



## **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy**

Last reviewed: July 2018

YTAS's Membership Values (Statement 4):

**We work to broaden access for those who want to participate in our youth theatre activity as creators and audience. We agree that every young person in Scotland should have unrestricted access to a quality youth theatre experience and should not encounter barriers to access. We are not exclusive in our attitude and we strive to remove all barriers to our activity to promote participation which reflects and celebrates the diversity of Scottish culture.**

## Introduction

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Youth Theatre Arts Scotland's work involves developing relationships with people from a range of backgrounds and cultures. Working effectively with diversity, targeting equality of opportunity and promoting inclusion are therefore an essential part of our work. There is no equality of opportunity if diversity and inclusion are not recognised and valued.

**Equality** of opportunity is about treating people fairly, without bias, and creating conditions in the workplace and wider society that encourage and value diversity and promote dignity. It is about trying to redress past imbalances. It is about ensuring that YTAS dealings with our members, participants, partners and suppliers are conducted in a constructive way that supports appropriate inclusion and does not give rise to unjustified discrimination.

**Diversity** is concerned with creating an environment and practices that benefit the organisation and those who work in and with it. It takes account of the fact that people differ from one another in many ways. Understanding, valuing and effectively managing these differences can result in greater participation that can be leveraged for success at an individual, team, organisational and even sector-wide level.

**Inclusion** completes the triangle of equality, diversity and inclusion; in so far as equality is about removing barriers and diversity is about recognition of people, inclusion aims to provide the conditions for people to be able to participate in the way that they want to, knowing they are welcome regardless of their background. Inclusive arts practice focuses on an approach of openness, participation, engagement and response to community cultural needs. Inclusion often involves a human rights approach, ensuring positive processes and outcomes, treating people with dignity and respect, and ensuring that barriers to involvement are removed.

When we talk about equal opportunity, diversity and inclusion, we focus on the protected characteristics identified in the Equality Act:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race / ethnicity
- Religion / belief and culture
- Sex / gender
- Sexual orientation

To this list, Creative Scotland (YTAS principal funder) added its own characteristic;

- Socio-economic deprivation

This additional characteristic covers areas such as poverty, crime, rural isolation, low economic activity/unemployment and poor educational attainment.

YTAS will use a range of tools to monitor and evaluate progress in mainstreaming our policy and promoting equality, diversity and inclusion. We believe the best way to manage equal opportunity and diversity is to ensure these are built into all processes and functions, considered part of all policy decisions, and present in the planning of all programmes from start to finish. This is what we mean by mainstreaming equality, diversity and inclusion principles and practices.

## **Research and Consultation**

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In developing its EDI Policy and Action Plans, YTAS drew from its existing sector research and experience. We also reviewed Scottish Government Equalities research and guidance, Creative Scotland's research behind the Youth Arts Strategy from 2013 and carried out our own consultation sessions at our sector conferences. Summaries of this data is available on request.

## **Policy Aims**

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We endeavour to:

- Comply with and exceed all relevant regulatory requirements.
- Continually improve and monitor equality, diversity and inclusion performance.
- Incorporate equality, diversity and inclusion considerations into business decisions.
- Increase employee awareness.
- Increase sector awareness.

**The ongoing delivery and development of the policy aims is carried out through YTAS's Business Plan and regularly updated EDI Action Plan. See website for current versions.**

## **Responsibility**

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YTAS CEO is responsible for ensuring that the policy is implemented. However, all employees have a responsibility in their area to ensure that the aims and objectives of the policy are met.

The key elements of the policy are included in YTAS Board Handbook, which is reviewed, updated and signed off annually by the Board.

## **Culture**

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- We will involve staff in the implementation of this policy, for greater commitment and improved performance.
- We will update this policy annually in consultation with staff.
- We will provide staff with relevant equality, diversity and inclusion training.
- We will work with our event partners to improve their equality, diversity and inclusion performance.
- We will work with Members and sector to improve their equality, diversity and inclusion performance.

## **Avoiding Pre-conceptions**

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In the application of this EDI Policy, it is essential that the Board and staff guard against discrimination on the basis of possible assumptions that individuals, because of their age, disability, gender, marriage, civil partnership, pregnancy, maternity, race, ethnicity, religion, belief, culture, sexual orientation or socio-economic deprivation, possess characteristics which would make them unsuitable for employment, volunteering or participation.

Any restrictions, which are applied by management, and/or senior staff which affect certain groups more than others may effectively constitute indirect discrimination and should be reviewed and altered to redress any imbalance.

## **Recruitment**

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Applicants for posts and volunteering shall be given as much clear and accurate information about posts through advertisements, job descriptions and interviews in order to enable them to assess their own suitability for a post. Information about posts shall be placed and prominently displayed where it may reach individuals of all groups previously referred to.

All applicants and volunteers shall be informed that Youth Theatre Arts Scotland encourages equality, diversity and inclusion through this policy. Such information should be included in advertisements, job descriptions and/or application forms.

All personnel specifications for posts and voluntary work shall include only requirements that are necessary and justifiable for effective performance.

All interviews shall be thorough, conducted on an objective basis and shall deal only with the applicant's suitability for the job or voluntary work and ability to fulfil the job requirements. Where it is necessary to assess whether personal circumstances will affect performance of the job, for example when it involves

unsocial hours or extensive travel, this should be discussed objectively without detailed questions based on assumptions about marital status, children and domestic obligations.

Youth Theatre Arts Scotland will not discriminate on the basis of sex, marital status, colour, ethnic origin, religion, sexual orientation, age, disability or unrelated criminal record in the allocation of duties between staff employed in any grade or grades with comparable job descriptions.

## **Training**

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Youth Theatre Arts Scotland shall not discriminate in the provision of training courses. Appropriate training shall be provided to enable staff to perform their jobs effectively. Age limits for entry to training provisions shall not be restrictive to exclude certain groups of staff. All Board, advisory committee members and staff involved in interviewing shall receive training as / when required to ensure that selection is made on an objective basis and that encouragement is given to women and men to take full advantage of training opportunities.

## **Grievance and Victimisation**

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Particular care will be taken to deal effectively with any complaint of discrimination or sexual harassment which should be pursued through the Grievance Procedures.

Any employee or volunteer who may feel discriminated against on the grounds of their sex, marital status, ethnic origins, colour, religion, sexual orientation, age, disability or unrelated criminal record has recourse via an appointed officer to have their complaint fully investigated. All parties involved in such a complaint and its subsequent investigation shall be made fully aware of the findings.

YTAS Grievance Procedure is outlined fully in the Company Handbook.