


Sunderland Culture

Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity Policy

March 2024

DISTRIBUTION: all staff and volunteers of Sunderland Culture; Sunderland Culture Board of Trustees.

Approved by	Rebecca Ball, Chief Executive
Signature and date	 12 th March 2024
Next review	March 2025

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1. Policy Statement

Sunderland Culture recognises, values and celebrates the diversity of our audiences, staff, creative partners and community. As an organisation with high profile venues, receiving public funds, we aim to act as an exemplar of good practice and encourage our participants, stakeholders, creative partners and local community to share these values. We do this in the following ways:-

- We do not tolerate discriminatory practices of any kind. In line with our strategic aims, we work to create a positive environment where all members of our community treat one another with mutual respect and dignity and do not face discrimination with regard to any aspect of their identity, such as age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, economic status, marriage/ civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief or sexual orientation.
- We ensure that this commitment is embedded across our organisation through our governance structure, workforce, staff recruitment and training
- We are committed to ensuring our performance, exhibitions, learning and engagement programmes reflect the diversity of stories, experiences and interests of our communities and accessible to all
- We are committed to ensuring our audiences from diverse backgrounds are able to enjoy and participate in our work

2. Policy scope

2.1 This policy applies to all staff working for Sunderland Culture on a paid or voluntary basis, the visitors to our venues and participants of our programme.

2.2 The principles also apply to the way in which we work with artists, contractors, subcontractors, service providers and anyone associated with the functions of Sunderland Culture.

2.3 This policy covers discrimination based on the following, including the 9 protected characteristics as outlined in The Equality Act (2010): -

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion and/or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

In addition, we have chosen to include:

- Socio-economic circumstances

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 Sunderland Culture Board's responsibility is to: -

- Take the lead in promoting equality and diversity.
- Own and monitor implementation of this policy.
- Nominate a Board-level Equality, Diversity & Inclusivity Champion

3.2 Sunderland Culture Chief Executive's responsibility is to: -

- Ensure implementation of this policy.
- Provide strong leadership on equality and diversity.
- Drive delivery of the Equality and Diversity Action Plan.
- Work closely with the Equality, Diversity & Inclusivity Group to monitor progress against the annual action plan.

3.3 Sunderland Culture's Equality, Diversity Inclusivity Group's responsibility is to: -

- Act as equality champions and role models.
- Act as a forum for regular updates and sharing of best practice from each venue/team/project within Sunderland Culture.
- Proactively promote and publicise the Equality and Diversity Group's strategies and plans to their teams across the organisation.
- Develop, and monitor the Equality and Diversity Action Plan.
- Identify, recommend and deliver equality and diversity initiatives.
- Act on feedback and concerns from staff members, and challenge and question policy and practice in a safe environment.
- Monitor the effectiveness of training, communication and publicity, and initiating action to maintain a high standard.
- The Chair of the Equality, Diversity & Inclusivity Group to report to the Chief Executive and the Board on progress of the action plan.

3.4 Sunderland Culture Line Managers' responsibility is to: -

- Ensure that staff, volunteers and contractors are aware of this policy and understand their rights and responsibilities contained within it.
- Role model behaviour that supports this policy and challenge those they manage to do the same.
- Allocate their time and support and any training or development opportunities.
- Build specific actions into their team and individual's goals that contribute to the delivery of the Equality, Diversity & Inclusivity Action Plan.
- Act objectively, fairly and without discrimination.
- Communicate regularly with their teams about equality issues in a way that keeps this policy and its action plan live.

3.5 Sunderland Culture staff and volunteer responsibility is to: -

- Treat others with dignity and respect.
- Report discrimination, bullying, unfair treatment or harassment that they experience or witness to their Line Manager or member of the Equality, Diversity & Inclusivity Group.

- Help identify discriminatory practices or procedures and bring these to the attention of their Line Managers.
- Attend mandatory staff training and development events, and refresher training on an annual cycle.
- Express opinions constructively with sensitivity and respect in a confidential and supportive environment.
- Support the work of the Equality, Diversity & Inclusivity Group when required.
- Play an active part in delivering the Equality, Diversity & Inclusivity Action Plan through their work and inputting into it through team meetings.

4. Our objectives

Sunderland Culture will work to promote a culture of equality and diversity through the following six objectives: -

4.1 Governance

- Through open recruitment and selection, we will work to ensure our Board becomes more representative of the range of communities served by the organisation.
- Board members to have a full understanding of the importance of ensuring a positive approach to equality and diversity through training and development, and an annual update from the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Group.
- Board members to adhere to and champion the Creative Case for Diversity and all equality and diversity issues at Board level.
- We have established a framework to monitor delivery of Sunderland Culture's commitments to the Inclusivity and Relevance Investment Principle.

4.2 Staff and volunteer recruitment and training

- Staff to have a full understanding of the importance of ensuring a positive and informed approach to equality and diversity, so that Sunderland Culture are operating to the highest standards. Equality and Diversity to be embedded into team meetings, staff appraisals, planning of future initiatives.
- Understand the make-up of our workforce and our local community and aspire to address under-representation in future recruitment where possible and appropriate.
- An Equality and Diversity Action Plan is developed, regularly checked and challenged and there is a forum to develop project ideas supporting equality, diversity and the Creative Case.

4.3 Accessibility

- Sunderland Culture venues and programmes of activity to be as inclusive and accessible as practicable, e.g., building requirements; staff welcome and approach; range of exhibitions and programme; marketing approach. We will undertake regular accessibility audits, and this will be monitored by the Equality and Diversity Group.

4.4 Learning Programme.

- Ensure a varied programme that is relevant to, engages with and reflective of all our communities
- Agree on an annual EDI focus/theme to raise awareness and understanding in specific areas amongst all staff and where possible focus programme
- Ensure activities are delivered by a pool of high quality practitioners from diverse backgrounds

4.5 Cultural Programme

- To programme artists with attention to ACE's Creative Case for Diversity
- Interpretation of our collections and archives to accurately acknowledge equality and diversity issues.
- Support and promote the creative development of artists in the city from diverse backgrounds through our talent development programmes.
- Agree on an annual EDI focus/theme to raise awareness and understanding in specific areas amongst all staff and where possible focus programme

4.6 Audience Development

- Increased understanding of audience profile to ensure that our programmes reflect and attract the communities that we serve.
- To enable the Board and Management team to listen to the voices of the community and actively seek out their views to influence planning.
- To share our values with audiences, stakeholders, prospective staff etc.

5.0 Implementation and monitoring

- Sunderland Culture as a whole share responsibility for the application of this policy, whilst specific responsibility falls to Line Managers and representatives of the Equality, Diversity & Inclusivity Group.
- This policy will be implemented through Sunderland Culture's Equality, Diversity & Inclusivity Action Plan. Progress against actions and objectives will be reported into the Management Team by the Chair(s) of the Equality and Diversity Group. Updates will regularly be given at staff meetings.
- This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis by the Equality, Diversity & Inclusivity Group and Sunderland Culture Board to ensure that it reflects best practice and current legislation. The review will focus on tracking progress, identifying challenges to delivery and devising ways to overcome these as well as checking that the policy objectives and actions remain relevant.
- Sunderland Culture will train our staff and volunteers on an annual cycle, including Board Members, to implement this policy and embed equality principles into all relevant training including induction, 1-2-1s and team meetings.
- We will communicate this policy to all our stakeholders so that they are aware of our commitment to treat them fairly and their obligation to operate in line with this policy.
- Take appropriate action when incidents occur which breach this policy (see section 6).
- On an annual basis, monitor and review the success of this policy in promoting equality and evaluate the relevance and effectiveness of our Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity Action Plan.

6. Handling complaints

6.1 Sunderland Culture take seriously complaints of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination by fellow employees, visitors, artists, participants, volunteers and any others in the course of our work activities.

6.2 Should staff or volunteers experience or witness breaches of this policy, perhaps involving direct discrimination against an individual or bullying and harassment, then they should in the first instance speak to their Line Manager or a member of SMT.

6.3 The Line Manager or SMT member will investigate the breaches thoroughly and provide opportunities for the person making the complaint to speak in a safe

environment about their experience. Staff employed by the University of Sunderland or Sunderland City Council will go through the complaint's procedure of their organisations.

- 6.4 If the complaint is against an individual, they will also hear their point of view. They will decide the action to take based on the principle of ensuring the continued inclusion and safety of any member who has experienced discrimination or harassment.
- 6.5 Members of the public should address complaints to the Line Manager of the team in question in the first instance and follow the Sunderland Culture Complaints Procedure which can be found at <https://sunderlandculture.org.uk/terms-and-conditions/feedback/>