



## **EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY**

### **Our policy**

The National Student Drama Festival (NSDF) will ensure that everyone receives equal treatment and access to opportunity however they come into contact with NSDF. We will not accept any type of discrimination.

We provide equal opportunities to everyone we employ and engage including paid employees, freelance staff and volunteers (workers).

**Updated June 19**

We provide equal opportunities in the service we deliver to participants in all our activities.

We treat all our workers and participants fairly and equally.

We choose our workers based on their skill level and aptitude for the role.

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

### **Our commitment**

Every worker and participant has the right to be treated with dignity and respect. We will not tolerate bullying or harassment. We will make the Equal Opportunities Policy (EOP) available to all workers and participants.

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

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

### **The law**

This policy is in line with the current law.

### **Policy Statement**

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 ensures that all job applicants, employees, freelance staff, volunteers and student participants are treated equally and encouraged to develop and maximise their true potential irrespective of age, disability, sex, race, religion and belief, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership, sexual orientation, gender reassignment or socio-economic background.

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 and work.

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. 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 EOP and its Code of Practice and make reports to the Board of Trustees.

Breaches of this policy are 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 (CoP-E)**

#### **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 or engagement 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 EOP 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 EOP 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 Trustees 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.

#### **Employee and freelance 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 and freelance staff will receive introductory material to give an understanding of the company. Training opportunities will be made available to employees and freelance staff. 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 and freelance staff.

#### **Volunteers**

All volunteers will be recruited and trained within the spirit of this EOP. NSDF recognises and values the experiences of people from all communities. 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 EOP.

#### **Internships**

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.

This EOP and CoP-E applies to all NSDF employees, freelance staff and members of the Board of Trustees, particularly those in a position of responsibility for employment, contracting or supervising of other employees and freelance staff.

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 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 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 Trustees.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

NSDF will monitor age, disability, ethnicity, gender and sexual orientation of board members, job applicants, employees, freelance staff, volunteers, and Festival participants.

NSDF will review the EOP and mechanisms for evaluating it's effectiveness each year and make any changes if they are found to be discriminatory.

NSDF will ensure that the EOP is known to all employees and freelance staff and take appropriate action in accordance with agreed procedures should anyone be found to have infringed it.

## **Appendix 1: Definitions**

### **Black and Minority Ethnic (BME)**

The description currently used by the Equality & Human Rights Commission. 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 EOP we use this term to refer to white communities who do not define themselves as BME.

## **Appendix 2: Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form**

All the information on the 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**
- **Disability**
- **Ethnicity**
- **Gender**
- **Sexual Orientation**

## **Resources**

Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974

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

See [www.legislation.gov.uk](http://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](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/>

**2011 Census for England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland**

87% of people in the UK are White, and 13% belong to a Black, Asian, Mixed or Other ethnic group.

18% of the UK reported having a limiting long-term health problem or disability.