



20th Anniversary

Media Information Pack



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About Tender

Tender Arts and Education is a nationwide charity harnessing the power of drama and the arts to educate children, young people and adults about healthy relationships. We partner with a variety of organisations from primary schools to global businesses to teach respect, kindness and equality and help prevent domestic abuse and sexual violence.

Background

Launched in 2003, Tender was founded by Tamsin Larby whose own experience in the theatre revealed how performance could be utilised to educate. Tamsin therefore built a charity that works creatively with young people to engage them in the prevention of abuse, and the promotion of healthy, equal relationships.

Enlisting the support of current CEO Susie McDonald, Tamsin developed and launched five primary school projects in London. Now in our 20th year, Tender delivers more than 300 projects, training sessions and events each year, reaching more than 32,000 young people and over 3,600 adults.

How we work

Tender harnesses the power of drama and the arts to support children, young people and adults to build healthy relationships based on equality and respect – and prevent the domestic abuse and sexual violence that negatively impacts so many lives.

Our approach is safe, enjoyable, age-appropriate and helps young people ‘rehearse’ for real-life scenarios through script-work, role-play and creative media, like films and art. Young people are encouraged to explore their choices, rights and expectations in relationships and recognise the early warning signs of abuse.



Schools

In primary schools, our workshops and programmes build strong foundations by exploring healthy friendships and family relationships through a variety of drama-based games and activities. This approach is developed further in secondary schools and youth settings, where we deliver a wide range of activities exploring intimate and romantic relationships.

Tender's work ranges from two-day workshops to long term projects, like RE:SET, which supports schools to adapt and reset their existing relationships education. All our projects are directly informed by young people themselves and encourage participants to become ambassadors for positive social change in their peer groups and communities.

Specialist provision

Our dedicated specialist provision team adapt and deliver programmes for specialist settings, ensuring we tailor our methods to reach children and young people of all levels and abilities. We work with the most vulnerable young people in the UK including look-after children, young asylum seekers and those involved in the criminal justice system. One such project is Relationship Goals, an online game designed for young people with mild-moderate special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), created in partnership with 15 young people with SEND and their caregivers.

We provide training, toolkits and resources for adults working with young people including teachers, and social workers, and also work with businesses and organisations to promote diversity, equality and healthy working methods. Our university programme helps staff and students to build and support a safe and inclusive environment that promotes healthy relationships and prevents abuse on campus and further afield.

Impact

Over the past two decades, Tender has reached more than **half a million** young people.

In 2021-22, Tender delivered 283 projects, training sessions and events, reaching more than 32,000 young people and over 3,600 adults. As a result of taking part in Tender projects, 98% of young participants were able to identify at least one early warning sign of sexual and domestic violence, and 98% of adult training participants increased their knowledge of domestic abuse and coercive control.



Susie McDonald CEO



Susie has used theatre for social change for more than 30 years.

Initially working with prisoners to develop confidence and communication skills, she then became an associate member of the National Theatre's Education Department, specialising in interactive theatre for vulnerable and at-risk young people.

Susie set up Tender's Healthy Relationship Programme in 2004 and became CEO in 2010. She has three daughters who she is always encouraging to take on the world and view any challenge as an opportunity, rather than a problem.

Olivia Colman Tender Patron



We are privileged to have Academy Award-winning actress Olivia Colman as our Patron.

Since her role in Paddy Considine's 2011 film *Tyrannosaur* in which she played a survivor of domestic abuse, Colman has been dedicated to the cause.

Olivia joined Tender in 2013 and has worked tirelessly to raise awareness of the issues surrounding domestic abuse and sexual violence. She has played an instrumental role in helping Tender grow and prosper over the last decade.

About our 20th anniversary

October 2023 will mark 20 years since Tender was founded and registered as a charity.

Those 20 years have seen exciting and significant growth within Tender as an organisation, and in society's understanding of domestic and gendered violence. However, there is still so much further to go.

To celebrate the 20 year milestone, Tender has teamed up with the following stars from stage and screen to launch their new Ambassador Scheme.



Aisling Bea is an Irish comedian, actor and writer. She created, wrote and starred in the comedy series *This Way Up* on Channel 4, and in the Netflix drama *Living with Yourself*, and has recently featured in the *Take That* inspired movie, *Greatest Day*.

Amy-Leigh Hickman is an English Actress. She made her television debut as Carmen Howle in the CBBC series *Tracy Beaker Returns*, and appeared as Linzi Bragg in *EastEnders*, before being cast as Nasreen Paracha in the Channel 4 drama *Ackley Bridge*. She also stars in the fourth series of the Netflix drama *You*.

Ben Whishaw is a three-time BAFTA award nominated English actor and producer known for his role as Q in James Bond's *Skyfall*, the voice of Paddington Bear in the *Paddington* movies, and playing the leading role in the BBC's medical drama series *This Is Going To Hurt*.

Jessie Buckley is an academy award nominated and three time BAFTA winning actress, known for her roles in films and television shows including *War and Peace*, *Chernobyl*, *Wild Rose* and *The Lost Daughter*. She was also awarded an Olivier award for her role as Sally Bowles in the theatre revival of *Cabaret*.

Jodie Whittaker is best known for portraying the thirteenth incarnation of the Doctor in the BBC's Doctor Who series, and has previously starred in several television roles including Broadchurch. This year, she is filming a 6-part Australian TV series in Sydney called One Night for Paramount and is currently filming the 3-part second series of the BBC drama Time.

Josh O'Connor is an Emmy and Golden Globe award-winning British actor, best known for portraying a young Charles III in the Netflix drama series The Crown (2019–2020).

Phoebe Waller-Bridge is the creator, head writer, and star of the BBC sitcom Fleabag, which was based on her one-woman show of the same name. She was also showrunner, head writer, and executive producer of the first season of the BBC series Killing Eve.

Priyanga Burford is an actress and writer who has appeared in several British films and television series, including Press, Silent Witness and Industry, The Other Man, Star Wars Episode VIII - The Last Jedi and No Time To Die.

Rebekah Staton is an English actress and narrator. She has starred in Doctor Who, Black Mirror and is the narrator for popular television series Don't Tell The Bride. Rebekah will also feature in the forthcoming BBC drama The Following Events Are Based On A Pack Of Lies.

The ambassadors will support Tender by raising awareness of the charity's work and will help to leverage funds by supporting fundraising campaigns and activities.



Press Release

Tender announces a star-studded line up of new ambassadors to mark its 20th anniversary



Photo: Michael Shelford

Today, Tender, a charity working to prevent domestic abuse and sexual violence in the lives of children and young people, has announced its new celebrity ambassadors to mark their 20th anniversary.

A host of stars from the acting world including Jodie Whittaker, Ben Whishaw and Aisling Bea have joined long-standing patron Olivia Colman as ambassadors for the charity.

This year marks 20 years since Tender was founded and registered as a charity. To celebrate the milestone, Tender has teamed up with stars from stage and screen including Aisling Bea, Amy-Leigh Hickman, Ben Whishaw, Jessie Buckley, Jodie Whittaker, Josh O'Connor, Phoebe Waller-Bridge, Priyanga Burford and Rebekah Staton to launch their new Ambassador Scheme to reach more young people and supporters.

Tender runs drama-based workshops in schools to promote healthy relationships amongst children and young people. Tender's projects enable young people to recognise the early warning signs that a relationship could become abusive: empowering young people to spot unhealthy behaviour early and prevent abuse from escalating.

As Tender ambassadors, they all share the charity's mission of preventing domestic abuse and sexual violence and promoting healthy relationships among young people. They will support Tender by raising awareness of the charity's work and will help to leverage funds by supporting fundraising campaigns and activities. This may include taking part in drama workshops in schools, speaking at fundraising events and supporting the charity on social media.

The new ambassadors were introduced to the charity by award-winning actress and Tender's long term patron, Olivia Colman. Since her role in Paddy Considine's 2011 film 'Tyrannosaur', in which she played a survivor of domestic abuse, Olivia has played an instrumental role in helping Tender grow and this year celebrates her 10th year as patron.

CEO of Tender **Susie McDonald** said, *"We are thrilled to be welcoming our new ambassadors to provide support and drive the charity's work forwards. For 20 years, Tender has worked to prevent domestic abuse and sexual violence in the lives of children and young people and the rates of domestic abuse in the UK remain consistently high. Our innovative, arts-based programmes reach over 30,000 young people aged 8 - 25 years every year and our inspiring new ambassadors will allow us to continue to deliver workshops across London and national hubs, as well as raising awareness of all services available through the charity."*



New ambassador **Aisling Bea** said, *“I’m honoured to be a Tender Ambassador. Olivia brought me into the fore earlier this year and I got to meet the people who do the workshops and see the care and thought they put into what they do. Learning how to have safe and healthy relationships early on in life is something which could literally save your life as an adult. It’s something we do not focus enough on in schools and it’s just as important as Maths and English, no matter what your background. By supporting Tender, by standing with them and working together, we can make a difference in the lives of young children, today and in the future.”*

While **Jodie Whittaker** said, *“Most of us know someone who has experienced an abusive relationship and many of us have felt at a loss as to how to support them, or to understand why it has happened. Tender makes our response a simple one; listen, believe, support. Their work with adults with safeguarding responsibilities enables them to further develop knowledge, support and safeguard young people. By supporting Tender, I know we are working towards helping every child have a safe space, to get the support they may need and teaching them what healthy, happy relationships look like.”*



Photo: @bypip

Tender Patron **Olivia Colman** commented, *“I have been the proud patron of Tender for 10 years! In that time children have grown up - they have become more empowered - to make their own decisions about the relationships they have and to be able to speak out when something doesn’t feel right. I love that Tender’s sole focus is on prevention. Stopping something from ever happening is a big ambition, but an absolute necessity to protect children and young people.”*

To find out more about Tender’s work go to www.tender.org.uk

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Notes to Editors

About Tender

For 20 years Tender has worked to prevent domestic abuse and sexual violence in the lives of children and young people.

Our innovative, arts-based programmes reach over 30,000 young people aged 8 – 25 years every year: preventing them from becoming victims or perpetrators, and supporting them to build healthy, equal relationships which enrich their lives.

Tender is one of the few UK organisations focused predominantly on the prevention of domestic abuse and sexual violence amongst young people. “We use drama, art and media to provide a safe, enjoyable space where children can engage with sensitive topics, “rehearse” for real life scenarios and explore their rights, responsibilities and expectations within relationships. Through our work, we aim to ensure that:

- 1) Children and young people are prepared and empowered to develop and maintain healthy relationships.
- 2) The communities and settings which children and young people inhabit become safe and supportive places.

Find out more at www.tender.org.uk.

Q&A with CEO Susie McDonald



How did Tender begin?

Tender was set up by my good friend Tamsin Larby. While working on productions of the Vagina Monologues, a play by Eve Ensler, Tamsin realised how the play and theatre more generally could motivate and inspire people to end violence and abuse.

She subsequently sought to set up a charity that would work creatively with young people to engage them in the prevention of abuse and the promotion of healthy, equal relationships. In 2003, Tender was born.

Thanks to our five pilot schools, our healthy relationships programmes began in 2004.

What drew you to get involved?

I came on board right at the beginning.

I'd been working as a consultant on a variety of programmes in different settings to enact positive social change. However, during projects relating to sexual violence and abuse, I encountered significant barriers to raising awareness and educating people on support and prevention.

With a background in theatre and outreach, I'd seen first-hand how drama techniques could be used as an effective mechanism to engage people of all ages with more difficult topics. It becomes experiential; techniques as simple as roleplays can reach children and young people in ways traditional lessons can't.

Having collaborated with Tamsin on many occasions, I knew we shared this vision and could develop projects and programmes that captured this cohesion between creativity and the prevention of abuse. From the very start, it's been magic to watch this in action.

How did you become CEO?

When Tamsin decided to step down in 2008, we tried some new directors but no one was the right fit and I could see Tender was starting to fall apart.

As a mother of three young daughters, I didn't think I had the time to take on the role myself. I decided that if I was going to step up, I was going to embed a new, flexible culture, where parents can pick their kids up from school, or ensure they have time for any commitments they have outside of Tender. The aim was that everyone can lead healthy, happy lives in- and outside of work. This remains a key part of the charity today.



What would you say have been the key milestones over the years?

In 2010, we began finding new ways to reach more children and young people. With new staff and expertise, we developed a social franchise model whereby we train other organisations to deliver our healthy relationship programme. We also expanded into different regions of the UK, with permanent staff both delivering and coordinating projects in the area.

Another key development has been our whole school approach, where we work with schools over a longer period of time to embed healthy attitudes and behaviours throughout – achieving real culture change. At first, we struggled to get schools on board but recent progress with safeguarding from Ofsted and the government has helped us drive this forward. Our RE:SET programme, the latest iteration of our whole school approach, is flourishing and will soon expand to more than 100 London schools.

Arts and theatre remain at the heart of what we do, and we've developed several films and animations over the years that have brought me real pride. We invest significant time and resource: Tamsin often returns to coproduce our productions with young people to ensure they represent and respect the realities of young people's lives. The impact they've had among children, adults and young people across the country has been brilliant.

Can you expand on Tender's unique art-based approach?

Relationships and abuse are always tricky topics, especially with children and young people – but there are safe and effective ways to explore them.

Our approach is playful and respectful; through games, characters and storytelling, we explore healthy attitudes and behaviours, and practice positive ways to navigate difficult situations. We don't impress a hierarchy; each project starts with a circle of chairs and facilitators are highly skilled in responding to the specific young people in the room and adapting along the way.

Amongst all ages, characters enable people to think differently, to challenge and explore new behaviours in a safe environment. I've seen young boys with quite misogynist attitudes become passionate about women's rights by the end of a two-day workshop. The change is tangible.



Violence against women and girls remains rampant in our society. What are your hopes for the future?

Tender is all about prevention – and pushing this up the agenda. Responding to abuse is important – but preventing it happening in the first place needs to be a much greater priority. Violence is always a choice, and we need to prevent people from making this choice.

So often, governments like quick wins – but prevention is a long term endeavour; it takes time, resource and commitment. Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) presents an incredible opportunity to instil respect and equality in the next generation – but so far teachers haven't had the time or training to deliver effectively. We often see teachers trying to open debate – but some things are not debatable. Consent is not a debate. Instead, young people need the skills to communicate consent, negotiate situations where they don't want to participate, and know how to ensure consent is given.

If the government is sincere in its goals to end violence against women and girls, it needs to dedicate the funds, training and resources to ensure all schools deliver effective RSHE.

What are you most proud of over the past twenty years?

There have been so many moments when I see a workshop or speak to a young person and I think – wow, we're really making a difference. When our whole team comes together to discuss the breadth and the reach of our work – it's a special moment. The passion our staff have for Tender, their drive to impact real change – it makes it a truly joyful place to be.



Key Statistics

General

Evidence shows that 16-24 year olds are at the **highest risk** of experiencing domestic abuse. ¹

On average, **two women a week** are killed by a current or former partner in England and Wales alone. ²

The risk of serious assault and death is highest for a woman after she leaves an abusive relationship. According to the Femicide Census, **38%** of women killed by their ex-partner from 2009 to 2018 were killed within the first month of separation and **89%** in the first year. ³

Responses to a school-based survey of 1,000 14 – 15 year-olds in England showed that **41%** of girls and **14%** of boys had experienced some form of sexual violence from a partner. ⁴

The social and economic costs of DA are estimated at **£66 billion** in England and Wales in the year 2016-17. £14 billion of this is the cost to the economy arising from lost output due to time off work. ⁵

Relationships and Sex Education (RSE)

Campaigns such as Everyone's Invited have published **50,000** anonymous accounts of sexual violence at UK educational settings.

The End Violence Against Women coalition (EVAW), said its recent research showed that **80%** of girls thought schools needed to do more to support young people's sex and relationships education, and to tackle sexual harassment in schools.

Young people are not learning enough about harmful relationships and how to seek help. Results of research by SafeLives ⁶ shows that:

Only **52%** agree or strongly agree that RSE classes gave them a good understanding of toxic and healthy relationships.

Only **46%** of students feel confident about who to talk to if they or someone they know is experiencing abuse.

Just **24%** of young people recall being taught about 'coercive control' in RSE classes and as little as **13%** believe this topic was taught well.

The majority of LGBT+ students (**61%**) disagree that LGBT+ relationships are being threaded throughout RSE, as is legally required.

Students want 'more relevant examples' (**47%**), 'more open discussions' (**44%**) and 'more regular classes' (**42%**). Young people expressed a desire for discussion-based activities and practical 'how to' conversations, such as: 'how to break up with someone without hurting them' and 'how to communicate consent.'

1. ONS, 2022 2. ONS, 2022 3. Femicide Census, 2020 4. Barter et al, 2015

5. Home Office: The Economic and Social Costs of Domestic Abuse, 2017 6. SafeLives: An exploration of Relationships & Sex Education in schools