior staff members each year	Completed September 2026 and September 2027	Chief Executive

## 7. Monitoring And Evaluation: Learning-Led Impact

Without Walls will move from retrospective and activity-based evaluation to a learning-led, theory-informed monitoring framework rooted in social transformation.

All activity will be guided by the EDI principle that Without Walls is committed to social impact for marginalised communities and actively pursues actions that lead to individual and social transformation. This transformation is defined as more frequent and more meaningful participation in outdoor arts as creators, collaborators and leaders.

Monitoring will respond to the current socio-political climate and sector evidence regarding exclusion of Global Majority (GM) communities, Working Class and Lower Socio-Economic (WC/LSE) communities, and Deaf, Disabled and Neurodivergent (DDN) communities. Data will be used not only to evidence activity, but to inform strategic decision making and structural change.

Action	Success Metrics	Review Deadline	Accountable
Develop and implement Theory of Change frameworks for all strategic initiatives and creative development projects rooted in social transformation and equitable participation.	Theory of Change frameworks approved by Senior Management Team (SMT) at commencement of programme design	Reviewed for effectiveness one month after each activity completes: Discover: November 2026 Associates: Spring 2027 Blueprint: September 2027	Head of Programme
Replace existing EDI monitoring forms with a newly developed monitoring form and mandate its use across all programmes and activity. Changes will include: WC/LSE data collected Disaggregated GM data collected Trans+ identification data collected	100% of monitored activity use universal monitoring form	Universal monitoring form used from September 2026	Head of Programme / Operations Manager

Revised DDN questions implemented			
Introduce longitudinal tracking across programmes including: Discover participants, Blueprint Artists, Associates Placements, Workforce, Network and Governance representation	Longitudinal tracking initiated for Discover, Associates, and Blueprint pathways	Rolling	Head of Programme
Embed co-created evaluation practices across strategic programmes	100% of evaluations conducted across strategic initiatives and Blueprint are co-designed with participants	Discover: October 2026 Associates: February 2027 Blueprint: March 2027	Head of Programme
Replace efficacy-based retroactive survey questions with strategy-led formative evaluation frameworks	100% of evaluations are informed by their corresponding Theory of Change frameworks	Discover: October 2026 Associates: February 2027 Blueprint: March 2027	Head of Programme
	Minimum 80% of participants report that evaluation processes felt relevant, reflective and useful to future development		
Introduce qualitative impact measures including narrative case studies and reflective interviews	Records logged of a variety of qualitative data gathering methods undertaken across strategic initiatives and Blueprint	Discover: October 2026 and October 2027. Associates (current placement): February 2027. Blueprint: March 2027 and March 2028.	Head of Programme