



All & Sundry

Equalities Policy

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Introduction

'All & Sundry' is a theatrical Community Interest Company made up of people from a wide variety of backgrounds, abilities, interests and ages. This not-for-profit company includes some professional artistic and technical people and those who have only just entered the world of theatre. We are keen to attract new members, both on and off stage, from all community sectors, so that interest in theatre can be widened to include as many people as possible in the South Birmingham and North Worcestershire area. We are determined that in everything we do 'All and Sundry' will promote equality for all.

'All and Sundry' acknowledges the following basic rights for all members, prospective members of the group, our audiences and our stakeholders:

- to be treated with respect and dignity
- to be treated fairly with regard to all procedures, assessments and choices
- to receive encouragement to reach their full potential
- to be free from unlawful discrimination
- to enjoy equality of opportunity

Isn't it enough just to treat everyone the same?

Equality does not mean treating everyone in the same way. People may, for example, have different needs and requirements. Different procedures, facilities or arrangements may impact unfairly on people with different 'protected characteristics'. An example might be a recruitment policy which for no justified reason bars people from applying who are over 50 years of age, or a wage policy that pays men and women different salaries for the same level of effort and skills required.

As of April 2011 all public organizations have had a legal obligation to provide 'equality of opportunity' to nine groups of people who hold 'protected characteristics'.

What are 'Protected Characteristics'?

There are 9 'Protected Characteristics' people may hold, defined as the following:

- 1) **Genders** (i.e. men and women.)
- 2) **Races.**
- 3) **Religions or Beliefs** (including certain non-religious belief systems).
- 4) **Sexual Orientations** (heterosexual, homosexual and bisexual).
- 5) **Ages.**
- 6) **Marital Status** (single, married, divorced, in a civil partnership etc).
- 7) **Disabilities** (physical and mental).
- 8) People who have **Changed their Gender** (transsexual people.)
- 9) People who are **Pregnant** or post natal.

It is unlawful to discriminate against any person on the grounds of their *'Protected characteristics'*.

What is 'Unlawful Discrimination'?

Discrimination is defined as *"Less favourable treatment to a person (or persons) that is not capable of being justified"*.

Discrimination can occur in many different ways. This includes:

Direct Discrimination - i.e. deliberately casting only heterosexual people in a play

Indirect Discrimination - Where our policies or activities indirectly affect people who have different 'Protected Characteristics'. E.g. holding performances that are inaccessible to people with mobility problems.

Harassment - This can be unwanted conduct which affects the dignity of any of our members, audience or stakeholders by creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. Examples will include unwanted physical contact, gestures, physical threats or assault, unwanted verbal conduct such as remarks, suggestions, propositions, innuendos, jokes or banter based on someone's 'protected characteristics', unwanted non-verbal conduct such as offensive pictures, graffiti, display of pornographic or suggestive literature or inappropriate use of visual display units (VDU's) or network systems for this purpose

By Association - For example, where someone is harassed by others because they are in a relationship with someone from a different ethnic group, or someone is harassed because they have a gay friend.

Victimisation - For example, where someone experiences harassment because they have made a complaint about something.

By Perception - For example, where someone is perceived to be gay / not gay and is teased about it - irrespective of the person's actual sexual orientation.

Isn't it sometimes necessary to 'discriminate'?

Yes. At times, decisions will be made which may, on the face of it, appear to be discriminatory. However, such decisions are often capable of being justified in pursuance of 'legitimate aims'. Relevant examples of justified discrimination in the context of theatre might be:

Examples of justified discrimination	Justification
Inviting only men to audition for a role	A male actor is required for reasons of authenticity. Similar rules excluding men would apply when casting a female part, (however see * below)
Selecting someone for a role which demonstrates particular ability	A&S will hold audition processes that are an objective assessment of ability and skills, while also taking opportunities to help people develop their abilities and skills
Targeting advertising for events and productions to different community groups or within different locations	As part of our aim to promote equality it is sometimes necessary to target certain groups that are under-represented in our membership or our audiences. Providing we are also advertising our services/ productions/ training in other 'mainstream' publications, enabling access for other groups, this action would be justifiable.

*** 'Colour-blind', 'Integrated' or 'non-traditional' casting**

'Colour-blind' 'non-traditional' or 'integrated' casting is the practice of casting people from black and minority ethnic groups and women in roles where race, ethnicity, or sex is not relevant and appropriate. In recent years there has been a strong drive in mainstream theatre to promote non-traditional casting particularly to reflect the significantly fewer roles historically written for women and black and minority ethnic actors and consequently reduced opportunities for these groups.

To further A&S's aim to widen interest in theatre to include as many people as possible, A&S will look to implement non-traditional casting whenever appropriate.

Responsibility of all members to promote equality

Every member of A&S has a responsibility not to behave in a way that could be offensive to others and to ensure that their colleagues are treated with dignity and respect. Our responsibilities as individuals are to make sure that we:

- Co-operate with all A&S initiatives to promote and implement diversity, equality and fairness

- Do not unlawfully or unfairly discriminate against members, colleagues and our audience
- Do not encourage, instruct, or pressurize other members of A&S to discriminate unlawfully
- Do not harass, bully, abuse or intimidate colleagues, members or any others we have dealings with
- Bring to the attention of the A&S committee any incidents of discrimination, victimisation, harassment or bullying carried out by colleagues, members or other stakeholders

Policy with regards to participation and membership of ex-offenders

All and Sundry welcomes participation in activities by all including ex-offenders.

A CRB check is only requested by 'All and Sundry' for those positions where it is relevant and legal to do so.

An 'enhanced' CRB check will be required when appointing the committee's Child Protection Lead and there will always be either a 'CRB checked' youth group leader or another CRB checked adult member present during A&S Youth Group sessions. Only licenced chaperones (who will be subject to enhanced CRB checks) will be utilized to supervise children involved in productions.

Complaints

Any complaints or issues will be taken seriously and considered by the 'All and Sundry' Committee/ Board of Directors.