

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy

1. Effective Date

This policy will be effective from 10 March 2025.

2. Scope

This EDI Policy applies to anyone who engages with the City of Stoke-on-Trent Symphony Orchestra through any of its work. This includes, but is not limited to

- CSSO Musicians, Conductors, Soloists and other Music Practitioners;
- CSSO Volunteers;
- CSSO Administrative personnel and any freelance consultants or businesses who do work for the CSSO; and
- the wider public, as participants, including audience members, beneficiaries, and sponsors.

3. Purpose

This policy exists to

- promote diversity and inclusion within the CSSO both internally and in the work that the Orchestra does in the community.
- ensure that, over time, the CSSO's workforce is increasingly representative of all sections of society; in particular of the primary areas served by the Orchestra;
- enable equality, fairness and respect for all those who work for and engage with the CSSO;
- not unlawfully discriminate on the basis of a protected characteristic as defined by the UK Equality Act 2010 i.e. age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race (including colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origin), religion or belief, sex (gender) and sexual orientation;
- not provide less favourable conditions or treatment to any current or potential employee of the Orchestra. This includes in pay/fees, contract terms and conditions, dealing with grievances and discipline, termination of employment contracts, parental leave, requests for releases or flexible working, and selection for positions, promotion, training or other developmental opportunities.

4. Definitions

4.1 Accessibility is the ease with which opportunities can be reached, understood and appreciated, particularly by those who may face economic, social, physical or mental barriers.

4.2 Diversity is the range of human differences and the inclusion of people with different characteristics and individual traits. This includes protected characteristics as defined by the UK Equality Act 2010 and also socio-economic status and different perspectives and life experiences.

4.3 Equality is ensuring that individuals and groups are not treated more or less favourably on the basis of their specific protected characteristics.

4.4 Inclusion is involving and valuing human differences and viewing such differences as strengths so that individuals feel valued, respected and supported.

5. Policy Detail

5.1 There are ethical, business and creative cases for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion within the City of Stoke-on-Trent Symphony Orchestra and the wider music sector, such as:

- Pursuing equal access to orchestral music in terms of careers and public engagement is the right thing to do;
- Evidence suggests that diversity can result in stronger teams which produce better outcomes;
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in creative practices can open up new opportunities for artistic creation and development.

5.2 The CSSO will integrate consideration of inclusion and diversity into artistic planning, public-facing materials, internal communications and other work planning.

5.3 The CSSO will highlight areas where there is unequal access to enjoying and participating in orchestral music and take steps to provide and promote solutions and routes to addressing these.

5.4 The CSSO's work and performances should be accessible, whether through the geographical breadth of its presence and its reach into communities or the range of orchestral and musical experiences that it offers.

5.5 Through its external relationships and internal practices, the CSSO will recognise and value individual differences and the contributions of all.

5.6 At Governance and Senior Leadership levels, the CSSO will promote diversity and inclusion and will seek to include diverse inputs from internal and external sources in decision making.

5.7 Selections of musicians and non-musicians working with the CSSO and appointments, training and other development opportunities within the CSSO will be made on the basis of aptitude and ability. The risk of bias in selection processes will be mitigated and managed.

5.8 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion are commitments all levels of Governance and Leadership within the CSSO.

5.9 The CSSO will seek to work with network bodies and partners to raise awareness of careers in the orchestral sector, develop musicians with the potential to perform with international orchestras, remove barriers to playing and hearing orchestral music and sustain in individuals a lifelong engagement with orchestral music.

5.10 In enacting its Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy, the CSSO will seek relevant, specific and continuous improvement through a strategy and rolling action plan and building inclusive practices into work programmes for specific areas of operations.

5.11 The CSSO will share knowledge and successes as well as challenges with network bodies and partners to develop and promote inclusive practices and diversity.

6. Obligations

The leadership of the City of Stoke-on-Trent Symphony Orchestra has obligations under this policy to adopt the inclusive practices laid out in Section 5, and to raise awareness of the case for diversity and inclusion in the orchestral sector, both internally and externally.

All employees, trustees, sponsors, beneficiaries and the wider public who engage with the CSSO are obliged to comply with this policy.

7. Monitoring and Reporting

The CSSO will define quantitative measures within its action plan to measure trends and change in inclusion and diversity and will operate the reporting systems to collect this data routinely.

8. Communication

This policy will be communicated to all employees, volunteers, job applicants and other stakeholders (including funders and partner venues).

9. Review

The effectiveness of this policy in achieving the measures set out in the plan for continuous improvement will be reviewed by the Board of Trustees at least annually. Changes to the policy will be made as required.