

## **Gender Split of directors in NPOS**

In autumn 2017 SDUK commissioned researcher Corinne Furness to investigate the gender split of directors being employed to direct productions in arts council funded venues. In the proceeding months there had been a great deal of talk in the media, and on social media about the gender imbalance in theatre. SDUK membership is made up of 54% women working in all sectors of the industry and at all levels. This statistic correlates with the UK Theatre workforce review with a gender split (across the workforce in general) made up of 56% Women.

With a gender split within the workforce which roughly correlates to the gender split of the national demographic, it should follow that the gender split of those being employed to direct productions within a building should also be roughly 50 / 50.

The report gathered publically available data from almost 40 theatres currently supported by Arts Council England. The report concentrated on producing houses, rather than touring companies predominantly because there are traditionally more opportunities for freelancers to direct within a building rather than a touring company. The report has only considered public productions, and has not included director led participatory work and community engagement. The report includes productions directed by artistic and associate directors. We have only included produced productions rather than work a theatre is receiving.

The theatres selected cover a broad range of producing models, however we have not included certain theatres such as Soho Theatre and the Arcola where their engagement with emerging companies means it is harder to analyse the data with any accuracy.

The research took in 12 months of productions from Autumn 2016 – Summer 2017. Twelve months felt like a reasonable window of time to analyse, however we are aware that there are some theatres with a very small amount of slots for produced work within a year long programme, and that this data is sometimes too small to give a fair representation. We are therefore publishing the raw data in full, in order to be completely transparent about how many productions were included.

**stage**  
**directors**  
**uk**

On the findings Executive Director of SDUK, Thomas Hescott, says

“Whilst directors make up only a small percentage of a theatre’s workforce they also act as gatekeepers, with responsibility for casting and recruitment of creative teams, as well as a large say in the content of a season. For theatres to be representative of the audience they serve it is essential that the demographic of directors being employed within a theatre matches the demographics of people living in the UK.

We are publishing these statistics in order to provoke discussion, highlight inequalities, and most of all to start a dialogue with theatres. We welcome recent initiatives such as the RSC’s all women directors season in 2018. SDUK will support, and engage with any theatre looking to create a more diverse workforce of directors within their organisation”.

SDUK chair Kate Saxon says

“This report is a sobering read and shows we’ve a long way to go to achieve parity for female directors in the UK theatre industry. I hope this will provoke useful discussions with Artistic Directors, on how they can seek out and employ a more representative percentage of women directors and also, on how we freelancers present our ideas and pitch for the work.”

**Theatres with more than a 70 / 30 % weighting towards male directors**

• Almeida	71.4%
• Bristol Old Vic	78%
• Chichester Festival Theatre	80%
• Hull Truck	100%
• Liverpool	78%
• Nottingham Playhouse	70%
• Oldham	100%
• Young Vic	83.3%
• Curve	71%
• Sheffield	71%

**Theatres with an equal (or near equal) gender split**

• Oxford Playhouse	50 / 50
• RSC	50 / 50
• Watermill Theatre	50 / 50
• Royal Court	56 / 44 (weighted towards male directors)
• Nuffield	50 / 50
• York	45 / 55 (weighted towards female directors)
• Royal Exchange	45 / 55 (weighted towards female directors)
• Donmar	43 / 57 (weighted towards female directors)

**In addition to this Derby Theatre employed 60% female directors, the New Vic employed 67% female directors and the Theatre Royal Stratford East 75% female directors.**