



21 July 2025

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Action Plan 2025-2028

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Upland Arts Development CIC (referred to as Upland below) is a membership and arts development organisation which provides a network of learning and sharing, a range of creative development opportunities and support services to professional visual artists and creative practitioners across a large rural area in the South West of Scotland. Upland aims to inspire and engage with priority audiences to understand, celebrate, participate in and be supportive of visual art and craft practice. In recent years, Upland has developed projects focussed on education and providing routes into art for young people in Dumfries and Galloway.

1.2 Upland is funded by public bodies and charitable trusts. Upland currently has some 170 members, who are practising artists and makers based in or with a strong connection to Dumfries & Galloway. It is a small organisation with 5 part-time members of staff who deliver a wide range of events, projects and programmes in Dumfries and Galloway. The salaried staff are supported by a board of trustees, which include volunteers from the membership and others with a commitment to developing visual art activity in the region. Upland has identified three key areas for development that it will be the focus for the next three years (2025-2028). These are considered realistic and appropriate to the size of organisation and will be reviewed and developed as resources allow.

2.0 Dumfries and Galloway

2.1 Upland operates within the local authority area of Dumfries and Galloway Council, an area of 6,426km², and is the third largest Council area in Scotland. Dumfries and Galloway is largely rural with no large, urban centres. The area consists of the main town of Dumfries (estimated population 33,280¹) and stretches from Stranraer in the west to Langholm in the east, a distance of some 112 miles. The area consists of a largely dispersed rural population with a low population density (60 people per square mile compared with a Scottish average of 168). The characteristics of the area represents challenges of geographical scale and limited infrastructure in the region as well as opportunities presented by rural landscapes and natural resources.

2.2 At 2021, Dumfries and Galloway had a population of some 148,790 with some 26.3% of the population over 65. This represents an age demographic in Dumfries and Galloway higher than the national average. The average age of the population is 46 compared with 42 in Scotland. Some 24.1% of the population are 24 and under. The most recent census data shows that the population predominantly identifies as white British.

¹ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dumfries#Demographics>

3.0 Draft Strategic Plan, Mission Statement and Relevant Objectives

3.1 Upland has a new business plan for the period 2025-28. In summary, the vision, mission statement, and relevant values, aims and outcomes are set out in the following section.

Vision

3.2 Creating a sustainable, innovative and inclusive visual arts and crafts sector in Dumfries and Galloway

Mission

3.3 To make our vision a reality Upland will:

- Provide leadership in the visual art & craft sector regionally, collaborating with the cultural sector across Dumfries and Galloway and beyond;
- Raise the profile of the visual art and craft sector of our rural area in a national and international context and build meaningful partnerships to support this;
- Listen to local visual artists and makers and respond by providing relevant support and act as a collective voice to advocate on their behalf;
- Support the engagement of a wide diversity of audiences in visual art and craft and initiate opportunities that promote inclusive, meaningful participation;
- Produce and facilitate ambitious creative projects that are innovative and experimental in approach.

Values

3.4 Inclusivity – We believe that creative experiences and opportunities should be open and accessible to everyone. Our projects are created with communities and participants so we can better embed their voices in the development of our programme. We work to build partnerships to help us reach groups who are not currently involved and help us improve our provision.

3.5 Aims

- To inspire and engage a diverse range of people to celebrate, participate in and be supportive of visual art and craft practice;

3.6 Outcomes For Upland

- A wider diversity of people on the Board and within the membership including young people and others who face barriers to participation;
- Recognised as a key contributor to the local economy and development of creative businesses;
- Better placed to be responsive and flexible to the needs of our partners and communities;
- Seen as an approachable organisation making us better placed to deliver accessible projects which consider equality, diversity and inclusion and barriers to participation, especially with regards to rural isolation.

3.7 Uplands current Equality and Diversity and Dignity at Work Policy was developed in 2018 and is available on the web site [here](#).

It is proposed to review and update this policy. The staff handbook and associated policies have been updated and will be regularly reviewed.

3.8 Upland strives to be an advocate of equality and diversity for all of our funders, communities, members, partners and participants and will work hard to ensure all sections of the community are included. All those we engage with have a right to equal treatment and Upland will not tolerate unfair or unlawful discrimination on the grounds of any “protected characteristic”, except for those situations as permitted in under current legislation.

3.9 The characteristics, which are considered “protected” under the Equality Act 2010, are as follows:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment (although Upland will widen this definition to all transgender people)
- Race / ethnicity
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Marriage and civil partnership

3.10 Upland is committed to creating recruitment processes, a work environment and service delivery which is free of harassment and bullying, where everyone is treated with dignity and respect. Upland will analyse the demographic profile of its members and will make efforts to:

- Reach under-represented or hard to reach groups such as disabled people, ethnic minority people, older people, people of faith etc.
- Remove barriers to participation for example for those on low income or with parenting or caring responsibilities.

3.11 Creative Scotland outlines the principles of equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) which are about creating fairness and access to culture. It is also about creating the conditions for excellent art to be produced. Equality is about removing barriers, and diversity and supporting and reflecting different cultures within Scotland, enabling all artistic and creative voices to be heard. Inclusion is about creating opportunities for people to work in, engage with, participate in, and experience arts and creativity throughout the country.

3.12 Taking our lead from Creative Scotland, this EDI Action Plan will initially focus on three of the legally defined protected characteristics as outlined in the Equality Act 2010 (see below). In addition, Creative Scotland acknowledges the fundamental importance of art to health and wellbeing, as well as the impact that wider socio-economic issues can have to outcomes including poverty, crime, rural isolation, low economic activity/unemployment and poor educational attainment.

4.0 Current Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis

4.1 The following table represents Uplands current SWOT analysis as an organisation and board. It will require to be reviewed and updated following the collection and analysis of detailed equalities data from our members and participants.

Strengths	Weaknesses
Uplands vision and mission clearly state our commitment to equalities outlined in new Business Plan (2025-28)	
Our current major events and projects have equalities issues embedded within them, for example our series of projects aimed at young artists and creatives.	We lack detailed equalities data on our members, participants and online followers.
Work closely with Dumfries and Galloway Council, a major funder of Spring Fling and other funders	We lack confidence and training in the legalities of equalities work and best practice in approaches and terminology
Active membership of artists and creatives who are represented on the Board and who participate in Upland subgroups and open forums to develop projects	We lack detailed understanding of the barriers faced by different marginalised and less visible communities
We have a committed and passionate staff and board	We lack capacity to fully respond to the multiple barriers and inequalities that exist across the arts in Dumfries and Galloway
Actively welcome job and project applications from all	Dumfries and Galloway is an extensive rural area and there are gaps in provision in relation to some communities, particularly in the west and Stranraer. Our networks in this area and with more rural communities could be stronger.
We offer flexible working conditions for all staff and provide the necessary training	Short term funding and short-term contracts leads to staff turnover
We pay the Living Wage to all staff and are seeking accreditation. We pay recommended rates to any freelance artists and project workers we appoint.	The Board lacks diversity and there is limited representation from young people.
Opportunities	Threats
Review and evaluate previous year's work in relation to equality, diversity and inclusiveness	Lack of confidence in legal context limits our action.
Adjust programmes and projects to better target priority communities following evaluation of EDI data	Stretched time and resources, not being able to adequately factor in EDI work.
Scope to target underrepresented communities in the west of Dumfries and Galloway and develop links and strategic partnerships with other organisations	Short term funding streams and insecurities
Better target our projects and programmes for young people, and develop further engagement with secondary schools	
Further develop our digital approaches and review and develop our web sites to make more accessible.	
Improve the diversity of people on the Board and within the membership including young people and others who face barriers to participation. Seek to recruit board member with HR background	
Develop appropriate equalities training for board and staff	
Include a budget line into multiyear funding applications to deliver EDI Action Plan	

5.0 Key Aims and Objectives for 2025-2028

5.1 Projects and Programmes

Upland will:

- a) Provide events, programmes, consultations, communications, and programmes that are relevant and accessible to all.
- b) Develop programme of arts and projects in the west of Dumfries and Galloway to create more extensive geographical engagement and outreach to rural communities.
- c) Increase young people's (12-30) engagement with the arts, by continuing to roll out existing arts projects and programmes with secondary schools and seek to engage with further secondary schools in Dumfries and Galloway. Specifically, we will increase focus on the Stranraer area. However, it should be noted that the existing membership of Upland is not extensive in this area and will therefore be dependent on developing strategic local partnerships.

5.2 Performance and Accountability

Upland will:

- a) Update our existing equalities monitoring form and circulate this to all board members, staff and members. Seek training and support to give us the confidence in improving how we collect, analyse and apply EDI data in our organisational decision making, events and programming. Based on this data we will identify gaps in provision and create positive actions to redress inequalities, subject to the necessary resources.
- b) Identify an appropriate equalities trainer to facilitate a training session/workshop for staff/board that will increase confidence in the legal context of equalities and help inform the priority areas of work needed to strengthen organisational practice and policies.
- c) Ensure that we are accountable to our funders, members and communities we serve, and that the organisation meets its duties in respect of EDI. We have appointed a designated board member as an EDI champion to take an overview of the implementation of this policy and to work with staff to review and update the EDI Action Plan and report its implementation to the board. It is expected that all our staff and board will support delivery of the Action Plan and engage with EDI issues, as they arise within their daily role.

5.3 Upland has identified three key areas for development that we will focus on over the next three years in the period 2025-2028. We believe that these are realistic and appropriate for the size of organisation. These are:

- Age (Youth 12-30 age group)
- Disability
- Socio-economic barriers including geographical coverage and outreach to rural communities

They are discussed further and set out in the Action Plan at section 7.0.

6.0 Risk Analysis

6.1 The following table assess risk in relation to the proposed EDI Action Plan.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Score	Action Required to Mitigate Risk
Risk 1 - To continue to collate EDI information and identify action to redress identified inequalities. Dumfries and Galloway is an extensive rural area with limited Upland membership in the west.				
Risk 1	3	4	12	Regularly review by Creative Director every 3 - 6 months and by the Board every 6 -12 months.
Risk 2 - Stretched time and resources result in inability to adequately factor in EDI work. To continue to develop good HR policies and practices, and staff training, to reduce the risk of employment discrimination given a small staff team and limited resources.				
Risk 2	4	3	12	Identify an appropriate equalities trainer to facilitate a training session/workshop for staff/board and review and update existing policies as required. An EDI champion has been appointed from the Upland board members.
Risk 3 - Upland is funded by public bodies and charitable trusts and this results in short term funding streams and insecurities.				
Risk 3	3	5	15	To seek regular funding from Creative Scotland and explore other funding streams and donations in order to resource and implement the EDI Action Plan over a 3-year period.
Risk 4 – Overworked staff or loss of key staff				
Risk 4	2	4	8	Ensure sufficient funding provision to maintain staff for projects and skills development and training.
Risk 5 – Failure to engage priority audiences (artists, young people & local communities)				
Risk 5	2	4	8	Ensure capacity to deliver all elements of the project fully by utilising existing networks and partnerships to grow and connect. Build the right partnerships.

Note - As a guide, risk factor scores of:

5 to 10 are acceptable low level risks to the organisation, but caution is still required to ensure they do not escalate.

10 to 15 are medium level risks requiring attention, but they are not critical. Action is required to stop the likelihood element.

15 to 25 are high level risks requiring immediate attention.

7.0 DRAFT EQUALITY, DIVERSITY and INCLUSION ACTION PLAN 2025 - 2028

Upland has identified three key areas for development that we will focus on over the next three years in the period 2025-2028. We believe that these are realistic and appropriate for the size of organisation. These are:

- Age (Youth 12-30 age group)
- Disability
- Socio-economic barriers including geographical coverage and outreach to rural communities.

The Action Plan is set out in relation to the objectives identified in the previous section. Some of these initiatives are currently being developed, but to fully implement them are dependent on future core funding from Creative Scotland. As a consequence, 2024 has been assumed as year 1 of a 3-year delivery plan for the period 2024 to 2026. Relevant feedback on this draft Action Plan from Creative Scotland will be factored in.

Year 1 - 2025/26	Task	Date	Lead	Measures of Success	Actual Performance
General	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and review SWOT analysis • EDI survey of staff, board, members and participants • Appropriate training for staff and board • Standing item on board agenda • Review and update the following policies: Staff Handbook, Equality and Diversity and Dignity at Work Policy and Maternity Policy • Ensure annual budget to roll out EDI programme, analysis and training 	2025/26	Upland Board Creative Director	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete SWOT analysis & greater understanding • Staff training planned, undertaken and greater informed staff and board • Regular discussion • Funds allocated to EDI Actions 	To be assessed and measured on a regular basis
Age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EDI survey – audience and members survey to gather data • Develop and strengthen the role of Youth & Engagement Coordinator • Continue to develop series of projects with and for young people – Create, 	2025/26	Upland Board Creative Director Events & Exhibitions Development Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EDI survey - audience and members survey to gather data, evaluate and adjust 	

	<p>ROAM, Modern Makers and Visual Art Summer Studios.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highlight our youth programmes clearly through our promotions and online presence. • Develop our ROAM (Space) committee – a group of emerging artists currently working with Upland to plan a programme of activities for themselves and their peers, creating more opportunities locally for emerging contemporary artists. • Continue to develop existing programme with secondary and primary schools across the region and actively build relationships with schools not yet reached. • Actively build partnerships with other organisations who support young people outwith the school setting and those who face barriers to participation • Continue to stay connected and collaborate with our local networks, sharing best practice and signposting to the range of youth work in the region, seeking new ways to amplify opportunities and reach more young people. 			<p>programmes as necessary.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A strong youth programme is delivered which is cocreated with young people leading to more young people taking part in projects and joining Upland as members. 	
Disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EDI survey – board, audience and members survey to gather data • Introduce simplified documents for project applications, alternative methods for submission e.g audio/visual and promotional materials • Accessible support sessions for applicants and participants 	2025/26	Upland Board Creative Director Events & Exhibitions Development Manager		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and develop existing measures (Spring Fling) – access information in brochure and on website Review and develop Upland website to ensure greater accessibility for all Further develop project work with partners which creates opportunities for young people who face barriers to participation Provide Autism and neurodivergent training for staff 				
Socio-economic barriers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EDI survey - audience and members survey to gather data Consult with ROAM (Space) Committee and identify barriers to participation Establish links, strategic partnerships and consult with rural communities and those in the west of the region Build in access costs to projects costs Continue to offer free projects, fairly paid opportunities and financial bursaries to aid participation Reach out to community groups, building partnerships to strengthen provision in isolated areas and/or areas of multiple deprivation 	2025/26	Upland Board Creative Director Events & Exhibitions Development Manager		
Year 2-2026/27	Task	Date	Lead	Measures of Success	Actual Performance
General	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and act on SWOT analysis Review EDI Action plan and evaluate actions Review and refresh staff and board training Standing item on board agenda Ensure annual budget to roll out EDI programme, analysis and training 	2026/27	Upland Board Creative Director Events & Exhibitions Development Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review SWOT analysis & its outcomes in relation to programme development and tasks Staff training planned, undertaken 	To be assessed and measured on a regular basis

				<p>and greater informed staff and board</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular discussion • Funds allocated to EDI Actions 	
Age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review survey data and further develop work streams • Consult with youth focus group made up of programme participants. 	2026/27	Upland Board Creative Director Events & Exhibitions Development Manager		
Disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commit to making recruitment more accessible e.g. audio described or large print • Provide more accessible exhibition interpretation (e.g. visual interpretation (VI) or British Sign Language (BSL)) • Consider ways to offer better mobility assistance for Spring Fling. • Explore the potential of offering support for visitors with sensory needs. 	2026/27	Upland Board Creative Director Events & Exhibitions Development Manager		
Socio-economic barriers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create further bursaries for young and emerging artists • Work with our regional partners to explore how we could offer creative internships, across different creative organisations. • Further develop strategic partnerships with rural communities and communities in the west of the region 	2026/27	Upland Board Creative Director Events & Exhibitions Development Manager		
Year 3-2027/28	Task	Date	Lead	Measures of Success	Actual Performance

General	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and act on SWOT analysis • Review EDI Action plan and evaluate actions • Review and refresh staff and board training • Standing item on board agenda • Ensure annual budget to roll out EDI programme, analysis and training 	2027	Upland Board Creative Director Events & Exhibitions Development Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review SWOT analysis & its outcomes in relation to programme development and tasks • Staff training planned, undertaken and greater informed staff and board • Regular discussion • Funds allocated to EDI Actions 	To be assessed and measured on a regular basis
Age	Review and develop actions from 2025 & 2026	2027	Upland Board Creative Director Events & Exhibitions Development Manager		
Disability	Review and develop actions from 2025 & 2026	2027	Upland Board Creative Director Events & Exhibitions Development Manager		
Socio-economic barriers	Review and develop actions from 2025 & 2026	2027	Upland Board Creative Director Events & Exhibitions Development Manager		

Date - Updated and reviewed 21 July 2025

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