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Introduction

What does Diversity, Equity and Inclusion mean and why should it affect us all?

Diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI), diversity and inclusion (D&I) and equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI), are umbrella terms encompassing broad and relevant concepts that build upon the progress made through equal opportunities.

Diversity is about recognising differences and may be focused on the protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. It is unlawful to treat anyone with a protected characteristic less favourably than someone without it, if that treatment is not a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim. Diversity also includes broader characteristics such as gender identity, social and demographic background and neurodiversity.

Inclusion is about welcoming and giving people a feeling of belonging and ensuring that everyone in the society feels they have a voice. It is about valuing and respecting differences in ideas and views.

A cultural shift from the word “equality” to “equity” now recognises that treating everyone equally does not recognise that some individuals are more disadvantaged than others.

Equity seeks to provide equal opportunities by accepting that additional resources and opportunities may need to be allocated to disadvantaged or under-represented groups.

A Society encouraging DEI can help:

- Make it more successful with shows that are better attended.
- Keep everybody involved happy and motivated.
- Prevent serious or legal issues arising, such as bullying, harassment and discrimination.
- To better serve a diverse range of audiences and participants.
- Improve ideas, decision-making and problem-solving.
- Attract and keep good people.

DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION POLICY

About this policy

RUTLAND MUSICAL THEATRE (RMT) is committed to providing a creative environment in which diversity and inclusion is valued and ensuring all members, committee members, volunteers, visitors, audience members (and any staff and freelancers) are treated, and treat others, with dignity and respect.

As part of our zero-tolerance approach to discrimination in any form, you will receive equal treatment regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, marital or civil partner status, pregnancy or maternity, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation (**Protected Characteristics**). We are also committed to providing equitable treatment to all those we deal with as an organisation, including customers and suppliers.

This Policy sets out our approach to diversity, equity and inclusion. Our aim is to encourage and support diversity, equity and inclusion and actively promote a culture that values difference and eliminates discrimination at rehearsals, performances, meetings or during any other activities arranged by the Society, including social functions.

It applies to all aspects of employment or engagement with us, including recruitment, membership, training, conduct when working with or for the Society, disciplinary and grievance procedures, and termination of engagement.

The theatre and creative world pushes boundaries; it explores, expands, and celebrates the spectrum of human emotions and experiences. This Policy sets out to underpin this valued work, not to censor any activities.

The Welfare Officer is responsible for this Policy and will review it annually.

Diversity and Inclusion training

The Committee and Members will be given the opportunity to attend appropriate training to ensure that everyone is aware of and understands the contents of this Policy [and the Anti-harassment and Bullying Policy] and is capable of recognising and avoiding discrimination, harassment and victimisation, and promoting equality of opportunity and diversity in the areas of recruitment, development, rehearsals and production.

Discrimination

You must not unlawfully discriminate against or harass any other people. This applies at rehearsals, performances, meetings, when dealing with customers, suppliers or other Society-related contacts, or during any other activities arranged by the Society, including social functions.

The following forms of discrimination are prohibited under this Policy and are unlawful:

Direct discrimination: treating someone less favourably because of a Protected Characteristic. For example, rejecting someone because of their religious views or because they might be gay.

Indirect discrimination: a provision, criterion or practice that applies to everyone but adversely affects people with a particular Protected Characteristic more than others and is not justified. For example, requiring a job to be done full-time rather than part-time would adversely affect women because they generally have greater childcare commitments than men. Such a requirement would be discriminatory unless it can be justified.

Harassment: this includes sexual harassment and other unwanted conduct related to a Protected Characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating someone's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them. [Harassment is dealt with further in our Anti-harassment and Bullying Policy].

Victimisation: retaliation against someone who has complained or has supported someone else's complaint about discrimination or harassment. This includes where someone mistakenly believes that the person victimised has done so.

Disability discrimination: this includes direct and indirect discrimination, any unjustified less favourable treatment because of the effects of a disability, and failure to make reasonable adjustments to alleviate disadvantages caused by a disability.

Casting and selection

Casting and other selection exercises will be conducted on the basis of merit, against objective criteria that avoid discrimination. When recruiting or casting, we will aim to take steps to improve the diversity of our members and casts and provide equality of opportunity.

Shortlisting [and interviewing/auditioning] should be done by more than one person where possible. Our procedures will be reviewed regularly to ensure that individuals are objectively assessed on the basis of their relevant merits and abilities.

When casting, candidates should not be asked questions which might suggest an intention to discriminate on grounds of a Protected Characteristic.

For example, applicants should not be asked where they are from or whether they are pregnant or planning to have children.

Candidates should not be asked about health or disability before a role offer is made, except in the very limited circumstances allowed by law: for example, to check that the applicant could perform an intrinsic part of the role (taking account of any reasonable adjustments), or to see if any adjustments might be needed at audition because of a disability.