

Equality and Diversity Policy

The Society is committed to the policy of equal treatment of all employees and applicants to promote a culture which actively values difference recognising that people from diverse backgrounds can bring valuable insights to the workplace and enhance the way we do business. The Society's aim is to be an inclusive organisation by recruiting, training, promoting and rewarding on the basis of merit and irrespective of the protected characteristics detailed in the Equality Act 2010 (gender, disability, sexual orientation, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy & maternity, gender reassignment, age, religion or belief, race, which includes colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins) or in relation to part time status, trade union membership and political belief or affiliations.

The Society is therefore committed to providing equality of opportunity for all employees by:

- Preventing any form of direct or indirect discrimination or victimisation or bullying.
- Promoting a good and harmonious working environment where all individuals are treated with respect and dignity and in which no form of intimidation or harassment from colleagues, customers or clients will be tolerated.
- Fulfilling all legal obligations under relevant legislation and associated Codes of Practice where they apply.
- Exceeding legal requirements to ensure that any person will be treated with fairness, respect and in a way that is non-discriminatory.

You must be aware of the importance which the Society attaches to this policy, and must ensure that you do not, by your own actions, behaviour or attitude, directly or indirectly or unintentionally discriminate against any job applicants, employees, customers or clients. Any act of discrimination will be treated as a disciplinary offence; these will include for example, discrimination in selecting, promoting or training, refusing to work with or for a person because of any of the reasons stated in paragraph one of this policy and harassment of any employee, customer or client.

This policy applies to all individuals working at all levels, contractors, trainees, casual workers, agency staff, and all job applicants.

Definition of Equality and Diversity

Equality can be described as breaking down barriers, eliminating discrimination and ensuring equal opportunity and access for all groups both in employment, and to goods and services; the basis of which is supported and protected by legislation. It should be noted that this does not mean treating everyone 'the same'. What it does mean is recognising that everyone is different with different strengths and needs which need to be addressed.

Diversity can be described as celebrating differences and valuing everyone. Each person is an individual with visible and non-visible differences and by respecting this everyone can feel valued for their contributions which is beneficial not only for the individual but for the Society .

Equality and Diversity are not inter-changeable but inter-dependent. There can be no equality of opportunity if difference is not valued and harnessed and taken account of.

The key benefits of adopting an Equality and Diversity Policy are:

- To promote fairness in access to employment opportunities
- To attract employees and to retain existing employees
- To gain a diversity of talent and experience
- To ensure that every employee has the opportunity to develop their potential
- To provide fair and equitable services to customers and stakeholders
- To ensure legal compliance, particularly with regard to the Society's responsibilities under health and safety and to the common law duty of care.

Commitment

Equality and Diversity are at the heart of how we do business. We recognise the importance that we make full use of people's talents and skills by creating an open and inclusive workplace culture where people from all backgrounds can work together with dignity and respect. We also recognise the importance to individuals to feel that they are being encouraged and developed to their full potential.

Steps we will take to ensure that we are fulfilling our responsibilities and promoting good practice include:

- Complying with legal obligations in a transparent manner
- Assessing the impact of policies and practices to identify remove or mitigate any disadvantage to underrepresented groups
- Taking measures to eliminate discrimination
- Take positive action to redress any imbalances identified by the monitoring carried out
- Fostering good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not
- Promoting awareness and understanding of equality and diversity matters among employees through policies, training and guidance
- Ensuring that the Society's property is, as far as possible, welcoming and accessible to all
- Making sure that reasonable adjustments are made, as appropriate, to enable people with disabilities to overcome barriers in the work environment
- Ensuring that employees are provided with appropriate tools so that they feel confident to discuss equality and diversity issues and raise any concerns they may have

Responsibilities

Each employee has a responsibility to ensure that the ethos of this policy is put into practice in all areas of work and in any dealings with people external to the Society.

The Chief Executive Officer and the Senior Management Team are responsible for:

- Providing leadership on the Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity strategy and policy, acting as overall champions to ensure that that policy is implemented effectively and communicating the strategy and policy both internally and externally.
- Ensuring that training on this Policy is included as a core requirement at all levels within the Society
- Closely monitoring all aspects of equality, diversity and inclusivity and taking action where any anomalies are identified to redress the imbalances found.

Managers at all level are responsible for:

- Demonstrating and role-modelling acceptable standards
- Supporting their employees in meeting the aims of this policy
- Ensuring that all employees participate in the training provided
- Taking practical steps to implement and support this policy.
- Ensuring that any complaints or grievances are dealt with fairly, in accordance with the Disciplinary Policy and Grievance Policy.

- Implementing the policy as part of their day-to-day management of staff and in applying employment policies and practices in a fair and equitable way;
- Ensuring equality and diversity issues are addressed in performance;
- Effectively managing and dealing promptly when investigating issues relating to potential discrimination, including those matters concerning employees, members of the general public or other stakeholders; and
- Ensuring all policy or service decisions that will change provisions, practices or policies and affect the workforce are Equality Impact Assessed.

The Employees' Responsibilities

All employees have a responsibility to guard against any form of discrimination and avoid any action which goes against the spirit of this policy. Employees at all levels must ensure that there is no discrimination in any of their decisions or behaviour. This includes the provision that all employees must:

- Implement the policy in their day-to-day work and their dealings with colleagues, customers and visitors;
- Ensure their behaviour is appropriate to the policy and that they treat people with respect and dignity;
- Not discriminate against other employees, volunteers or students; and
- Notify their line manager of any concerns with regard to the conduct of other employees, volunteers or students, the public or third parties.

Definitions of types of Discrimination

Direct Discrimination

Unlawful direct discrimination occurs when a person is treated less favourably than another because of one or more of the protected characteristics. These protected characteristics include gender, disability, sexual orientation, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy & maternity, gender reassignment, age, religion or belief, race, which includes colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins) or in relation to part time status, trade union membership and political belief or affiliations. Direct discrimination, for example, can occur where a woman is refused a job, training or promotion because she is pregnant.

Indirect Discrimination

Unlawful indirect discrimination is when a provision, criterion or practice is applied to all people but which, in practice, is such that fewer people in certain groups are able to comply and it cannot be shown to be a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim. Some practices may look fair but have an unintended discriminatory effect. For example, if the Society made a GCSE English qualification a requirement as selection criteria. This would have a disproportionate adverse impact on people educated overseas and may not be justified if all that is required for the job is to demonstrate a level of literacy or the ability to communicate with others. The necessary level of literacy can be tested or checked in other ways that are more relevant to the job.

Victimisation

If any employee is victimised (treated unfairly) because they have supported another person who has a protected characteristic, that employee will have the same protection as if he or she had that protected characteristic.

For example, one person gives a statement confirming that they witnessed the other employee being harassed due to his or her race. The witness is then victimised, and pressure is brought in an attempt to get him or her to withdraw the statement. The witness will then be protected in the same way as the original employee who was being harassed.

Associative Discrimination

This is where a person is discriminated against because they have an association with someone who has a particular protected characteristic. For example, a non-disabled person is discriminated against because of the action they need to take care of disabled dependent.

Discrimination by Perception

Discrimination against a person because the discriminator thinks the person possesses that characteristic. For example, a person is not shortlisted for a job on the basis that the recruiter assumes the applicant does not have the correct VISA to work in the UK as they have a foreign looking name on their application form

Harassment

Harassment is defined as unwanted conduct which can be physical, verbal or non-verbal that either violates a person's dignity, or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that person. The Society will not tolerate harassment on the grounds detailed in the Equality Act 2010 (gender, gender reassignment, race, which includes colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins, disability, sexual orientation, age, religion or belief. It may be persistent or an isolated incident. It can take many forms, from relatively mild banter to actual physical violence.

You may not always realise that your behaviour constitutes bullying or harassment but you must recognise that what is acceptable to one person may not be acceptable to another.

The Society has a separate Harassment, Bullying and Stalking Policy.

Time off for Religious Observance

The Society will consider any request made for time off to observe particular religious commitments with sensitivity and sympathetically. For example, if you need to be home by a certain time on Friday or Saturday to observe the requirements of your faith, the Society will review the duties of you to see if it is feasible to accommodate this request. Where possible, such requests will be agreed and time may be taken as unpaid time off or made up at a different time which suits the Society.

If the work simply cannot be done at another time, then the Society will be unable to agree to the request as it would mean that the organisation's operation would suffer. The same type of consideration will be given to practising Christians who may not wish to work on Sunday or to refrain from working at Christmas or Easter.

Consideration will also be given to the locations and the timings of meetings and functions. The Society will treat employees' beliefs and religion with sensitivity. For example, locations for business meetings will be checked regarding alcohol if one of the people required to attend the meeting follows a doctrine which prevents him or her from attending meetings at such a place. The timing of routine meetings will, as far as possible, not be arranged when employees who follow a particular religion would be unable to attend due to that religion.

Some religions require their followers to pray at specific times during the day. The Society will allow time off for quiet prayer which can be taken at times convenient to the business and in a convenient place. This time will be unpaid unless it can be made up at a time which is convenient to the Society.

If you request time off for religious practices, such requests will be treated with sensitivity, and your duties and the impact on the business considered carefully.

If you wish to make a request under this section of the policy, you should talk to your line Manager who will discuss your requirements to see if these can be accommodated.

Using Holidays

Sensitive consideration will be given to requests to take holiday (or unpaid leave or flexitime) to observe religious holidays. Wherever possible, the Society will agree to these requests. However, if the Society has a legitimate business reason for refusing any request then this will be the outcome as the Society is permitted to make these decisions based on the need to operate the business effectively. If requests are made with as much notice as possible being given it may be more likely that these can be accommodated and planned for in the business work schedule.

Religious and Cultural Dress

You may wear appropriate religious and cultural dress (for example, clerical collars, head scarves, skullcaps, turbans, burqa, hijab) unless it creates a health and safety risk to them or any other person, or otherwise breaches this policy.

For operational and health and safety reasons, employees of the Society may have to be flexible in some circumstances. However, the Society's policy is to ensure that any such restrictions regarding clothing to be worn in an operational environment are genuine requirements on grounds of operational effectiveness or health and safety.

Where necessary management can give further information and guidance on cultural and religious dress in the workplace.

Procedure for Dealing with a Complaint of Unlawful Discrimination

Complaints about, or reports of, discriminatory behaviour or harassment should be made through the Society Grievance Procedure.

Complaints should be raised as soon as possible so that the matter can be dealt with quickly. The matter should be raised first with the complainant's line manager. If this would cause embarrassment or if the complainant feels it inappropriate, for example if the line manager is the subject of the complaint, then the matter should be raised with another, possibly more senior manager.

If you experience any discriminatory behaviour from a third party such as customers or clients, you should raise the matter immediately with your line manager or any other Manager present at the place of work. The matter will be treated seriously and the Manager will carry out a full investigation.

Accusation of Unlawful Discrimination

Any accusations of unlawful discrimination will be investigated fully by the Society. As part of the investigation, you will be given every opportunity to answer the allegation and provide an explanation of your actions.

Once the investigation is complete, if the Society finds that no unlawful discrimination occurred, no further action will be taken.

However, if the Society decides that your actions amount to unlawful discrimination, you may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including summary dismissal for gross misconduct.

If, after the investigation is complete, it is found that the claim is false or malicious, disciplinary action may be taken against the employee who raised the complaint.

Equal opportunities practice is constantly developing as social attitudes and legislation changes. The Society will keep its policies under review and will implement changes where these could improve equality of opportunity.

Recruitment and Selection

This is a key area where anti-discriminatory practice can make a difference. It is important that the Society recruits the best person for each vacancy that arises.

All advertisements, job descriptions and the short listing and interview procedures should take cognisance of the Society's Equality and Diversity Policy. Please note that special consideration should be applied when drawing up the section relating to knowledge, skills and experience. The key points are to be objective, be clear about the role and avoid unfair assumptions (E.g. that women will have childcare issues).

Learning and Development

The Society believe that all employees should be given the opportunity to undertake learning and development as part of the Society's commitment to continuous professional development.

Specific ways to encourage diversity through training and development include:

- Providing appropriate training for all employees involved in the recruitment and selection process and to those who may provide feedback to candidates
- Offering Diversity training as part of the induction process and updating all employees on any changes to practices or legal framework affecting this policy
- Having regular refresher training on diversity so that it is maintained as a crucial part of how the Society operates
- Encouraging awareness of all sections within the Society through initiatives including secondments, mentoring, attending presentations, occasional hot-desking, and development days
- Allowing all employees, the opportunity to fulfil their potential through ongoing development in accordance with the Performance Management Policy.

Disability Discrimination

The Disability Discrimination Act was passed in 1995 and is included in the Equality Act 2010. As well as dealing with issue that may occur in employment it also places an obligation on service providers to ensure that disabled people are able to use their services. This also means that reasonable adjustments have to be made to buildings so those physical barriers do not prevent disabled people from accessing services.

The installation and use of induction loops, text phones, appropriate use of colour contrast, low level reception desks, and having information available in large print, tape or Braille can help to meet these requirements.

The Equality Act compels the Society to think how it offers its services in ways that allows disabled people to have access as well as considering what needs to be done to facilitate the employment of disabled people.

The Society is committed to make every effort that should any employee become disabled they will stay in employment. Should a candidate with a disability apply for any vacancy within the Society, they will be considered on their abilities not their disability.

Where any employee has a condition that is regarded as a disability, the Society will as flexible as possible discussing any reasonable adjustments with the employee so that the workplace is comfortable and accommodates their requirements.

This will also include any adjustments to the dress code followed by the Society.

If any employee would like to discuss any adjustments, they should talk to their line manager in the first instance.

Reasonable Adjustments

If you have a condition that is regarded as a disability, the Society will be as flexible as possible by discussing any reasonable adjustments with you so that the workplace is comfortable and accommodates your requirements.

This will also include any adjustments to the dress code followed by the Company.

If you would like to discuss any adjustments, you should talk to your line Manager in the first instance.

Composition of the Board of Directors

The Board of Directors will ensure that its membership is sufficiently representative of the community served by the Royal Scottish National Orchestra as far as this is reasonably possible.

Artistic Programming

The Royal Scottish National Orchestra constantly strives to extend the range of work presented by the orchestra in order to increase audience numbers and make the programme of the orchestra accessible to different sectors of the community.

The Royal Scottish National Orchestra recognises that some sectors of the community have specific interests which should be considered if they are to enjoy equal access, participation and development opportunities.

The Royal Scottish National Orchestra involves under-represented and minority groups in educational workshops and events.

Marketing and Publicity

The Royal Scottish National Orchestra has a targeted mailing list of minority ethnic groups and disabled patrons for the distribution of publicity material.

The orchestra's season ticket brochure is available on tape for blind and partially sighted people.

Consideration would be given to using ethnic minority languages in publicity material if it was established that significant numbers of the community served by the orchestral were not literate in English.

Market research is carried out periodically to determine the nature of the orchestra's audience and its composition and to ensure that its needs are served by the orchestra's programme.

The ticket pricing policy of the orchestra includes concessions for unemployed, disabled, elderly and young people and this is also extended to escorts in the case of blind patrons and wheelchair users.

Implementation, Monitoring and Review

While it is important to have a policy on Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity, it is equally important to have a robust monitoring system with checks and balances in place so that any issues can be highlighted. This also allows management to identify where there may be areas of institutional discrimination happening which may not be as obvious as individual occurrences. A result of any monitoring will be published along with any action plan devised to address the imbalances shown.