

THE ART MINISTRY

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY

1. Policy Statement

The Art Ministry is committed to promoting and valuing equality and diversity in all of our activities. We welcome and celebrate the diversity of our local communities and are strongly committed to achieving equal opportunities and access for all people and groups in society.

Equality and diversity is the cornerstone of all of our policies and procedures. We are proud of the actions we take to eliminate discrimination and prejudice to ensure inclusion and engagement for all the people who work and volunteer with us or wish to use our services or to support us. We will continue to strive towards a culture that is diverse and which recognises and develops the potential of all our staff, volunteers and service users.

1.1 Equality

Equality is about making sure people are treated fairly and given fair chances. Equality of opportunity is about everyone being evaluated fairly and being able to progress purely on the basis of their merit. It encompasses a range of employment legislation that has been put into place to prevent people being treated unfavourably on the basis of a range of specific factors:

- Race
- Nationality
- Ethnic or National origin
- Gender/sex
- Marital status or pregnancy
- Religion or Belief
- Sexual orientation
- Disability
- Gender re-assignment
- Age

People must not be unfairly discriminated against because of any of these factors and we must all contribute to creating a positive learning and working environment where discriminatory practices and discrimination no longer happen.

The Art Ministry recognises that certain individuals and groups are discriminated against and is committed to working towards eliminating all forms of discrimination through its own work and through its employment policies and practices.

1.2 Diversity

Diversity is about respecting and valuing all forms of difference in individuals and positively striving to meet the needs of different people. It goes beyond equal opportunities legislation, encompassing any aspect of an individual that is not directly related to their ability to do a specific job or undertake a particular task such as:

- Approach to work
- Values
- Experience
- Family commitments
- Where someone lives

People with different backgrounds and attitudes bring fresh ideas and perceptions, and as a diverse organisation we can draw upon the widest range of experiences so that we can offer the best services possible and be a welcoming place to work.

The Art Ministry will actively encourage diversity to maximise achievement, creativity and good practice and to bring benefits to individuals and communities. We will encourage all people we work with, and for, to contribute to an environment in which people feel comfortable expressing how they feel and what they need, knowing they will be treated with respect and that their contribution is valued. We will endeavour to deliver services in a way that genuinely recognises the importance of an inclusive society and that brings opportunities and access, not barriers to individuals.

2. Aims and Objectives

The aims and objectives of the Equality and Diversity Policy are:

- To encourage, promote and celebrate diversity in all our activities and services
- To ensure equal access to jobs, volunteer opportunities, services and activities
- To ensure compliance with legislation on discrimination and equality including Equality Act 2010 and other relevant legislation currently in force
- To create environments free from harassment and discrimination
- To maximise the use of resources in the best interests of staff, volunteers and service users
- To confront and challenge discrimination where and whenever it arises, whether it is between colleagues, or in any other area relating to our work
- To make a willingness to accept and implement this policy to be a necessary qualification for any position in the organisation
- To ensure, through positive action and so far as is practicable, that our premises and services are accessible to all people
- To ensure that employment and advancement within the organisation is determined by objective criteria and personal merit

3. Equality and Diversity Framework

3.1 Expectations

Responsibility for implementing and developing the policy rests with the trustees. However, we believe that all who work with or for the organisation have an individual responsibility:

- to accept the policy and ensure a personal involvement in its application;
- to co-operate actively to ensure that the environment we desire is a reality.

3.2 Recruitment

- Unless exceptional circumstances apply, we will place advertisements internally and externally for vacancies, using the appropriate media consistent with the Equality and Diversity policy.
- We will endeavour to recruit staff, trustees and volunteers from all sections of the community.
- We will ensure that clear role descriptions and person specifications are used to select applicants, with guidance notes on how applicants might meet the criteria laid down in the person specifications, and in relation to the application form
- Role titles will not be sex / gender biased and will be accurate.
- All applicants will be informed of our commitment to equal opportunities and the recruitment monitoring process that will be followed.
- Role requirements will be those that are really necessary to do the role and not a reflection of traditional practices that may be operating to the disadvantage of men or women, minorities, disabled people or younger or older people.
- No age or age inference will be stated in recruitment advertising or used as a discriminator in recruitment and selection.
- Suitably trained and experienced interviewers will conduct selection interviews. We recognise the importance of ensuring that selection panels reflect the wider community.
- Interviewers will avoid questions that could be construed as discriminatory.
- Clear interview notes and records of all applicants will be maintained and kept in a secure and confidential place for a period of six months.

3.3. Induction and training

- All new staff, trustees and volunteers will complete a planned programme of induction, which will include information on this Policy.
- All staff, trustees and volunteers will receive training and have the same opportunities for training and development. The selection criteria for training and promotional opportunities will be examined to ensure they are not directly or indirectly discriminatory.
- Equal standards will be operated when undertaking performance reviews and assessments.
- Staff, trustees and volunteers will be encouraged to put themselves forward for training and where appropriate.

3.4. Board of Trustees

- The Board of Trustees will endeavour to ensure that its composition is as representative as possible of the local community.

3.5 Publicity and information

- In publicising our work, including all written publications, we are committed to sensitively representing and portraying the whole community, in a positive manner.
- We will work towards declaring our commitment to equality and diversity in opportunities in all publications.
- All material produced by or on our behalf will be monitored to ensure that the content is consistent with this framework.
- A commitment is made to develop our publicity and information materials, to ensure they are available and accessible as widely as possible to all groups.

3.6 Influencing others

- Staff, trustees and volunteers are expected to challenge, in an appropriate way, any discrimination they come across in their working practice.

3.7 Discrimination and harassment

- We will investigate all complaints of discrimination and harassment thoroughly, however minor they may appear to be at first sight.
- We will take action against any staff, trustee or volunteer found to have discriminated against another member of staff, service user, trustee or volunteer on the grounds of sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, race, religion and belief, disability, age, marital or civil partnership.
- We will take disciplinary action against any member of staff, trustee or volunteer found to have harassed another person on the grounds of race, nationality, ethnic or national origin, gender / sex, marital status or pregnancy, religion or belief, sexual orientation, disability, gender re-assignment or age.

3.8 Implementation, monitoring and review

- We will continually seek the views of our service users, staff, volunteers and others on how we can provide a genuinely non-discriminatory service, learn from our experiences and build upon our success.
- Responsibility for implementing, monitoring and reviewing the plan rests with the Board of Trustees.

4.0 Concerns

- Any concerns regarding a failure to implement or breaches of this Policy should be reported to the Chair of the Trustees – see www.theartministry.org.uk for current Chair.

Signed: 

Position: Trustee

Date: 10th June 2025

Review Date: 30th June 2026