

## **City of Stoke-on-Trent Symphony Orchestra (CSSO)**

### **Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy (EDI)**

**Effective from:** 20 February 2026

**Approved by:** CSSO Board of Trustees

**Next review:** February 2028

#### **1. Purpose**

CSSO is committed to being an inclusive, welcoming and representative organisation. This policy sets out how we will:

- champion equality, diversity and inclusion across all areas of our work.
- ensure fair and equitable treatment for everyone who engages with us.
- remove barriers to participation in orchestral music.
- reflect the communities we serve.
- comply with the Equality Act 2010 and embed best practice across the cultural sector.

#### **2. Scope**

This policy applies to everyone who engages with CSSO, including:

- musicians, conductors, soloists and artistic collaborators.
- volunteers and trustees.
- administrative staff, freelancers and contractors.
- audiences, participants, beneficiaries, sponsors and community partners.

#### **3. Our Commitment**

CSSO will:

- uphold the Equality Act 2010, including all nine protected characteristics.
- make reasonable adjustments to ensure disabled people can participate fully.
- embed inclusive practice in artistic planning, programming, recruitment and governance.
- identify and remove barriers to accessing orchestral music.

- promote a culture of respect, dignity and zero tolerance for discrimination, harassment or victimisation.
- ensure transparency and fairness in all recruitment, selection and development processes.
- reflect the diversity of Stoke-on-Trent and the wider region in our workforce, audiences and artistic work.

#### 4. Definitions

- **Accessibility:** the ease with which opportunities can be reached, understood and appreciated, particularly by those facing economic, social, physical or mental barriers.
- **Diversity:** the range of human differences, including protected characteristics, socio-economic background, perspectives and lived experiences.
- **Equality:** ensuring individuals and groups are not treated more or less favourably because of protected characteristics.
- **Inclusion:** creating an environment where differences are valued and individuals feel respected, supported and able to contribute.

#### 5. Policy Detail

##### 5.1 Why EDI Matters

CSSO recognises the ethical, artistic and organisational benefits of equality, diversity and inclusion, including:

- widening access to orchestral music.
- strengthening teams and improving outcomes.
- enabling new creative opportunities and artistic development.

##### 5.2 Embedding EDI in Our Work

CSSO will integrate inclusive thinking into:

- artistic planning and programming.
- public-facing materials and communications.
- internal communications and work planning.

##### 5.3 Addressing Inequalities

CSSO will identify areas where access to orchestral music is unequal and take steps to address these through targeted solutions and opportunities.

## **5.4 Accessible Performances and Experiences**

CSSO will ensure its work is accessible through:

- geographical reach across communities.
- a range of orchestral and musical experiences.
- inclusive presentation and event design.

## **5.5 Valuing Individual Differences**

CSSO will recognise and value individual differences and contributions across all internal and external relationships.

## **5.6 Inclusive Governance and Leadership**

CSSO will promote diversity and inclusion at governance and senior leadership levels, ensuring diverse perspectives inform decision-making.

## **5.7 Fair Selection and Development**

All appointments, training and development opportunities will be based on aptitude and ability, with active mitigation of bias in selection processes.

## **5.8 Shared Responsibility**

EDI is a commitment at all levels of governance and leadership within CSSO.

## **5.9 Sector Contribution**

CSSO will work with partners and network bodies to:

- raise awareness of orchestral careers
- develop musicians with potential
- remove barriers to participation
- support lifelong engagement with orchestral music.

## **5.10 Continuous Improvement**

CSSO will pursue continuous improvement through a strategy and rolling action plan, embedding inclusive practices into operational programmes.

## **5.11 Sharing Learning**

CSSO will share successes and challenges with partners to promote inclusive practice across the sector.

## **6. Obligations**

Leadership must adopt the inclusive practices set out in this policy and promote the case for diversity and inclusion internally and externally. All employees, trustees, sponsors, beneficiaries and members of the public engaging with CSSO must comply with this policy.

## **7. Monitoring & Reporting**

CSSO will:

- define quantitative measures within its action plan
- collect data routinely
- monitor trends and progress in inclusion and diversity.

## **8. Communication**

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

## **9. Review**

The Board of Trustees will review the effectiveness of this policy annually and make changes as required.