

OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

Updated November 2013

OUR VALUES AND COMMITMENT

Equal Opportunities are fundamental to everything we do at Create. We believe that every individual is valuable, and that everyone should have equal access to society's opportunities and resources. Our particular focus is on widening access to and through the creative arts. We are passionately committed to:

- acting openly, fairly and without prejudice as an employer and as a service provider
- promoting equality by reaching out to disadvantaged groups of people and offering them empowerment through the arts
- celebrating cultural diversity

This policy sets out the main ways that we aim to live up to these values and fulfil these commitments.

The contents of this policy are not contractual and Create may, in its absolute discretion, amend or replace the policy at any time.

PREVENTING DISCRIMINATION

We will respond openly, fairly and without prejudice to all people who wish to take up the opportunities we have to offer as an employer and as a service provider. Obviously these opportunities are limited by the resources we have available. We will set out clear criteria for the decisions we make, eg when appointing staff or locating projects. In all these decisions, we will not discriminate against anyone on the basis of their:

- age
- race, ethnic origin, colour or nationality
- disability
- employment status
- income level
- gender
- housing status
- marital, civil partnership or relationship status
- religion or belief
- sexuality
- any other unfair protected grounds including those that derive from a person's social status or identity

We wish to hear from anyone who feels that Create has treated them unfairly on any of these grounds. We will take any such complaint very seriously, and will respond following Create's

Grievance Procedure (in the case of staff) or Create's Complaints Procedure (in the case of non-staff).

Chairman: Eddie Donaldson **Chief Executive:** Nicky Goulder **Patrons:** Sir Matthew Bourne OBE . Esther Freud . Dame Evelyn Glennie . Howard Goodall CBE . Ken Howard OBE RA . Erwin James . Shobana Jeyasingh MBE . Nicholas McCarthy . Lord Moynihan . Susannah Simons **Trustees:** John Broadis . Eddie Donaldson . Richard Duggleby . Alistair Johnston CMG . Vanessa Sharp . Carol Topolski

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PROMOTING EQUALITY

In developing and locating our projects, we take various factors into account – especially the views, needs and capacity of our sponsors, partner organisations and artists. Fundamental to all project decisions are our aims of widening participation in the arts and helping transform the lives of people who are disadvantaged. This means that we target our projects at groups of people who are known from research to be vulnerable to social exclusion. These social groups include:

- disabled people
- homeless people
- lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people
- lone parents and carers
- people living in poverty
- people living in geographical areas of high social deprivation
- people with little or no formal education
- people with physical or mental health needs
- offenders, ex-offenders and those at risk of offending
- refugees and asylum seekers
- substance misusers
- unemployed people

Across and within these groups, the following people are often especially vulnerable to disadvantage:

- children and young people
- older people
- people from black and minority ethnic groups
- women and girls

These lists are not exhaustive. We recognise that there are many factors that may lead to social disadvantage, especially to exclusion from the arts, and we are always open to considering new groups of people who may be in need of our projects.

We do not pretend that Create will be able to reach all the groups listed above. Our projects will aim to include at least one of them, and many of our projects will reach several.

CELEBRATING CULTURAL DIVERSITY

While working against the unjust differences created by social exclusion, we embrace the fact that our society includes rich differences in culture, belief and social identity. We welcome

this kind of diversity in all our projects, and we design many of them specifically to reinforce and celebrate it, for example:

- supporting people from disadvantaged backgrounds to find imaginative ways of representing or expressing their experiences, perspectives that are often marginalised by mainstream society and in mainstream arts activities
- encouraging people from different social groups to communicate and collaborate with each other

- whenever possible, responding to or incorporating artistic traditions from minority ethnic and other cultures

UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR

There are some varieties of belief and expression that we do not support. We will do everything in our power to challenge views that are inconsistent with equal opportunities. This means stereotypes of particular groups of people, and views that are prejudiced, degrading or offensive. Unacceptable viewpoints include:

- ageism
- disablism
- homophobia
- misogyny
- racism
- sexism
- any acts or expressions of discrimination on the grounds of any other protected characteristics

In the case of staff, we will treat any such behaviour as a disciplinary matter under Create's disciplinary procedure. We will also seek to avoid working with organisations that are opposed to equal opportunities.

We will be more tolerant of the views of participants in our projects because we realise that many disadvantaged people have had limited access to education and wider awareness. We will, however, challenge any discriminatory remarks or behaviour by third parties and take steps to prevent it where possible. This may include excluding those who make unacceptable remarks or behave in an unacceptable manner.

AS AN EMPLOYER

As an employer, our implementation of the policies set out above will include the following:

- All Create staff, artists and volunteers are expected to understand and agree to abide by this Equal Opportunities Policy and to take it into account in all their work. This expectation will be included in the Person Specification or contract for their work.
- We will assess the training needs of staff in relation to equal opportunities and provide or obtain appropriate training whenever resources allow.
- In recruitment, wherever possible, all vacancies will be advertised simultaneously internally and externally.
- Create will give all applicants an equal opportunity by advertising job vacancies as widely as resources allow (including on the charity's website), publishing the selection criteria for each post in a Person Specification and basing decisions solely on the responses to this Person Specification in application, interview and exercises (not on any previous knowledge of, or personal connection with, a candidate).
- This Equal Opportunities Policy will form part of the application pack.
- Where possible, more than one person will be involved in the recruitment process and those involved will be given training on the application of the Policy relative to their responsibilities.
- We aim for Create's staff, artists, volunteers and trustees to reflect the diversity of the communities in which we work. To this end, we may target the advertising of some vacancies at groups with particular characteristics, which we have identified as being underrepresented. We will not, however, exclude anyone from applying, and will assess all candidates against the same criteria and in all cases select the candidate who we consider is best qualified for the opportunity.
- All applicants will be asked to complete an equal opportunities monitoring form, which will be separated from their application on receipt. Statistical records will be kept in accordance with current legal obligations.

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- The reason for selection and rejection of applicants for vacancies will be recorded. However, Create will be under no obligation to provide these reasons to successful or unsuccessful candidates.
- Discriminatory remarks or behaviour by staff will be treated as a disciplinary matter.
- We believe that it should not be left to an individual to challenge any discrimination that is directed at them. Managers and colleagues will respond on their behalf wherever possible. We cannot guarantee that our staff and artists will be free from discriminatory remarks or behaviour from project participants but we will do everything in our power to support staff and to address any discrimination.

AS A SERVICE PROVIDER

We will take equal opportunities into account in all our projects, including:

- considering accessibility issues in project planning – eg timing of projects to avoid religious festivals, physical accessibility of venues for wheelchairs and children’s pushchairs
 - wherever possible including participants in the planning and running of the project, and responding carefully to their feedback
 - helping project partners to support the involvement of particularly disadvantaged people, eg working in cooperation with their interpreters for people who do not speak English, signers for deaf participants,
 - support workers for people with severe learning or physical difficulties
 - seeking advice and support from specialists, where appropriate, to meet particular needs
 - making no assumptions about people’s abilities
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- valuing everyone’s involvement and, if necessary, finding imaginative ways to engage people with additional needs
 - challenging remarks or behaviour that are discriminatory, and excluding people from participation in extreme cases where other participants are offended or sidelined

EVALUATION AND MONITORING

We are strongly committed to reviewing this policy and improving our practice in the light of information and experience. As an integral part of every Create project, we will obtain subject to necessary consents wherever possible the following monitoring data (anonymously if needed, or solely in statistical form) on all project participants:

- age groups
- disability (and other educational special needs if available)
- ethnic groups (following the definitions of the Census, and including further breakdowns if possible)
- gender
- information regarding other protected characteristics
- other information as available – eg free school meals as an indication of child poverty, employment or housing status; English as an additional language (EAL)

Wherever possible, it will be a contractual condition that partner organisations provide this data when hosting Create projects. The data will then be presented (if possible in accessible graphic form) in Create’s evaluation report at the end of each project. The report will also comment on the inclusiveness or otherwise of the project and, if relevant, on any other issues of diversity or equality that have arisen from the project. Any such data will be held only in accordance with current legislation.

Annually, the Chief Executive will report to a meeting of the Board of Trustees with:

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- the annual totals of the monitoring data set out above
- a summary of Create's progress or otherwise in implementing equal opportunities over the year
- proposed actions to improve practice or address needs in the coming year
- proposed changes to this Equal Opportunities Policy, to be approved or discussed in more depth.