

## Companion Timeline & Appendix: EDI Work at the Crafts Council (2020–2025)

### Timeline of Key Phases

#### Phase 1: Before June 2020 – Growing Awareness

- Our partnership with Dr Karen Patel of Birmingham City University revealed exclusion and bias in the craft sector.
- Crafts Council conducted anti-racism and white fragility training for all staff with Shades of Noir.

Challenge: Early progress not visible to external audiences.

#### Phase 2: June 2020 – A Catalyst for Action

- Crafts Council posts a black square on our online socials to mark what was then known as #BlackoutTuesday which was felt by many to be a performative act and provoked criticism from Black makers in the sector.
- An online forum “Tackling Racism” was convened with our maker community.

Achievement: Start of a dialogue that led to formation of Global Majority Group.

#### Phase 3: 2020–21 – Formation of the Equity Advisory Council (EAC)

- A Global Majority Group was formed; which was subsequently renamed the Equity Advisory Council (EAC).
- A Relationship Manager was appointed.
- A Terms of Reference document and mission was developed.

Lesson: Crafts Council underestimated the emotional labour and structural reform required to enable effective and consistent organisational change and progress.

#### Phase 4: 2021–22 – EAC Cycle 1

- EAC members contributed to external research, *Disrupting the Craft Canon*, in partnership with Glasgow Caledonian University.
- Clore fellow Omeima Mudawi-Rawlings conducted research on barriers to access of Crafts Council directory for makers who are deaf or hearing impaired.
- *Making Changes in Craft* report (authored by Dr Karen Patel) was published by Birmingham City University. This project, in collaboration with Crafts Council, made a series of recommendations to address racism within the craft sector.
- The development of *Toolkit for Change*, a sector wide resource for embedding EDI within craft organisations, created in partnership with EAC members was published.

Challenge: Despite significant achievements, role clarity and decision-making power of EAC was not fully resolved leading to growing concerns.

#### Phase 5: 2022–23 – EAC Cycle 2 & Organisational Change

- Cycle 2 of the EAC was established with refreshed membership and clearer objectives.
- Meetings aligned with Board cycles; EAC alumna, Rose Sinclair joined the Board.

- Paul Hamlyn Foundation bid submitted to support work of CC & EAC (ultimately rejected).
- Internal turbulence: Departure of the then Executive Director and Chair, significant funding cuts and financial challenges, organisational restructure undertaken.

Lesson: EDI work requires integration into core functions, not siloed roles. Despite promoting the Toolkit for Change, there was a missed opportunity to holistically embed the toolkit for change internally in order to promote greater awareness.

#### Phase 6: February 2024 – Withdrawal of Labour

- Following the departure of the Equity and Inclusion Manager, EAC representatives met together formally, a discussion which led to the withdrawal of their labour.
- EAC representatives shared a letter with Crafts Council Board members highlighting structural barriers, limited support, and frustration over lack of tangible progress.
- EAC members were subsequently paid to contribute to a series of consultation activities, including interviews, reading reports, attending and contributing to an all-staff EDI focused away day.

Result: A facilitated process of structured interviews, summaries and recommendations exchanged between staff and EAC over 6 months to seek resolution and learnings.

#### Phase 7: Spring 2025 – Implementing Lessons Learned

- Equality Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Committee established with internal and external membership.
- Further consultation, reflection and research conducted internally at Crafts Council, and with key stakeholders to inform the development of a new EDI strategy and plan.
- New EDI Strategy (2025–27) written and launched, with supporting action plan
- Commitments to transparency, representation, training, and systemic change embedded within the plan, with a focus on centring equality, diversity and inclusion within all activity.
- Collect Open bursaries: 3 bursaries launched to support global majority makers from lower socio-economic backgrounds to participate in Collect Open, an initiative initially championed by Imogen Bright-Moon, a member of the Equity Advisory Council
- A revised associate model is developed to ensure a consistent, transparent and fair approach to engaging external expertise
- Two former members of the EAC join the newly established Collection Advisory Committee.

#### Appendix: Supporting Documents & Milestones

- Making Changes in Craft Report (2021) – by Dr Karen Patel
- Disrupting the Craft Canon (2022–23) – Collaborative research project
- Clore Fellow Report – by Omeima Mudawi-Rowlings
- EDI Strategy: With Heart and Humility (2025–2027)
- EDI Action plan