



Open Arts Equal Opportunities Policy

Open Arts' Statement on Equal Opportunities

Open Arts is committed to implementing and promoting equal opportunities in its activities, services and practice. It realises that discrimination exists in society (whether protected by law or not), and believes that this prevents individual potential and ability from being realised.

Open Arts will not tolerate discrimination on the basis of:

- Gender, marital, partnership or family status.
- Religious belief or political opinion.
- Disability.
- Race or ethnic origin.
- Nationality.
- Sexual orientation.
- Age.

As a provider of a service to the community, Open Arts accepts the responsibility to promote equal opportunities and challenge discrimination wherever it occurs. This document sets out the main consequences of this commitment and the action to be taken in order to achieve equal opportunities.

Open Arts recognises that some users of its services may, because of their past or present disability, distress or illness, say or do things, which would otherwise be unacceptable and incompatible with Open Arts' Equal Opportunities Policy. Open Arts will do all it can to challenge such behaviour. In cases where intervention is possible a gentle approach will be adopted which aims to alter attitudes and behaviour while maintaining support for the individual.

Open Arts realises that a genuine commitment to equal opportunities must operate on all levels:

- Open Arts will prevent unfavourable treatment, directly or indirectly, upon individuals from any group facing discrimination in its recruitment and deployment of human resources. Where discrimination does occur, it will be dealt with through the agreed procedures (Grievance, Personal Harassment).

- Open Arts will seek to prevent discrimination and ensure equal representation in the services it provides, the structures that it facilitates and the practice through which it carries out its work. This involves the development of diversity in the board, networks and participation, to ensure a genuinely wide representation.

Responsibility

The CEO has specific responsibility for the effective implementation of this policy. The Board and all other line managers have responsibilities and it is expected that all staff, artists, access assistants, volunteers and participants abide by the policy and help create the equality environment, which is its objective.

In order to implement this policy, Open Arts will ensure that:

- Open Arts will bring to the attention of all staff, artists, access assistants, volunteers and participants the existence of this policy, and will provide such training as is necessary to ensure that the policy is effective and that everyone is aware of it.
- If any staff, artist, access assistant, volunteer or participant feels that they have been, or are being discriminated against, in any way, they are entitled to pursue the matter with the CEO (see Harassment Policy). All complaints of discrimination will be dealt with seriously, promptly and confidentially.
- All instances or complaints of discriminatory behaviour will be treated seriously.
- Complaints or allegations of an unfounded or malicious nature will also be treated as serious.

Disabled Access

- Disability discrimination occurs when for a reason related to their disability, a disabled person is treated less favourably than other people, and this treatment cannot be justified. It also occurs when an employer fails to comply with the duty to make a reasonable adjustment in relation to the disabled person, and the failure cannot be justified. An employer cannot justify less favourable treatment if, by making a reasonable adjustment, it would remove the reason for the treatment.
- Open Arts will ensure that all the premises it uses have disabled access. We will ensure that programmes and activity are accessible for disabled people.

Use of Language

- Staff, artists, access assistants, volunteers and participants should avoid and challenge the use of language which, in any way, belittles anyone
- Where the language used has a personal impact on others, and it has been made clear to the person concerned that their use of such language is unwelcome and/or offensive, disciplinary action may be taken if they persist with it.
- All programmes/activities/materials used or developed by Open Arts will be judged in the light of the promotion of equal opportunities, and those considered to be discriminatory will not be used.

Sexual Harassment

- No staff, artist, access assistant, volunteer or participant should be subject to sexual harassment.
- This is interpreted as unwanted behaviour of a sexual nature including:
 - verbal sexual abuse
 - physical contact
 - repeated remarks which an individual finds offensive
- If it has been made clear to the person concerned that their behaviour is unwelcome and they persist with it, then staff, artist, access assistant, volunteer or participant, who is the recipient of the behaviour will be entitled to make a formal complaint.

Monitoring and Review

The Policy will be constantly reviewed by the Board to ensure that no one involved with Open Arts is put to a disadvantage either, directly or indirectly. This monitoring will apply to the practices of staff, artists, access assistants, volunteers and participants, the composition of the Committees and the provision of services.

It is the responsibility of every individual to eliminate discrimination and to ensure the practical application of this Policy.

The Board of Open Arts will review this policy every 3 years.

Agreed 9th August 2022