

## **The Harwich Festival's Diversity and Equal Opportunities Policy**

### **The Harwich Festival's Statement on Diversity and Equal Opportunities**

The Harwich Festival is committed to implementing and promoting equal opportunities in its activities, services and practice. It realises that discrimination exists in society (whether protected by law or not) and believes that this prevents potential and ability from being realised.

We have combined the three strands of our public duties on race, disability and gender into one policy as laid out by the Equality Act 2010. This captures the spirit of our own development and evolution in terms of a more unified approach to diversity and equality.

The Harwich Festival no longer talks about cultural diversity. We feel this approach is outdated and not a reflection of modern society, nor in itself a fully inclusive approach. We now talk about diversity, recognising that discrimination is complex and rarely reflects one strand. The Harwich Festival has adopted the approach taken by Arts Council England, viz:

*Our definition of diversity encompasses responding to issues around race, ethnicity, faith, disability, age, gender, sexuality, class and economic disadvantage and any social and institutional barriers which prevent people from participating in and enjoying the arts. We are turning our focus from remedying past imbalances towards celebrating diversity positively, with all the artistic and creative opportunities it offers.<sup>1</sup>*

We share the belief that celebrating diversity in society and in the arts shows England at its best. The historical and in many cases unrecognised contribution of diverse artists to British arts, cultural life, the arts sector and even to the creative process itself is vital to a flourishing and vibrant arts ecology. Diversity has the unique ability to refresh, to replenish and to stimulate the arts by encouraging new work that challenges, innovates and takes risks. It is not really possible to talk about a modern and relevant arts sector without talking about diversity and equality.<sup>2</sup>

The Harwich Festival 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

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<sup>1</sup> Arts Council Annual Equality Report 2010

<sup>2</sup> Arts Council Annual Equality Report 2010

- Refugee or asylum seeker status

As a provider of a service to the community, The Harwich Festival 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 Harwich Festival recognizes that some of the potential users of its services, namely: performers, artists, audience, volunteers, patrons and those participating in activities, may, because of their past or present distress or illness, say or do things which would otherwise be unacceptable and incompatible with The Harwich Festival Diversity and Equal Opportunities Policy. The Harwich Festival of the Arts Trust 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 and opportunity.

The Harwich Festival reserves the right to work with any organisation which supports our aims and objectives. However, it will not work with those organisations that actively work against the development of a diversity and equal opportunities policy over time, despite encouragement from The Harwich Festival.

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

- The Harwich Festival of the Arts 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. This will be achieved by following the Harwich Festival's Diversity and Equal Opportunities Policy.
- The Harwich Festival 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 management committee, sub-committees and networks to ensure a genuinely wide representation.

## **Responsibility**

- 1.1. The Trustees of The Harwich Festival have overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy and this will be discussed in The Harwich Festival Committee meetings. However, all potential and actual performers, volunteers, audience, patrons and participants in activities have a duty as part of their involvement with The Harwich Festival to do everything they can to ensure that the policy works in practice.
- 1.2. Those responsible for recruiting volunteers to work in The Harwich Festival projects, namely the Venues and Stage Management Committee,

are responsible for ensuring that they are aware of The Harwich Festival's Opportunities Policy and that they adhere to it while working as The Harwich Festival volunteers.

- 1.3. Those responsible for programming The Harwich Festival, namely the Programming and Visual Arts Committees, are responsible for ensuring that they are aware of The Harwich Festivals Opportunities Policy and that they adhere to it while selecting performers and artists for the festival.
- 1.4. The Harwich Festival will bring to the attention of all potential and actual volunteers, patrons, performers, artists, audience and those participating in activities, the existence of this policy, and will provide such training as is necessary to ensure that the policy is effective and that everyone is aware of it.
- 1.5. If any potential or actual performer, artist, patron, member of the audience or volunteer feels that they have been, or are being discriminated against, in any way, they are entitled to pursue the matter with the committee.
- 1.6. All instances or complaints of discriminatory behavior will be treated seriously.
- 1.7. Complaints or allegations of an unfounded or malicious nature will also be treated as serious.

### **Disabled Access**

- 1.8. The Harwich Festival endeavor to ensure, as far as is practicable, that all the premises it uses have disabled access. When considering new premises, every effort will be made to ensure such premises are fully accessible. This will be managed by the Venues and Stage Management Committee.

### **Use of Language**

- 1.9. Performers, artists, volunteers, patrons, audience and those participating in activities should avoid and challenge the use of language which, in any way, belittles anyone
- 1.10. 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.
- 1.11. All materials used or developed by The Harwich Festival will be judged in the light of the promotion of diversity and equal opportunities, and those considered to be discriminatory will not be used.

## **Sexual Harassment**

- 1.12. No Performers, artists, volunteers, patrons, audience and those participating in activities should be subject to sexual harassment.
- 1.13. This is interpreted as unwanted behaviour of a sexual nature including:
- verbal sexual abuse
  - physical contact
  - repeated remarks which an individual finds offensive
- 1.14. If it has been made clear to the person concerned that their behavior is unwelcome and they persist with it, then the performer, artist, volunteer, patron, member of the audience or someone participating in an activity who is the recipient of the behavior will be entitled to make a formal complaint.

## **Monitoring and Review**

The Policy will be constantly reviewed by The Harwich Festival management committee to ensure that no Member of the group is put to a disadvantage either, directly or indirectly. This monitoring will apply to the practices of staff and volunteers, the member organisation, the composition of the Committees and the provision of services. It is the responsibility of every individual to promote diversity and eliminate discrimination and to ensure the practical application of this Policy.

The Harwich Festival committee will review this policy every year.

**Adopted: January 2017**

**Review Date: Jun 2025**

**Next Review Date: Jun 2026**

**Signed: Chris Berwick – General Manager**