



Sound Sense equality and diversity policy

4 January 2018

Sound Sense is opposed to discrimination and values diversity

Introduction

Sound Sense is the national association of those involved or interested in community and participatory music. It promotes the significance and value of community music and assists in its members' professional development.

Community music enables people's active and creative participation in music-making. By description it happens in all types of community where it reflects the context in which it takes place; and it is concerned with *putting equal opportunities into practice*.

Equality and diversity being therefore central to the practice, they must therefore be central to the organisation which promotes the practice. Hence:

- Sound Sense is opposed to discrimination and values diversity

We see opportunities for diversity and anti-discrimination through:

- Our staff
- Our members
- The service we provide

And we also recognise that there may be:

- Balances and constraints in the practical application of this policy

The responsibility for ensuring compliance with this policy rests with the board of trustees.

Staff

Staff here includes employed staff and in most circumstances – and so far as the law allows – contractors, workers, volunteers and trustees too.

We value staff members as individuals to be treated with dignity and respect. We recognise that people from different backgrounds or with different personal characteristics can bring change and a different approach which can make the way we work more efficient, creative and innovative. We expect staff to cooperate in promoting a harmonious working environment free from harassment, intimidation or victimisation.



We comply with legislation on discrimination and equality, and we are committed to preventing discrimination on any further ground not justifiable in the context of this policy. To meet our undertakings here we expect staff to cooperate with measures to ensure equality of opportunity and promote diversity.

In respect to employed staff specifically we fulfil our commitment to equal opportunity by:

- Recognising our legal obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and associated law
- Ensuring no applicant is treated less favourably than others because of any further personal characteristics not justifiable in the context of this policy
- Selecting an applicant for employment based only on their ability to do the job
- Adopting recruitment procedures based on good practice at the time of such recruitment
- Adopting training, promotion and employment procedures based on good practice at the time of such activity

In respect of board members (trustees) specifically, where possible (and where allowable by law) we actively seek members from under-represented groups.

Sound Sense recognise that practices that are anti-discriminatory in one area may discriminate elsewhere:

- The gold standard for recruitment to employed posts is open advertising. But this might reduce the ability to recognise ability or promote within existing staff. For short-term contracts, the cost open recruitment may be disproportionately large – reducing the amount of our very small income available for core activity; by definition the promotion of equality of opportunity. For these reasons we may offer small or short-term contracts (of value to be agreed from time to time) without open recruitment; we may recruit for new posts first internally; or we may offer developments of existing part-time posts first to the current post holder.
- Most of our work is carried out in partnership, whether with organisations or individuals. In almost every such case funding or tender applications need to contain the details of the partners; and successful selection is largely based on the reputations of the totality of the partners and their track record working together. Given also that the members of such partnerships are necessarily drawn together swiftly in response to the tender or funding call, open recruitment of partners for such work is therefore not a possibility; and the



only alternative for Sound Sense not to carry out such work, and so as above reducing our income and our influence

Concerns about non-compliance with commitments and expectations described here are addressed through disciplinary or grievance procedures based on good practice at the time of such concerns.

Members

Sound Sense members are our association, and we value their diversity in every characteristic. We do not discriminate against them on any ground not justifiable in the context of this policy. In turn, we expect members to cooperate in promoting a harmonious environment free from harassment, intimidation or victimisation

We recognise there are balances and constraints we have to operate under. We need to charge membership fees in order to operate – but we mitigate any potential discrimination by the actions described in the following section.

Services

Sound Sense members practice inclusion, participation and diversity in their work – we want the widest range of people from diverse backgrounds or with different personal characteristics to benefit from the services Sound Sense provides.

In the provision of our services (information, disclosure & barring checks, insurance, advice etc) whether to members or non-members, we comply with legislation on discrimination and equality, and we are committed to preventing discrimination on any further ground not justifiable in the context of this policy.

Where appropriate, and as allowable by law, we actively address issues of underrepresentation in the content of, supply of, or demand for, our services.

We recognise there are balances and constraints we have to operate under. Most of our services need to be available only to members – but we mitigate any potential discrimination by actions such as:

- Charging lower fees where possible for certain classes of member
- Prioritising requests for advice from non-members concerning disability issues
- Making freely available information on our website or via social media within the constraints of our business model

Review



This policy was accepted by Sound Sense board on 24th November 2014.

This policy was reviewed and accepted by Sound Sense board on 28th March 2018

Background

This policy is based on the twin concepts of equality and diversity. Improving equality and diversity in your organisation: a guide for the third sector CEO's ACEVO: 2011 says "Equality is associated broadly with the legislative framework. It thrusts is focused on rights and responsibilities and anti-discrimination " whereas diversity " include every kind of difference that makes each person unique or distinct" This policy has been informed by the Cranfield Trust HR service (a charity of the management school Cranfield) and the ACEVO guide cited above.