

## Appendix 9: OSO Equal Opportunities Policy

The OSO is committed to implementing and promoting equal opportunities in its activities, services and practice. We recognise that discrimination exists in society (whether protected by law or not), and that we have legal and moral duties to promote a positive culture of equality, respect, inclusivity and full participation. We believe especially in the value to individuals of participation in the arts for all people, in the power of the arts to promote understanding and respect between people of diverse backgrounds and cultures, and in promoting a sense of local community which is fully inclusive.

The OSO will not tolerate discrimination on the basis of:

- Race
- Colour
- Gender
- Sexual orientation or identity
- Ethnic or national origin
- Disability
- Partnership status or home responsibility
- HIV or AIDS status
- Age
- Political or religious belief
- Trade union activity
- Socio-economic background
- Refugee or asylum seeker status

As a provider of a service to the community, the OSO accepts the responsibility to promote equal opportunities and challenge discrimination wherever it occurs. This document sets out the main consequences of this commitment and the action to be taken in order to achieve equal opportunities.

The OSO recognises that some users of its services may, because of their past or present distress or illness, say or do things which would otherwise be unacceptable and incompatible with our Equal Opportunities Policy. The BCAC will do all it can to challenge such behaviour. In cases where intervention is possible, a gentle approach will be adopted which aims to alter attitudes and behaviour while maintaining support for the distressed client.

The OSO reserves the right to provide access to any organisation who supports our aims and objectives. However, it will exclude those organisations that actively work against the development of equal opportunities.

The OSO realises that a genuine commitment to equal opportunities must operate on all levels:

- The OSO will prevent unfavourable treatment, directly or indirectly, upon individuals from any group facing discrimination in its recruitment and deployment of human resources. Where discrimination does occur, it will be dealt with through the agreed procedures.
- The OSO will seek to prevent discrimination and ensure equal representation in the services it provides, the structures that it facilitates and the practice through which it carries out its work. This involves the development of greater diversity in the use of the centre, trustee body and networks, to ensure a genuinely wide representation.

## **Responsibility**

1.1. The trustees of the BCAC have overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy. However, all volunteers and service users have a duty as part of their involvement with the BCAC to do everything they can to ensure that the policy works in practice. Those responsible for recruiting volunteers to work in the BCAC are responsible for ensuring that they are aware of our Policy and adhere to it.

1.2. The OSO will bring to the attention of all volunteers and service users the existence of this policy, and will provide such guidance as is necessary to ensure that the policy is effective and that everyone is aware of it.

1.3. If any service user or volunteer feels that they have been, or are being discriminated against, in any way, they are entitled to pursue the matter with the trustees.

1.4. All instances or complaints of discriminatory behaviour will be treated seriously.

1.5. Complaints or allegations of an unfounded or malicious nature will also be treated as serious.

## **Disabled Access**

1.6. The OSO will endeavour to ensure, as far as is practicable, that the premises and all activities that take place have disabled access.

## **Use of Language**

1.7. Volunteers and service users should avoid and challenge the use of language which, in any way, belittles anyone

1.8. Where the language used has a personal impact on others, and it has been made clear to the person concerned that their use of such language is unwelcome and/or offensive, disciplinary action may be taken if they persist with it.

1.9. All materials used or developed by the BCAC will be judged in the light of the promotion of equal opportunities, and those considered to be discriminatory will not be used.

## **Sexual Harassment**

1.10. No volunteer or service user should be subject to sexual harassment.

1.11. This is interpreted as unwanted behaviour of a sexual nature including:

- Verbal sexual abuse
- Physical contact
- Repeated remarks which an individual finds offensive

1.12. If it has been made clear to the person concerned that their behaviour is unwelcome and they persist with it, then the service user or volunteer who is the recipient of the behaviour will be entitled to make a formal complaint.

## **Monitoring and Review**

This Policy will be constantly reviewed by the trustee body to ensure that no person is disadvantaged either, directly or indirectly. This monitoring will apply to the practices of staff and volunteers and the provision of services.

It is the responsibility of every individual to eliminate discrimination and to ensure the practical application of this Policy.

