

SKY Music Hub - November 2023

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy Statement

SKY Music Hub seeks to ensure that equality and diversity principles – including inclusivity, accessibility, anti-racism, respect and difference – underpin all areas of our work and we commit to actively promote them through provision, commissions and partnerships with other organisations and individuals.

Furthermore;

- Provision can only be at its best when those who are involved in music education and music-making come from all walks of life and are at the heart of diverse and equitable music-making.
- Provision will be a stronger, more exciting and more relevant to more people by fully embracing equality, diversity and inclusion; reinforcing its values where necessary by positive action to achieve its goals and to properly engage with the under-represented.
- To involve Children and Young People in exciting and compelling music-making that contributes to a world where everybody can connect with music to support their life journey, that fulfils its objectives and is appropriate to our times, SKY Music Hub must embrace the wide range of people and communities it serves.

Therefore:-

Equality, diversity, inclusion and social justice are values which are fundamental to our mission, and sit at the core of our organisational processes, practices and culture.

We will strive to eliminate discrimination including direct or indirect discrimination, discrimination by association, discrimination linked to a perceived characteristic, harassment and victimisation.

We will remain proactive in taking steps to ensure inclusion and engagement for all the people who provide services for us and/or work with us.

We will continue to strive towards a culture that is diverse and inclusive that recognises and develops the potential of all.

We recognise the business benefits and opportunities of having a diverse community of stakeholders, who value one another and realise the contribution they can make.

The Equality Act 2010 provides the legislative framework that informs our work to promote equality of opportunity and reduce barriers to engagement, in particular for protected groups including:

- age*
- disability*
- ethnicity (including race, colour and nationality)*
- gender*
- gender reassignment*
- religion or belief*
- sexual orientation*
- marriage and civil partnership*
- pregnancy and maternity*
- refugees and asylum seekers
- people who are neuro-divergent
- ex-offenders

*Under the Equality Act (2010) these are known as “protected characteristics”.

Achieving action

Sefton and Knowsley (SKY) Music Education Hub, has an Equality, Diversity & Inclusion action plan, which sets out how we plan to develop best practice.

What do we mean by Equality, Diversity and Inclusion?

Equality is about ensuring that every individual has an equal opportunity to make the most of their lives and talents, and believing that no one should have poorer life chances because of where, what or whom they were born or have chosen to become, what they believe, or whether they have a disability.

As referred to below a reference to **protected characteristics** in this statement includes reference to age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, colour, religion or belief, neurodiversity, sex and sexual orientation, political opinion or affiliation.

Equality recognises that certain groups of people with protected characteristics experience discrimination and that it may be necessary to take positive action to address this.

Diversity literally means difference.

Diversity is about recognising individual as well as group differences, treating people as individuals, it is about us placing and protecting positive value on diversity within BRS as an organisation and in the wider community.

For BRS, diversity means embracing and celebrating the full breadth of the society we live and work in and ensuring that under-represented communities have a stake in it – and in BRS.

It is also about valuing the unique skills, experiences and perspectives of every individual and finding ways to bring the best out of them.

Diversity is vital to our culture, society and economy. It teaches us how to relate and co-exist with people who are different from ourselves.

Inclusion – we are committed to ensuring everyone feels welcome, no one feels uncomfortable and everyone is able to thrive and contribute equally regardless of who they are, where they're from, what they're going through.

What this means for anyone who works for and with us:

All involved with SKY Music Hub are integral to making our vision of equality and diversity a reality. This includes:

- Taking part in opportunities to develop awareness, knowledge and skills to understand and adopt inclusive approaches to their work.
- Reading and committing to SKY Music Hub Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy Statement.
- Participating in groups/actions to implement best equality and diversity practice.

Serving Young People and Schools

SKY Music Hub is committed to high quality provision through identified need and aspirations. We know that these differ from school to school and young person to young person, so services adapted to ensure that all are able to benefit from our services.

So, our commitment means understanding and meeting the needs of young people regardless of race, ethnic origin, nationality, religion, cultural background, gender (including gender reassignments), sexuality, disability, illness (such as HIV or AIDS status), age, membership of trade unions and/or political beliefs.

SKY also delivers a wide range of services to schools and directly to young people and through partnership with other organisations. We will improve their contribution to equality and diversity by:

- Linking policies and service delivery
- Giving a clear account of our performance through monitoring and evaluation

Workforce

The SKY workforce is our largest resource in improving equality, diversity and inclusion so we want to ensure that everyone understand its importance and have the confidence and capacity to do so. This includes:

- Developing a workforce profile reflects that community profile;
- Giving staff the knowledge and confidence to tackle equality and diversity issues and implement best practice.

Tackling Discrimination

It is our policy not to discriminate unlawfully or unfairly against anybody.

We know that unlawful and unfair discrimination occurs in society and is often based on stereotypes and false assumptions. We oppose unfair discrimination as an abuse of advantage and power

We also know that institutions as well as individuals can unlawfully discriminate. We define institutional discrimination as:

- The collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of who they are;
- Processes, attitudes and behaviour, which amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and/or stereotyping;
- Not just actions taken by a person or organisation but also actions not taken, neglect, or services provided which do not meet the needs of members of different groups.

Institutional discrimination can be unwitting, and it can exist no matter how good the intentions of the individual or the organisation. This is a challenge that all organisations, including ourselves, need to face honestly and openly.

We will examine our policies and practices and their outcomes to guard against disadvantaging any section of local communities.

What we will do

Disability Equality Statement

The SKY Disability Equality Statement sets out a clear commitment to promoting equality of opportunity between disabled people and other people by adopting the Social Model of Disability. Disability occurs because stereotypes, assumptions, exclusion, segregation and physical barriers deny disabled people equality of access in the above areas.

We recognise that social disadvantage and exclusion is not an inevitable consequence of people's medical condition or impairment, but rather that people are disabled by society's negative attitudes and treatment of disabled people.

This can limit their opportunities and choices and prevent disabled people from taking part fully in the life of their community. This discrimination stems from prejudiced and/or poorly informed attitudes and beliefs about the abilities, skills or characteristics of disabled people and can make disabled people more vulnerable to discrimination, hostility and inappropriate treatment.

This means we will strive to remove the barriers disabled people face, in particular with regard to education, employment and access to services. An integral part of this process is the involvement of disabled people.

In particular we will:

- Challenge discriminatory assumptions about disabled people;
- Ensure that we comply with the Disability Discrimination Act.
- Continue to support groups and networks of disabled young people
- Support disabled people to make choices about their own lives
- Protect vulnerable disabled people from abuse
- Continue to respect disabled people's dignity

SKY is committed to ensuring that activities and buildings are monitored for accessibility. SKY will endeavour to overcome any physical barriers by providing any reasonable adjustments, where appropriate.

Race Equality Statement

We recognise racism as any unfair discrimination on the grounds of people's skin colour, accent, religious beliefs, dress, culture or ethnic origin. We are determined to challenge racism and to create an environment that is free from discrimination.

We know that racism is widespread within society. And we know that we must confront it to reduce its damaging effects. Racist assumptions create the barriers which can hinder aspirations and access to appropriate, services and employment opportunities.

SKY Race Equality statement sets out the charity's commitment to ensuring that our staff, contractors and service users are not discriminated against on the grounds of race, colour or nationality;

- Recognize that black and minority ethnic communities are not homogenous. Different communities and people within these communities will have different needs and we will work to ensure that these needs are not defined by stereotyping or presumptions.
- Ensure that we identify and consider the rights and needs of black and minority ethnic people when planning and delivering services.
- Promote a culture in which there is respect for others, an understanding between different communities and an appreciation of racial and cultural difference
- Ensure that all people, regardless of race, ethnic or national origins, have the same rights of access..

Gender Equality statement

We recognise that women can experience disadvantage and discrimination. SKY Music Hub will promote equality for all female staff, contractors and service users.

We will:

- Challenge discriminatory assumptions about women;
- Offer equal access for women to, services and employment/contracts.

Caring responsibility

We recognise that people with caring responsibilities for others may face discrimination. We will, where possible, adopt flexible delivery patterns;

Although there is only protection in law for transsexual people, it is best practice for SKY to afford the same protection to all transgender people. We will follow the Merseyside Police definition for transgender people as “a generic term commonly used to cover those people who do not conform to the existing social and cultural classifications of men and women. It embraces transsexual people, transvestites, cross dressers, intersex people and others whose gender is not easily defined”

In order to comply with this legislation we will:

- Collect information about the proportions of men and women using services and engaged at different levels in the organization
- Take steps to promote a gender balance at all levels in the workforce. This point includes the promotion of flexible delivery practices
- Monitor progress
- Review gender equality goals and actions every three years

Sexuality Orientation Equality Statement

This equality statement recognizes that employment and service delivery procedures and practices should not be based on the assumption that everyone is or should be heterosexual. Lesbian, gay and bisexual people experience discrimination because of attitudes and practices. Lesbian, gay and bisexual people who are open about their sexual orientation, and also people who are not open about their sexual orientation but are assumed to be lesbian, gay or bisexual may face discrimination when trying to gain access to education, training, job opportunities and mainstream services.

This statement recognizes that everyone has the right to define their own sexual orientation and that discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation is unacceptable.

SKY Music Hub recognises that the lesbian, gay and bisexual communities have different needs and that these needs should not be defined by stereotyping or presumptions. In order to do this we will:

- Work towards enabling lesbian, gay and bisexual people at all levels in the workforce to feel safe in being open about their sexual orientation

- Take positive steps in conditions of service to take account of the rights of lesbian, gay and bisexual employees, including recognition of their needs as partners, having partners, and as parents and carers
- Ensure that existing equality and diversity training courses and induction include anti-homophobic awareness and its impact on the organisation policy and activities.
- In policy development, service planning and delivery, the charity will ensure that people do not receive a different quality of service due to their sexual orientation.

Faith, Religion and Belief Equality Statement

This equality statement recognises that both service provision and delivery procedures and practices should not be based on the assumption that everyone is or should belong to a specific faith, religion or belief.

People who follow faiths, religions and beliefs may experience discrimination when trying to gain access to education, training, job opportunities and mainstream services because of assumptions, attitudes and practices.

The statement recognises that everyone has the right to follow their own chosen faith religion or belief and that discrimination on the grounds of belief systems is unacceptable.

SKY recognises that faith communities are not homogenous. Different communities and people in the communities have different needs. Needs should not be defined by stereotyping or presumptions.

We will not discriminate against anyone because of their religion or belief, which is any religion, religious belief, or similar philosophical belief.

We will respect and accommodate people's religious observances in both serving and engaging with them, and we will expect others to do the same.

We realise that at times some people's beliefs may conflict with aspects of this policy. We will try to resolve any such conflicts, but we will treat the aims of this policy as overriding and expect others to comply with it.

To achieve this, SKY will:

- Work towards enabling all feel safe in being open about their faith, religion or belief systems
- Be positive, respect and take account of the rights of all to follow the observances of their chosen faith, religion or belief system
- Make provisions for religious awareness training in existing diversity training courses
- Ensure that all information and publicity is not prejudiced and uses positive images and language to counter the effects of religious discrimination
- In policy development service planning and delivery the Hub will ensure that requirements according to their faith, religion or belief are taken into account.

How we will implement and monitor the policy

We will monitor our workforce as well as our services. We will use performance indicators as part of our audit and scrutiny of our progress in increasing equality and diversity.

We recognise that everyone needs to adhere to this policy to ensure its success.

Service Managers have an essential role in delivering this policy by:

- Actively developing their services' approach to equality and diversity;
- Ensure that staff and contractors meet the aims of this policy;
- Establish and maintain appropriate consultation with community and key stakeholder groups.

Providing services

SKY Music Hub Will

- Developing and implementing provision in a way that reflects and is consistent with this policy
- Checking the impact of our services against the aspirations of this policy the and needs of stakeholders
- Monitoring the outputs and outcomes of our services

Employing people

This section will show our proposals for increasing equality and diversity in our workforce by:

- Assessing the local labour market;
- Checking the impact of our employment functions on equality and diversity
- Setting equal recruitment objectives and targets
- Continuing with Council recruitment and employment policy
- Monitoring and reporting on workforce profile
- Stating ED+I requirements when commissioning external contractors.

Publicising this Statement

All employees, contractors and Board members will be informed that an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Statement is in operation and that they are to comply with its requirements.

Copies of the whole statement will be provided on appointment or on acceptance of any voluntary position or on the signature of a contract and at induction.

This statement will also be drawn to the attention of funding agencies, volunteer applicants, job applicants and contractors.

Review Date – September 2024