

Equal Opportunities Policy

STATEMENT OF POLICY

The aim of this policy is to communicate the commitment of the Steering Committee and Senior Management team to the promotion of equality of opportunity at Dorchester Youth Theatre. Dorchester Youth Theatre is committed to combating discrimination through the promotion of equal opportunities in respect of:

- Provision of services
- Working practices of the organisation
- Employment and training

Dorchester Youth Theatre will try to ensure that in respect of the above, no person shall receive less favourable treatment than others because of her or his:

- Gender, including gender reassignment
- Marital or civil partnership status
- Having or not having dependants
- Religious belief or political opinion
- Race (including colour or ethnic origins)
- Nationality
- Disability
- Sexual orientation
- Age
- Trade Union activity
- Educational background

We are opposed to all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination. All job applicants, employees and others who work with us will be treated fairly and will not be discriminated against on any of the above grounds.

PRACTICES AND COMMITMENTS

In order to ensure that Dorchester Youth Theatre's services are accessible to all, Dorchester Youth Theatre will follow these principles:

Promoting a good and harmonious working environment in which all persons are treated with respect.

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Preventing occurrences of unlawful direct and indirect discrimination, harassment and victimisation

Fulfilling all our legal obligations under the equality legislation and associated codes of practice

Complying with our own equal opportunities policy and associated policies

Publicity materials, publications, advertisements, events, workshops and performances shall avoid language which presents a stereotyped, offensive or detrimental view of any group or individual's background on any of the above grounds. However, performances and workshops will necessarily need to present such language and views when tackling hard hitting issues.

- Dorchester Youth Theatre will make its services available to disabled people, including wheelchair users – by using premises that are wheelchair accessible for its activities whenever possible; to make use of signers and interpreters where appropriate and by ensuring these facilities are published for potential participants.
- Dorchester Youth Theatre should not allow its publicity, events, premises or facilities to be used for the expressions of views in conflict with this policy.
- Regarding breaches of equal opportunities policy as misconduct which could lead to disciplinary proceedings.
- Dorchester Youth Theatre values diversity and recognises the wealth of benefits diversity can bring to the organisation.

IMPLEMENTATION

The Artistic Director and Steering Committee have specific responsibility for the effective implementation of this policy.

In order to implement this policy we shall:

Ensure the policy is communicated to all employees, volunteers, steering committee members, job applicants and relevant others (such as freelance artists).

Provide/source training and guidance as appropriate for all staff.

Incorporate equal opportunities notices into appropriate communication practices.

Obtain commitments from other persons or organisations such as subcontractors or agencies that they too will comply with the policy in their dealings with our organisation.

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Ensure that adequate resources are made available to meet the policy's objectives.

COMPLAINTS

Any party who believes that they have suffered any form of discrimination, harassment or victimisation are entitled to raise the matter through either the complaints or grievance procedures (whichever the most relevant) detailed in Dorchester Youth Theatre's Policy and Procedures Manual. All complaints will be dealt with seriously, promptly and confidentially.

In addition to our internal procedures, employees have the right to pursue complaints of discrimination to an industrial tribunal or the Employment Tribunal under anti-discrimination legislations.

However, parties wishing to make a complaint to a tribunal will usually be expected to raise their complaint under our internal grievance procedure in the first instance.

MONITORING AND REVIEW

Regular monitoring of Youth Theatre services and participants takes place to ensure that the equal opportunities policy is implemented and effective. Dorchester Youth Theatre is proactive in programming services and activities which target underrepresented groups in particular, whether they are participants, volunteers or staff.

Reports are made to the Steering Committee detailing ethnic origin, disability, etc. of participants, where appropriate and targets are established to encourage the increased integration and encouragement of disenfranchised young people. These are clearly identified in the Artistic Development Plan and Annual Service Plan.

A comprehensive induction programme for new participants, staff and volunteers incorporates the Youth theatre's Equal Opportunities Policy and emphasises the role and expectations upon all new individuals to assist in ensuring its implementation.

Our volunteer policy will also support and include Equal Opportunities principles and practices which all volunteers sign an agreement.

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A Handbook for all new participants reinforces further the Equal Opportunities message and this is re-issued on an annual basis.