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PARENTS IN PERFORMING ARTS PUBLISHES INTERIM RESEARCH PROJECT FINDINGS

*Parents in Performing Arts (PIPA), a Consortium of 18 leading Industry organisations, led by *The Old Vic*, announces the preliminary findings of their Best Practice Research Project. Conducted in partnership with 15 leading UK theatre organisations and *The Royal Central School of Speech and Drama*, the research project is funded by *The Arts Council of England*, *Creative Scotland*, *The Royal Central School of Speech and Drama*, *Actors' Children's Trust*, *The Family Arts Campaign* and *UK Theatre*.*

The initial findings, based on a UK wide survey with 966 respondents working in the theatre sector, as well as follow-up interviews and focus groups conducted with the 15 partner theatre organisations, confirm that the burden of childcare falls disproportionately on women. It also reveals that self-employed people are significantly disadvantaged by current provisions for childcare support.

According to the survey 81% of self-employed people and 57% of employed people reported that they have turned down work as a result of a caring responsibility. Further, 66% of survey respondents reported changing their jobs as a consequence of becoming parents.

It also reveals that there is a tacit working culture in theatres that disadvantages people with caring responsibilities and moreover that caring responsibilities that are not for dependent children are invisible to employers.

'Our interim findings demonstrate the depth and complexity of the challenges faced both by theatre workers with caring responsibilities and their employers. We have identified both employment and career consequences of caring and aspects of the long-established working culture of theatres that actively disadvantage and exclude parents and those with other caring responsibilities. We have now begun the next phase of the research with some extremely promising discussions with the senior managements of theatre companies. We look forward to supporting them to trial solutions to the challenges we have identified.' Dr Tom Cornford, *The Royal Central School of Speech and Drama*

*'The extraordinary advancement of the PIPA campaign over the last year has been supported by all of us at *The Old Vic*. We have joined with other members of the industry in this initial best practice research project, the findings of which have already revealed some practical steps that we can all trial to improve our family friendly employment*

practices. We are committed to finding solutions to effect lasting change. If we don't, we'll miss out on the pool of talent out there who need us to open the gateway to ensure they can work in our industry.'

Kate Varah, Executive Director, The Old Vic

On 14th December 2016, Phase 2 of the research initiative began with the 15 theatre organisations meeting at the first Parents In Performing Arts symposium hosted by the Donmar Warehouse. The aim of the event was to identify potential solutions to the challenges highlighted by the research findings, some of which will be trialled over the next 6 months.

'It has been invaluable to spend time with colleagues from across the sector, to explore the challenges and opportunities that people with caring responsibilities face when working within the performing arts industry. It has been fascinating to learn about the many successful best practice processes and policies that already exist, and to learn from one another how these can be more broadly adopted to ensure a consistent approach nationwide. Many of the ideas raised at the recent symposium were surprising simple, easy to implement, and had tangible positive benefits.' Caroline Newall, Director of Artistic Development at the National Theatre of Scotland

The overall aim of the research is to identify barriers facing carers working in the performing arts, and to investigate practical ways of reducing them. The outcome will be a Best Practice Charter to be embedded in the *Family Arts Standards* in conjunction with the *Family and Childcare Trust* as well as other performing arts industry guidelines.

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Notes to editors:

- Established in 2015 by Cassie Raine (Actor), and Anna Ehnold-Danailov (Director), *Parents in Performing Arts* is a grassroots organisation that emerged as a direct result of Cassie and Anna's respective experiences of returning to work after having children. Both recognised that the unique challenges faced by carers in the performing arts industry include long and late working hours, erratic, last minute recruitment practices, regular travel and notoriously low earnings.
- Research participants are: Birmingham Repertory Theatre, Bristol Old Vic, Donmar Warehouse, Dundee Rep Theatre, English Touring Theatre, Liverpool Everyman & Playhouse, Hull Truck Theatre, Mercury Theatre Colchester, National Theatre of Scotland, National Theatre Wales, Northern Stage, Royal Court Theatre, Stellar Quines Theatre Company, Theatre by the Lake and The Old Vic (PIPA lead organisation.)
- *Parents in Performing Arts Consortium* is led by The Old Vic, London and includes Actors' Children's Trust, Belgrade Theatre Coventry, Birmingham Repertory Theatre, Chichester Festival

Theatre, Donmar Warehouse, Dundee Rep Theatre, English Touring Theatre, Equity, Family Arts Campaign, Hull Truck Theatre, ITC, Mercury Theatre Colchester, National Theatre of Scotland, One Dance UK, Spotlight, Stellar Quines Theatre Company and UK Theatre.

- *Parents in Performing Arts* Project Board is Chaired by Kate Varah (Executive Director, The Old Vic) and includes Alastair Coomer (Casting Director, Donmar Warehouse), Cassie Chadderton (Head of UK Theatre and Membership Development), Charlotte Jones (Chief Executive, ITC), Christine Payne (General Secretary, Equity), David Brownlee (Director, Family Arts Campaign), Jane Claire (Executive Producer, English Touring Theatre), Helen Laws (Interim Head of Industry and Artist Support / National Institute of Dance Medicine and Science, One Dance UK), Melinda Burton (Head of HR, The Old Vic), Rachel Tackley (Director, Chichester Festival Theatre), and Trina Jones (General Manager, Birmingham Rep.)
- *The Royal Central School of Speech and Drama* is a higher education conservatoire – a specialist college of the University of London which nurtures creative collaboration. Courses include acting, applied theatre, movement, musical theatre, drama & movement therapy, theatre & live performance, puppetry, scenography, actor & teacher training, voice, technical arts & production, and writing for stage & broadcast media. With over 60 academic staff, together with visiting artists and lecturers, Central has the largest grouping of drama/theatre/performance specialists in the UK, an active research culture and is a hub for the theatre and performance industries.
- *Parents in Performing Arts* campaigns for equal opportunities and access for parents and carers working in the performing arts. It aims to achieve sustainable change in attitudes and practices in order to attract, support and retain a more diverse and flexible workforce. A full list of PIPA's aims and objectives can be found at <http://www.pipacampaign.com/manifesto/>