Equality & Diversity Policy

Update: November 2019

Equality and Diversity Officer: Rose Kent

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1. Policy

1.1 Accessible Arts & Media (AAM) is committed to ensuring equality and diversity is fundamental to all its activities, its governance and to the way in which it treats participants, staff, volunteers and stakeholders.

1.2 AAM strategies and actions are underpinned by a commitment to fairness for all.

1.3 AAM believes that diversity enriches its artistic portfolio, enhances the skills base of its staff and artists, and contributes fresh ideas and perceptions to its development.

1.4 We aim to remove any barriers, bias or discrimination that prevent individuals or groups from realising their potential and contributing fully to our organisation's aims and to develop an organisational culture that positively values diversity.

1.5 AAM will promote the following basic rights for everyone associated with it:

- to be treated with respect and dignity
- to be treated fairly at all times regardless of colour, race, age, nationality, gender, gender reassignment, marital status, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief, and with consideration of needs for flexible hours and work patterns.

1.6 AAM recognises that many people in our society experience discrimination. Discrimination is acting unfairly against a group or individual through, for example, exclusion, verbal comment, denigration, harassment, victimisation, a failure to appreciate needs or the assumption of such needs without consultation.

1.7 All forms of discrimination are unacceptable, regardless of whether there was any intention to discriminate or not. Staff and volunteers have a duty to co-operate with AAM to ensure that this policy is effective in ensuring equal opportunities and in preventing discrimination.

1.8 AAM values and relies on the diversity of its trustees, staff, artists, volunteers and participants for a rich and changing cultural and social context. AAM will update its policy and practice based on developments in the make-up of society and any new forms of discrimination and injustice that may arise.

1.9 AAM is actively committed to promoting equal opportunities in all areas of employment practice, including opportunities for creative work placements and volunteering.

1.10 AAM implements annual appraisals, training opportunities and Continuing Professional Development for staff and volunteers.

2. Implementation

2.1 The Board of AAM has overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy. However, all staff, volunteers and artists have a duty as part of their involvement with AAM to do everything they can to ensure that the policy works in practice.

2.2 Breaches of the Equality and Diversity Policy will be regarded as misconduct and could lead to disciplinary action against employees, appropriate action against a member of the Board or withdrawal of service agreements or volunteer agreements.

2.3 AAM will ensure that all new employees, volunteers, artists and trustees will receive induction on the policy and that partners will be fully informed. Appropriate training and guidance will be provided as required to develop equality and diversity within the organisation.

2.4 Legislation now identifies the following nine protected characteristics in the Equality Act of 2010 which AAM takes into account in everything we do:

1. Age
2. Disability
3. Gender
4. Marital status
5. Pregnancy & maternity
6. Race
7. Religion/belief
8. Sex
9. Sexual Orientation

3. Procedure

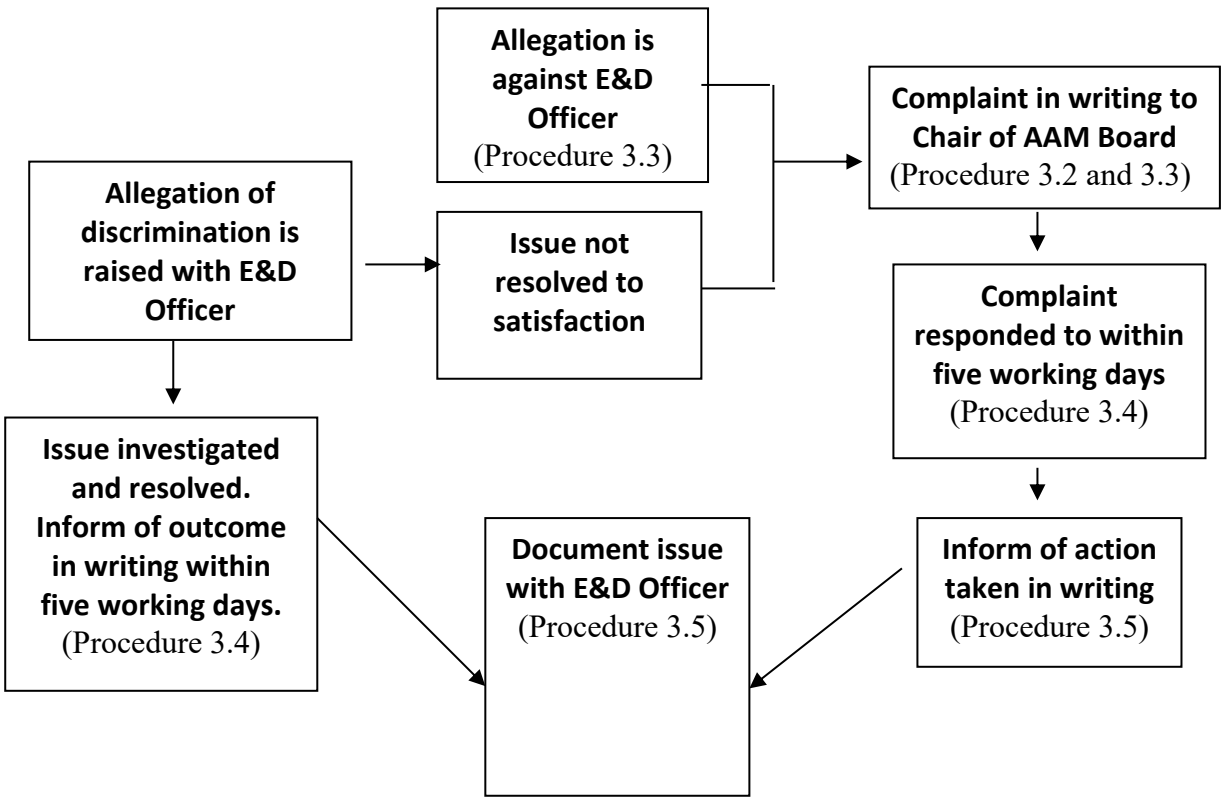
3.1 If you hear offensive language or see offensive material in the work place or if you feel that you or any other employee, volunteer, client or other individual that the organisation interacts with is being discriminated against because of differences, you must raise the issue in the first instance with the Equality and Diversity Officer, Rose Kent, who will investigate the complaint.

3.2 If you feel that the matter has not been resolved to your satisfaction, you must put your complaint in writing to the Chair of AAM Board, detailing your concerns.

3.3 If you are alleging discrimination against the Equality and Diversity Officer, or you do not feel the issue has been resolved to your satisfaction, you should raise your concerns with the Chair of AAM Board.

3.4 Your complaint will be responded to within five working days and you will be informed of any action to be taken and the outcome of it in writing.

3.5 Inform the Equality & Diversity Officer of the action to be taken and file that decision and action, once completed to the Chair's satisfaction.



4. Definitions

4.1 **Equality** is understood to be

- about creating a fairer society in which everyone can participate and have the opportunity to fulfill their potential
- about removing or reducing all forms of unfair discrimination and has been underpinned by legislation see 2.4
- about breaking down barriers for people in particular groups such as black and minority ethnic communities, disabled people, vulnerable groups, gay men/lesbian/bisexual/ transgender people, younger and older people, people from different religious and faith backgrounds, men and women.

4.2 **Diversity** is:

- about including everyone
- valuing differences
- raising aspirations
- harnessing differences in individuals to the benefit of both the individual and the community in promoting inclusive best practice
- having a better understanding of the diverse needs of our audiences, employees and community.

4.3 **Disability is** applied to a person who has a physical or mental impairment and the impairment has a substantial (more than minor or trivial) and long-term adverse effect on their ability to perform normal day-to-day activities, including eating, washing, walking, doing shopping. (Long term is an impairment which has lasted or is likely to last for at least 12 months.)

Anybody who has cancer, MS or has HIV/AIDS is automatically protected under the Equality Act.

4.4 **Direct Discrimination** is when you treat someone less favourably than others because of a protected characteristic for unlawful means, for example not employing someone because of their gender or disability.

4.5 **Indirect Discrimination** is when an employer has a policy, practice or procedure that applies to everyone but might disadvantage a particular group, and which cannot be justified in relation to the job.

4.6 **Harassment** is unwanted conduct that violates a person's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive working environment for that person.

4.7 **Victimisation** is when you treat someone less favourably or discriminate against them because they have pursued or intend to pursue their rights relating to alleged discrimination within AAM.

4.8 **Positive discrimination** is unlawful in most circumstances in the UK.

4.9 **Positive action** to address imbalances in the workforce is allowed in particular circumstances. Examples would include:

- setting equality targets;
- encouraging people from particular groups to apply where they are under-represented;
- training for promotion or skill training for employees from under-represented groups who show potential.

5. Monitoring and Review

5.1 It is the responsibility of the Board to monitor effectiveness, and to review and develop the policy where necessary. This is a standing agenda item of the HR and Governance Subgroup.

5.2 The effectiveness of the equality and diversity policy will be reviewed by the HR committee bi-annually for approval by the Board and action taken as necessary.

Date approved:

Next review date: **November 2021**

Signed by:

Position:

Appendix 1

Read and Acceptance Form for Staff and Volunteers

Equality & Diversity Policy

NAME: ……

JOB TITLE: ……..

I have read, understood and agree to comply with this policy.

SIGNED: …….

DATE: ……