

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

APPENDIX V

Our policy

We provide equal opportunities to everyone we employ, both paid staff and volunteers. We will not accept any type of discrimination.

We treat all our employees and participants fairly and equally.
We choose our employees based on their skill level and aptitude for the role.

We encourage all our employees to develop their full potential and we will do everything we can to help them achieve this.

We will not offer internships without paying national minimum wage if the intern is classed as having worker status (as defined by the document 'Internships in the arts' created by Arts Council England and Creative and Cultural Skills in 2011) for any part of the internship, so as not to exclude people who cannot work without payment.

We provide equal opportunities in the service we deliver to participants in our activity and recognise the cultural diversity of the United Kingdom.

Our commitment

Every employee and participant has the right to dignity and respect. We will not tolerate bullying or harassment. We will make the policy available to all staff, volunteers and participants.

If anyone breaks the conditions of our Equal Opportunities Policy, this will be misconduct and could lead to disciplinary action.

Our policy has been agreed with the Board of Trustees, and our Chief Executive and staff fully support it. We will monitor and review our policy every year.

The law

This policy is in line with the current law.

Policy Statement

The National Student Drama Festival (NSDF) is committed to promoting theatre as an activity for all.

NSDF showcases and nurtures enterprising theatre and live performance by young people and actively helps to encourage and develop a higher standard of work from emerging artists. NSDF provides a supportive environment where artistic, technical and administrative training and the nurturing of ideas, occur in collaboration with a wide diversity of artistic voices. NSDF is committed to bridging the gap between young people and the professional theatrical world, both in terms of practitioners and audiences.

NSDF undertakes to ensure that all job applicants, employees, volunteers and student participants are treated equally and encouraged to develop and maximise their true potential irrespective of age, disability, gender reassignment, marital or civil partnership status, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex, sexual orientation or social class.

NSDF recognises discrimination as being a process of acting unfairly against an individual or group by exclusion, verbal comment, denigration, failure to appreciate needs or the assumption of such needs without consultation.

NSDF strives to ensure that the work environment is free of harassment and bullying and that everyone is treated with dignity and respect is an important aspect of ensuring equal opportunities in employment.

NSDF serves the entire UK and works exclusively with young people 16-25 years and anyone of any age who is in full time education. NSDF strives to engage with those often excluded because of their culture and ability. NSDF works with Visiting Artists from a diverse range of backgrounds to compliment the diversity of the students. NSDF works in partnership with student groups around the country as a way of reacting to the needs of emerging artists and their community throughout the UK.

NSDF recognises that English may not be the first language of all users and aims to ensure that all public information, which includes any printed material and online content uses 'Plain English' in line with the Plain English Campaign's guidelines.

It is the responsibility of the Administrator and Director to monitor effectiveness and develop where necessary the Equal Opportunities Policy and its Code of Practice and make reports to the Board of Trustees.

Breaches of this policy is a disciplinary issue.

The Equality and Human Rights Commission is available to give advice, information and assistance.

NSDF recognises its moral and legal duty to equal opportunities as embodied in the Equality Act 2010, as well as the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.

Code of Practice as an Employer

Across all areas of NSDF's activity, the following behaviour will be considered inappropriate and unacceptable:

Acting in an aggressive, angry or abusive manner against an individual or group solely because they are black, a woman, a man, a member of an ethnic or national minority, a lesbian woman or a gay man, bisexual or transgender, have a disability, a particular political or religious belief or because of age or class. Racist, sexist or otherwise insulting remarks, jokes, name-calling or innuendo.

Bringing onto the premises insignia, publications or pamphlets that in any way support racial or sexual discrimination, or seeking to promote a negative stereotyped image of an individual or group.

If an incident of harassment or discrimination takes place within NSDF's range of activities:

- Support and counselling will be offered immediately for the victim.

- Where the perpetrator is under the employ of NSDF, the Chief Executive Officer/Director will discuss the incident with the perpetrator, make available a copy of this document and take further action as deemed appropriate.
- If suspension from the activity occurs, the appropriate authorities or concerned professionals will be notified in writing.

Where the perpetrator is working on behalf of NSDF, infringement of this policy will be dealt with in accordance with NSDF's Disciplinary and Grievance Policy.

In managing any such incident, staff will bear in mind at all times the needs and concerns of all the young people present, whether directly affected or not.

Recruitment and Selection of Employees

NSDF is committed to a recruitment process that actively encourages people from all communities to apply for posts.

The intention through this policy is to seek to recruit individuals with specialist knowledge, or as positive role models, from a diverse range of potential individuals.

Responsibilities towards those the NSDF works with means that on occasions it will be necessary to exclude people from work with young people. This will happen where it is known that the individual has a criminal record for offences relating to children or sexual behaviour. Where a criminal record is disclosed relating to other types of offences, this will be brought before the Board of Directors in confidence, together with other relevant background information, for a decision to be made to appoint or not. Having spent or unspent convictions will not necessarily exclude an applicant from offers of employment.

Advertising for posts will:

State the basic minimum requirements both in terms of qualifications and experience. Indicate that the organisation will treat all applications equally.

Be placed where it is felt that the maximum numbers of interested people will be reached.

Be accessible and welcoming to those from minority groups – this may include placing advertisements in specific publications / places.

Job descriptions

All the organisation's job descriptions will incorporate a requirement to understand and abide by this policy.

Applications, short listing and interview procedures

NSDF will value all relevant experience and skills including those who are non-traditional or non-academic.

NSDF will conduct an interview on an equal opportunities basis.

Staff training and development

This organisation recognises that the commitment we make to being an equal opportunity employer does not stop at the appointment of a worker.

All employees, including freelance and short-term workers, will receive introductory material to give an understanding of the company. Training opportunities will be made available to employees and freelance workers. Individuals from disadvantaged groups may have particular training needs and will be encouraged to undertake additional training where appropriate.

These commitments should follow through the entire relationship between NSDF and its employees.

Volunteers

All volunteers will be recruited and trained within the spirit of this equal opportunities policy. NSDF recognises and values the experiences of people from all communities within our area of operation. This includes a commitment to encouraging the active involvement of those who have been discriminated against and traditionally excluded from positions of power and influence. All volunteers are required to abide by this equal opportunities policy.

Internships

NSDF will ensure that interns are paid national minimum wage if the tasks they are completing mean they fulfil worker status.

This policy applies to all employees and members of the Board of Directors, particularly those in a position of responsibility for employment, contracting or supervising of other employees. The Director and Administrator have specific responsibility for monitoring the effectiveness of the policy and for overseeing the implementation process. A monitoring system, which is acceptable, practicable and manageable by all employees, will be introduced. The aim of the system is to enable evaluation of the effectiveness of both policy and practice.

Code of Practice as a Service Provider

Access to Venue, Events, Activities – NSDF will:

- Continue to focus on making people with disabilities aware of our accessible venues at the Festival and activities through targeting special schools and student disability organisations.
- Continue to encourage people from throughout the diverse community of the UK to take an active role in our events and activities.
- Carry out an access audit of all Festival venues in conjunction with the venues themselves at least 2 months prior to the Festival.
- Analyse student participation development initiatives each year and implement any immediate findings and recommendations in time for the September season marketing/PR strategy.
- Endeavour to ensure the Festival venues are welcoming to all student groups by having signs and participatory information in 'Plain English' and other accessible signposting.

Access to Information – NSDF will:

- Review and revise our information formats and accessibility in September of each year.
- Continue to use current disability and cultural related language (see Appendix 1).
- Continue to include positive images of disability and BME communities, ensuring a broad cross section of the NSDF's students and visiting artists are represented in publications and print (physical or digital).
- Review accessibility of our website annually and implement any changes required in time for the new festival cycle.

Programming diverse arts practitioners – NSDF will:

- Continue to research and collate information regarding gender, disability, Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic arts sector.
- Continue to increase opportunities for students to explore diversity with a wide range of practitioners.

Diversity and decision-making – NSDF will:

- Aim to continue to actively ensure that decisions are made and informed by diversity in the broadest sense.
- Aim to increase the diversity of the Board of Directors.

Monitoring and Evaluation

NSDF will monitor the ethnic origin and disability status of board members, job applicants, employees, volunteers, and Festival participants.

NSDF will review the policy and mechanisms for evaluating the effectiveness of the previous years implementations in October of each year and change them if they are found to be discriminatory.

NSDF will ensure that the policy is known to all staff members and take appropriate action in accordance with agreed procedures should a staff member be found to have infringed it.

Appendix 1: Definitions Black and Minority Ethnic

The description currently used by the commission for racial equality. It includes a broader range of people who may be subjected to racism, direct or indirect. However, the term 'minority' is regarded as increasingly inappropriate.

Cultural diversity

A term that has been used by the Arts Council of England and other arts funding bodies to indicate diversity across ethnicity, disability, gender and sexual orientation. Within this plan we use it with reference to ethnicity.

Disabled

The DDA describes disabled people as anyone with “physical, sensory or mental impairment” with long-term effects lasting 12 months or longer.

Plain English

English designed to be as direct and simple as possible. An important access consideration for people who have learning disabilities, literacy problems or for whom English is not their first language.

White

In this paper we use this term to refer to white communities who do not define themselves as Black and Minority ethnic.

Appendix 2: Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form

All the information on this form is confidential and held anonymously. It will be used only for monitoring purposes to allow us to increase the diversity of our workforce and combat any potential discrimination.

Age 16-17 18-21 22-25 26-30 31-40 41-50 51-60 61-65 66-70 71+

Disability Do you consider yourself to have a disability? Yes or No
If yes, please give more details:

Gender How would you describe your gender?

Ethnic Background Please tell us in your own words how you would describe your ethnic background

Thank You.

Resources

Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974

Equality Act 2010 (and accompanying Code of Practice for Employers)

See www.legislation.gov.uk for latest updates and amendments

Arts Council England and CC Skills – Internships in the Arts: http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/media/uploads/internships_in_the_arts_final.pdf

Equality and Human Rights Commission: <http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/>

Plain English Campaign - <http://www.plainenglish.co.uk/>