



EQUITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION POLICY

This document consists of three sections.

The first entitled 'Our Ethos' is the public statement we make about our belief in equity, diversity and inclusion. It informs what follows in the rest of the document.

The second section informs Societies, Members, staff and volunteers what our policy is in relation to equity, diversity and inclusion.

The third section is a simple guide to some of the language and legal rules that pertain to this area, and as such apply to all of us.

Our Ethos

The Arts Society is an organisation for everyone who appreciates the arts in all their various forms. That mutual interest is what binds us together as we work to achieve our charitable goals.

We want to create a culture within The Arts Society that respects and celebrates our differences, asserts that there is more that unites us than divides us, and recognises the strength that comes from diversity and inclusivity.

We understand that some aspects of the arts can be controversial and do not reflect the society in which we now live. This might be uncomfortable for many of us. However, our educational brief makes it important to challenge perceptions and we stand by our obligation to do that. We aspire to play a positive role in these necessary discussions.

We want everyone to feel welcome at our meetings, in our volunteering activities and at our workplace. We do not tolerate any form of discrimination, harassment or bullying.

Our members come from different walks of life, cultures and countries and we truly believe the arts are for everybody.

We want our members, staff and volunteers to reflect the communities from which they come and we are working hard to increase the diversity of our membership, and widening access to our volunteering opportunities and our educational services.

We recognise there is more we can do and we are committed to maintaining and working on our aspirations for inclusion and diversity as an important part of our agenda both now and in the future.

Our policy

The Arts Society is committed to providing equal opportunities to anyone acting on behalf of The Arts Society and avoiding unlawful discrimination within the organisation both centrally and at Member Society and individual level.

This policy is intended to assist The Arts Society and its members to put this commitment into practice. Compliance with this policy should also ensure that anyone acting on behalf of or within The Arts Society does not commit unlawful acts of discrimination.

Striving to ensure that the environment in which we work, learn and volunteer is free from harassment and bullying and that everyone is treated with dignity and respect is an important aspect of ensuring equity within The Arts Society.

Recruitment and Selection to employment

The recruitment and selection process is crucially important to any equal opportunities policy. We will endeavour to ensure that anyone acting on behalf of The Arts Society, making selection and recruitment decisions will not discriminate, whether consciously or unconsciously, in making these decisions.

All applicants who apply for jobs with us will receive fair treatment and will be considered solely on their ability to do the job.

Selection decisions will not be influenced by any perceived prejudices of anyone acting on behalf of The Arts Society.

Candidates for employment or promotion will be assessed objectively against the requirements for the job, taking account of any reasonable adjustments that may be required for candidates with a disability. Disability and personal or home commitments will not form the basis of employment decisions except where necessary.

Helpful legal provisions and definitions

It is important to know that this policy and the law relating to discrimination applies not only to The Arts Society's employees and potential employees, but also to our Members, volunteers and those who provide services to The Arts Society, such as lecturers.

It is unlawful to discriminate directly or indirectly because of age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, pregnancy, maternity, race (which includes colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins), sexual orientation, religion or belief, or because someone is married or in a civil partnership. These are known as "protected characteristics".

Types of unlawful discrimination

Direct discrimination is where a person is treated less favourably than another because of a protected characteristic. An example of direct discrimination would be refusing to employ a woman because she is pregnant.

In limited circumstances, an organisation can directly discriminate against an individual for a reason related to any of the protected characteristics where there is an occupational requirement. The occupational requirement must be crucial to the post and a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

Indirect discrimination is where a provision, criterion or practice is applied that is discriminatory in relation to individuals who have a relevant protected characteristic (although it does not explicitly include pregnancy and maternity, which is covered by indirect sex discrimination) such that it would be to the detriment of people who share that protected characteristic compared with people who do not, and it cannot be shown to be a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

Harassment is where there is unwanted conduct, related to one of the protected characteristics (other than marriage and civil partnership, and pregnancy and maternity) that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity; or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. It does not matter whether or not this effect was intended by the person responsible for the conduct.

Associative discrimination is where an individual is directly discriminated against or harassed for association with another individual who has a protected characteristic (although it does not cover harassment because of marriage and civil partnership, and pregnancy and maternity).

Perceptive discrimination is where an individual is directly discriminated against / harassed based on a perception that he/she has a particular protected characteristic when he/she does not, in fact, have that protected characteristic (other than marriage and civil partnership, and pregnancy and maternity).

Victimisation occurs where an employee is subjected to a detriment, such as being denied a training opportunity or a promotion because he/she made or supported a complaint or raised a grievance under the Equality Act 2010, or because he or she is suspected of doing so. However, an employee is not protected from victimisation if he or she acted maliciously or made or supported an untrue complaint. There is no longer a need for a complainant to compare his or her treatment with someone who has not made or supported a complaint under the Equality Act 2010. For example, if a blind employee raises a grievance that the employer is not complying with its duty to make reasonable adjustments and is then systematically excluded from all meetings; such behaviour could amount to victimisation.

Failure to make reasonable adjustments is where a physical feature or a provision, criterion or practice puts a disabled person at a substantial disadvantage compared with someone who does not have that protected characteristic and the employer has failed to make reasonable adjustments to enable the disabled person to overcome the disadvantage.

The Arts Society will avoid unlawful discrimination in all aspects of the organisation.

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