
INCLUSION POLICY

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1. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

Orchestras Live is committed to encouraging diversity and eliminating discrimination in its role as an employer, as a provider of opportunities and services and within the wider orchestral sector. We aim to create and promote a culture that respects and values individuals' differences; that promotes dignity, equality, inclusion and diversity; and that encourages individuals to develop and maximise their true potential. This means reflecting critically on issues of diversity and inclusion within all that we do, identifying and taking appropriate action to reduce inequality and improve equity of opportunity. We recognise that this policy is part of an ongoing journey and intend that it will be reviewed and revised regularly to reflect the context in which we work.

Through this policy, we aim to:

- Achieve and maintain a staff team, Board of trustees and wider workforce that broadly reflects the wider UK community
- Diversify the range of people – including participants and audiences – who benefit from the opportunities and services offered by OL and its partners
- Become more inclusive and welcoming in our activities, processes, communications and wider organisational culture
- Recognise and address the barriers to participation and employment that many people face

Orchestras Live recognises the role and responsibility it has as a national organisation and as a sector leader to champion inclusion. In particular, we are guided by the following aims:

- OL will endeavour to ensure that all activity co-produced with our promoter and orchestra partners is accessible and appropriate to the needs of the targeted participants and audiences
- OL will take a leading role in combating any form of conscious or subconscious discrimination in the orchestral sector
- OL will work with others to ensure that the diversity of the communities in which we work is recognised and everyone's artistic creativity is respected
- OL will focus on addressing barriers to employment and participation on the grounds of race, disability, ethnicity or ethnic origin, religion or religious belief, neurodiversity, sex or gender identity, sexual orientation, socio-economic background or age and will monitor and review our progress in this area. We recognise the difficulties of maintaining anonymity of responses within a small organisation and will utilise whatever processes are available to encourage open and honest responses.
- OL will take care to avoid consciously or unconsciously discriminatory images or text appearing in published, printed, online or spoken material.
- OL recognises the importance of diversity of thought within our teams and is fully committed to embracing and maximising the talents of autistic people and those with dyslexia, ADHD and other forms of neurocognitive variation.
- OL will always seek to make appropriate adjustments to recruitment, workplaces and ways of working to be fully inclusive to people with different needs and working styles.

The Inclusion Policy is an appendix to the Employee Handbook and is contractual for employees. Trustees, freelance contractors, volunteers and others working on behalf of Orchestras Live are expected to support, adhere to and help implement this Inclusion Policy.

2. DEFINITIONS

Inclusion represents Orchestras Live's commitment to make the necessary internal changes to our culture, processes and activities to be relevant and welcoming to all those working or coming into contact with Orchestras Live, and to acknowledge and address barriers. It also informs our commitment to wider cultural change within the orchestral sector and beyond.

To be inclusive, we need to address **equity**, which is about fairness and fair access. If fairness is the goal, equality and equity are two processes through which we can achieve it. Equality means everyone is treated in exactly the same way, regardless of need or any other individual difference. Equity means everyone is provided with what they need to succeed. Legal obligations must also be met under the [Equality Act 2010](#) and other relevant legislation.

To be inclusive, we must fully embrace **diversity**, putting into practice our commitment to working with a wide range of people, particularly those who are from specific backgrounds identified as 'protected characteristics' under the Equality Act 2010.

3. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is:

- To ensure equality and fairness for all current and prospective employees, trustees, freelance contractors and all those engaging with Orchestras Live's activities.
- To provide a framework to ensure Orchestras Live does not discriminate, consciously or unconsciously, on the grounds of race, disability, ethnicity or ethnic origin, religion or religious belief, neurodiversity, sex or gender identity, sexual orientation, socio-economic background or age. Orchestras Live opposes all forms of discrimination and commits to the following:

- All employees, trustees, freelance contractors and those engaging with Orchestras Live will be treated fairly and with respect.
- Selection for employment, promotion, training and volunteering will be on the basis of skills, experience, potential and commitment to Orchestras Live.
- Orchestras Live will champion inclusive recruitment of new, diverse trustees and staff through an accountable process and open, transparent, accessible and welcoming communications
- Acting with fairness and equality will be at the forefront of all Orchestras Live's activity.

4. PRINCIPLES

Orchestras Live adheres to the following principles:

- To create a working environment in which individual differences and the contributions of all our employees, trustees, freelance contractors, promoter and orchestral partners, participants, audiences and volunteers are recognised and valued
- To create an environment that promotes dignity and respect for all. No form of intimidation, bullying or harassment will be tolerated
- To ensure training and development opportunities are available to all employees and trustees
- To promote equality in the workplace
- To work towards ensuring, and monitoring, that our workforce and beneficiaries reflect and represent the broader population
- To regularly review all recruitment practices and procedures to ensure that no applicants are treated less favourably than others
- To be proactive in opening up our recruitment opportunities to a broader diversity of applicants
- To regularly review our partnerships to ensure that activities are accessible and appropriate to the targeted groups
- To monitor, evaluate and report on the diversity of all recruitment processes
- To monitor, evaluate and report on the diversity of those who participate in or attend the activities we co-produce with our partners
- To work with others in the sector to address barriers to participation
- To treat breaches of this policy seriously and to take disciplinary action when required
- To provide information and training to all employees, trustees and those working on behalf of Orchestras Live to ensure they are fully aware of the issues relating to inclusion and their responsibilities in ensuring this policy is adhered to
- To develop, monitor and report against an Action Plan to ensure this Policy is fully implemented
- To ensure the Policy is fully supported and embraced by the Board
- To monitor, evaluate and review the Policy annually
- To ensure this Policy is available and accessible publicly
- To promote inclusion, equity and diversity throughout the orchestral sector
- To implement actions and initiatives which address inequalities as appropriate
- To encourage and provide inclusion training as part of all employees' and trustees' professional development

5. POSITIVE ACTION v POSITIVE DISCRIMINATION

Orchestras Live understands the differences between positive action and positive discrimination.

Positive actions are the steps that can be taken to encourage and work with people with different needs, low participation or a history of disadvantage. Orchestras Live will use positive action in its recruitment processes to meet our commitment to address inequalities.

Positive discrimination is illegal. It means treating someone favourably solely on the basis of individual, protected and sensitive characteristics.

6. RECRUITMENT AT ORCHESTRAS LIVE

6.1 Job descriptions and person specifications

Job descriptions including person specifications are prepared for all posts, including employee and trustee positions. The Job Description indicates the responsibilities and tasks to be undertaken by the post holder. The Person Specification describes the qualifications, skills, experience and abilities required.

To help cultivate an inclusive organisation in the long term, the following criterion will be included in the Person Specification of all posts:

[the individual] will support Orchestras Live's commitment to inclusion, contributing to a culture of respect and collaboration in OL's internal and external activities

The specification will only include such qualifications, skills, experience and abilities that are directly relevant to the fulfilment of the role.

In addition, Orchestras Live has adopted the recommendations outlined in [Arts Council England's Culture Change Guide: How to recruit diverse talent](#). These include the implementation of the following considerations in person specifications:

- Include reference to equalities
- List 10 or fewer criteria
- Be clear on why particular knowledge and/or qualifications are being sought e.g. "must have GCSE maths" could be replaced with "ability to keep accurate financial records"
- Be clear about 'essential' requirements – desirable requirements may exclude candidates who do not fit a post's traditional profile.
- Distinguish between skill (proven ability to do something) and ability (having the capacity to do something) to include people with less formal work experience
- Be precise and explicit about criteria
- Describe what is meant by experience. Do not ask for a number of years' experience. Experience can include that gained outside of work.
- Be clear about the level of skill or experience needed. Candidates may underestimate the level required unless you state it.
- Show candidates how criteria will be assessed e.g. at interview, practical exercise.
- Clarify how different criteria and aspects of the application process are weighted, including whether this is different at different stages.
- Do not use personality traits e.g. 'outgoing personality'
- Do not unnecessarily exclude disabled people
- Do not ask for criteria which cannot be assessed/measured.

6.2 Advertising

Orchestras Live will use a range of advertising methods to attract the widest pool of appropriate applicants. Vacancies or new roles arising will be advertised externally, unless there is an exceptional reason not to do so.

All Orchestras Live's advertising will:

- State 'Orchestras Live is an Equal Opportunities Employer and a Living Wage Employer'.
- Ensure that Orchestras Live does not exclude, discriminate against or discourage any particular group from applying, nor make it difficult for anyone from such a group to apply
- Refer to the Job Description and Person Specification to give information about the requirements of the job
- Proactively encourage a diversity of applicants

- Be promoted in places that will attract diverse applicants
- Offer documents and information in a range of formats on request
- Give clear instructions about accessing the application pack, which will be available in full on Orchestras Live's website
- Give a realistic deadline for applications and will offer flexibility if appropriate for the needs of an applicant
- Provide a named point of contact
- If possible, offer an online session for potential applicants to find out more about working for Orchestras Live before they apply.

6.3 Application process

Application forms will generally be used only for administrative and junior posts. The personal details of the applicant will be replaced by a number prior to assessment.

Where the post holder is required to communicate persuasively, an application letter or short video presentation together with a CV may be more appropriate. It is acknowledged that anonymity cannot be maintained with this approach.

Candidates who would prefer to use a different format will be encouraged to contact Orchestras Live in advance of submitting their application to discuss how their needs can best be met. Orchestras Live will respond flexibly to remove barriers to access, with an open and approachable mindset.

Applicants who wish to disclose protected characteristics will be asked to make Orchestras Live aware of this in a separate communication.

All applications will be acknowledged on receipt. On receipt of their application, applicants will be sent a link to complete a survey requesting personally sensitive data, enabling Orchestras Live to track the demographics of those who apply. Completion of this survey is entirely voluntary and all data is anonymised (see 'Monitoring' below). Provision of this information is not part of the recruitment process.

6.4 Shortlisting process

Applications will be assessed independently by at least two people. Staff and trustees (in the case of senior management recruitment) responsible for assessing, shortlisting, interviewing and selection of candidates will be:

- Clearly informed of the selection criteria and the need for their consistent application
- Sent a copy of the current Inclusion Policy prior to shortlisting

All applications will be assessed against a matrix which scores each candidate according to how they fulfil the essential criteria, as stated in the advertised Person Specification.

All candidates who meet the minimum requirements of the role will be part of a longlist. Those assessing the applications will then prioritise the longlist to achieve a shortlist. At this stage any candidates who have disclosed protected characteristics which are currently under-represented within Orchestras Live will be added to the shortlist. Those assessing the applications will then prioritise the shortlist to achieve a manageable number of candidates to interview.

Care will be taken when shortlisting to ensure no discrimination stemming from access to previous opportunities or from an applicant having taken a career break.

Wherever possible, the people prioritising the shortlist will be the same as those on the interview panel.

6.5 Interviewing

All interviews will be carried out by a minimum of two people. In the case of senior management recruitment, at least one trustee will be on the panel, which may also include an external member.

Orchestras Live will aim to ensure that shortlisting and interview panels are as inclusive and as representative as possible, with a variety of external selection panellists being drawn upon.

Where appropriate, interviews may be held online to enable more candidates to be interviewed. The panel would expect to interview their final selection in person prior to offering them the post.

Orchestras Live will pay for travel costs for candidates to attend interviews which are held in person. If required, Orchestras Live will pay for childcare while the applicant is attending an interview.

Candidates will be informed who will be on the panel in advance of the interview and will be given some background information on those who will be interviewing them.

The same questions will be asked of all candidates applying for the post, although supplementary questions may be asked. These questions will seek to gather objective evidence in support of the Job Description and Person Specification. In deciding the questions, the person leading the recruitment will place an emphasis on how the candidate would approach the role, ensuring that questions already addressed in the candidate's application form or letter are not unnecessarily repeated.

One of the questions asked will pertain to how the individual will support Orchestra Live's development as a diverse and inclusive arts organisation and contribute to a culture of respect and collaboration.

Up to three questions will be made available to each of the candidates in advance of the interview.

Notes will be taken by the interview panellists and evidence gathered against the Job Description and Person Specification. Each candidate will be scored against the criteria.

All candidates invited to interview will be asked if they need access support during the interview process and wherever possible their needs will be accommodated.

Every candidate will have the opportunity to ask questions; the interview should be a two-way process.

6.6 Selection

All candidates will be scored against the Job Description and Person Specification. Interviewers will decide individually on scores in the first instance. The highest scoring applicant will be offered the position. Where scoring is equal, those from under-represented groups will be given priority, in line with Orchestras Live's positive action commitments.

An offer will be made to the successful candidate, subject to satisfactory references. For an employee post, the candidate will be required to provide proof of their eligibility to work in the UK. If required for the role, confirmation of appointment may also be subject to the candidate passing a DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) check.

All unsuccessful candidates will be informed promptly of the outcome of their application.

All candidates who are interviewed will afterwards be asked to complete a short, anonymous survey relating to their experience of Orchestras Live's recruitment process. This data will be used to inform future recruitment. If requested, constructive feedback will be given to unsuccessful shortlisted applicants.

Applications from candidates who have not been invited to interview will be securely disposed of after the successful candidate has accepted the post. All other applications will be securely disposed of after six months or once the post holder has successfully completed their probationary period.

6.7 Ex-offenders

Orchestras Live will not discriminate against ex-offenders with unspent convictions, unless required to do so because of the nature of the post.

All applications will be considered on an individual basis.

6.8 Induction

All employees and trustees will be required to follow an appropriate induction process to ensure they are equipped for the role.

All employees and trustees will receive training on the Inclusion Policy and Action Plan as part of their induction. For new staff and board members this will take the form of a conversation with a current member of the senior management team.

A discussion around, and implementation of, reasonable adjustments and any access requirements related to individual needs will start as soon as possible and be in place when employment begins.

6.9 Flexible working

Orchestras Live will consider all requests for flexible working arrangements constructively and creatively, taking account of balancing the needs of the organisation with the needs of the individual employee. Further details are outlined in the Employee Handbook.

6.10 Training

Orchestras Live will introduce a Staff Development Plan to give greater structure to professional development support for the team, linked to the current appraisal process.

An increased understanding of staff experience of the organisational culture will be sought in order to support a safe and inclusive working environment, including conduct at internal meetings and use of language. Orchestras Live will actively encourage a culture of listening and learning to improve processes in response to feedback.

Orchestras Live has a budget for employees' training to maximise the capability and retention of employees. Professional development within job roles is a requirement of Orchestras Live employment.

Training needs and opportunities will be discussed during appraisals or one-to-one meetings with line managers, and selection for training will be made on the basis of both the needs of the business set out in Orchestras Live's Business Plan and the personal development of the individual.

Access support and requirements for people with disabilities or caring responsibilities will be taken into account whenever practicable and methods sought to minimise any barriers to taking up training opportunities.

Staff with management, recruitment and selection responsibilities will be given guidance in the implementation of the Inclusion Policy to ensure that they understand their position in law and under Orchestras Live's own policy.

7. TERMS AND CONDITIONS FOR EMPLOYEES

7.1 Annual leave and religious holidays

Orchestras Live will not ask about an employee's religion and will not discriminate against anyone wishing to celebrate their festivals.

Employees are required to use part of their annual leave entitlement to cover time off for these and must following the normal procedure for booking annual leave, full details of which are in the Employee Handbook.

7.2 Cultural and religious needs

Where employees, freelance contractors or trustees have particular cultural and religious needs, Orchestras Live will endeavour to meet their needs wherever possible.

7.3 Disabled employees and trustees

Orchestras Live will:

- Make genuine efforts to recruit disabled people and take reasonable steps to make the workplace and individual roles fully accessible
- Regularly review its facilities for disabled employees and trustees and will try to overcome any problems faced wherever practicable and within reasonable resources available
- Ensure that disabled people have maximum access to employment opportunities and to meetings and events
- Support disabled employees and freelance contractors applying to Access to Work or other relevant schemes where appropriate
- Acknowledge the potential cost of making adaptations to enable access and will commit to include budgetary provision for it.

7.4 Grievance and disciplinary procedures

Orchestras Live will take seriously any complaints of discrimination and will not victimise people who make such complaints.

Full details of procedures relating to grievance and disciplinary matters and public interest disclosures ('whistleblowing') are in the Employee Handbook.

7.5 Bullying and harassment

Orchestras Live upholds the right of all employees, freelance contractors, trustees and others working with or on behalf of Orchestras Live to be treated with respect and dignity and to work in an atmosphere free of bullying and harassment.

7.6 Mental health

Orchestras Live is committed to supporting the mental health of its workforce.

Orchestras Live expects employees to take break times away from their desks and to maintain a balance between their working and private lives. There is no expectation that any employee should respond to messages outside of their normal working hours.

A Mental Health First Aider is available to all employees from within the staff team.

8 MONITORING OF DEMOGRAPHICS

As part of our commitment to track and measure to what extent we are reaching a diverse range of people when recruiting, applicants for roles will be sent a link to complete a survey requesting personally sensitive data about their age, ethnicity, gender, disabled status and socio-economic background, enabling Orchestras Live to track the demographics of those who apply. The data submitted through the form is stored and used by Orchestras Live as aggregated, anonymised data. Applicants are made aware of why this data is useful to Orchestras Live and that providing this data is completely optional – but a ‘prefer not to say’ response to questions is preferable to not completing the survey.

Current employees, trustees and freelance contractors will also be asked to complete a similar survey on an annual basis so that the aggregated, anonymised data can be submitted to Arts Council England as part of the annual reporting we undertake as a National Portfolio Organisation.

All applications, monitoring surveys and other personal data will be held securely in accordance with Orchestras Live’s Data Protection Policy and UK law.

9 ORCHESTRAS LIVE’S PARTNERSHIPS AND BENEFICIARIES

Orchestras Live requires from its partners a commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion and evidence that they are proactively working to achieve this.

Partnership Agreements make it clear to our partners that driving inclusion is one of Orchestras Live’s key values and is integral to our business plan; reports on audience/participant demographics that we request from partners enable us to monitor progress and inform the work we do with our partners to support this key value. In addition, if asked, partners are required to distribute an audience or participant survey to help us improve our quality of service.

10 ACCOUNTABILITY

It is the Chief Executive’s responsibility, with the support of the Board of trustees, to ensure the implementation of the Inclusion Policy and Action Plan. Appropriate funds will be sought to implement approved aspects of the Policy which require special and additional resources.

The Board of Trustees will review the Inclusion Policy and discuss progress of the Action Plan at least annually.

All employees, trustees and others working on behalf of Orchestras Live have the individual responsibility to:

- Follow procedures introduced to ensure equal opportunity and non-discrimination
- Draw the attention of management to suspected or alleged discriminatory practices
- Refrain from harassing or intimidating other employees, trustees or others on any of the grounds cited in the policy statement
- Report any witnessed or suspected harassing or intimidating behaviour to their line manager or to the Chair of the Board.