

ACADEMY OF MUSIC & SOUND

EQUALITY & DIVERSITY POLICY

EQUALITY & DIVERSITY STATEMENT

The Academy of Music & Sound is committed to the advancement and promotion of equality and diversity for all learners, employees, and all other users of The Academy of Music & Sound. Our ethos is to create and maintain an environment in which learners and staff are treated solely on their own merits, abilities and potential, regardless of age, disability (which includes mental health and people diagnosed as clinically obese), race, gender, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment or pregnancy and maternity.

The Academy of Music & Sound actively promotes a culture of celebrating diversity and will take all reasonable steps to prevent discrimination occurring. This includes promoting the significance of the Policy and what is expected of learners, employees and all other users of The Academy of Music & Sound whilst they study or work at The Academy of Music & Sound.

All decisions relating to employment practices and student assessment will be free from bias and based solely on work criteria and individual merit. The Academy of Music & Sound will attempt to employ a workforce that reflects the diverse community which we serve and maximise personal and commercial opportunities.

INTRODUCTION

The Academy of Music & Sound's strategic priorities are:

The Academy of Music & Sound strongly believes that the diversity of our local communities is one of our greatest strengths and our most valuable asset. The Academy of Music & Sound is fully committed to equality of opportunity, and we believe that all individuals have an equal right to develop and achieve their full potential. Our strategic aims reflect this, taking full account of the Learning and

Skills Council's priorities for the UK economy and the skilled workforce needed to deliver future prosperity at local and regional level.

Equality of opportunity and freedom from discrimination are fundamental rights and The Academy of Music & Sound has a legal and moral duty to exercise leadership in the promotion of equality of opportunity and diversity. We will promote equality and challenge all forms of discrimination through our role as a service provider, community leader and local employer.

Academy of Music and Sound are to ensure that no individual is discriminated against by virtue of their protected characteristics:

- age
- disability (which includes mental health and people diagnosed as clinically obese)
- gender
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race and ethnicity
- religion and belief
- sexual orientation

or other unjustifiable factor, within the constraints of available resources and current legislation. All the protected characteristics must be covered by this policy.

All different people receive services, consultation and employment opportunities in a fair and equal way. This means recognising, accommodating and valuing diversity across The Academy of Music & Sound and the community with which we work.

Our goal is to foster an environment that offers people inclusivity and security, achieving an improvement in the quality of life for all who learn or work at The Academy of Music & Sound. Our commitment to equality and diversity is intrinsic to the way we think and is therefore central to everything that we do.

We firmly believe that our work within The Academy of Music & Sound, with local communities, partners and other agencies, will assist in pulling together to promote a culture that celebrates and welcomes diversity.

We will follow best practice in all of the equality areas and work towards:

- Eliminating unlawful discrimination
- Eliminating harassment
- Promoting equality of opportunity
- Promoting good relations between different groups in the community
- Recognising and taking account of people's diversity

Purpose of this Policy

This Policy will set out how The Academy of Music & Sound will work towards promotion of equality of opportunity in all of its service delivery. It sets out how Academy will ensure that discrimination is challenged and eliminated through legislation and positive action. This Policy will also set out the responsibilities of Directors, Senior Management Team, staff members, tutors and others, and actions that the organisation will take to ensure full compliance with this policy.

Relevant Legislation

The Academy of Music & Sound has a legal duty to ensure compliance through the Equality Act 2010 (Part 6 Further Education) and replaces and harmonises previous discrimination legislation such as:

- Equal Pay Act 1970 & 1975
- Sex Discrimination Act 1975
- Race Relations Act 1976 (Amendment 2000)
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (amendment 2005)
- Equality Act 2006
- Employment Equality (Religion and Belief Regulations 2003
- Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003
- Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2003
- Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2007 (as subsequently amended) plus other ancillary pieces of legislation

and aims to address any concerns of service users and employees raised during the consultation period. The Scheme encompasses the previous:

- Race Equality Scheme
- Gender Equality Scheme
- Disability Equality Scheme
- Action/Development plans associated with the above schemes

Part of the Equality Act 2010 introduces the new Public Sector Equality Duty for eight of the protected characteristics. The Public Sector Equality Duty will replace existing race/disability and gender equality duties on 4th April 2011 with the relevant Code of Practice published in October 2011.

Responsibility for Equality and Diversity in The Academy of Music & Sound

Under legislation and this Policy all members of staff and service users have a responsibility to listen to what others say and respect different points of view. We must also report all incidents of harassment and discrimination.

Certain individuals have additional responsibilities under this Policy. They are:

- The Directors are responsible for agreeing the policy content and monitoring its implementation.
- The Centre Manager and Senior Management Team are responsible for the strategic ownership and delivery of this Policy and associated equality schemes.
- The Centre Manger will have responsibility for the day-to-day operation of this Policy and associated equality schemes. They are also responsible for ensuring that all staff are aware of their legal responsibilities under equal opportunity legislation, reviewing and monitoring the operation of this Policy and associated equality schemes and that they report all incidents of harassment and discrimination. They are also responsible for ensuring that all staff have equality of access and resources.
- All members of staff and teachers are responsible for ensuring that equality of opportunity is promoted. They should also ensure that on-going dialogue about equality of opportunity issues and practices take place with learners, partner colleges, contractors and other service users
- Course coordinators are responsible for discussing The Academy of Music & Sound Equality and Diversity Policy with learners and ensuring they know how to access it on our VLE.

The Academy of Music & Sound as a Service Provider

The Academy of Music & Sound will:

- Ensure that all our services are accessible
- Provide clear, meaningful information about The Academy of Music & Sound services in ways that are fully accessible and meet the community's diverse needs
- Monitor take-up and evaluate services to ensure that they do not discriminate or exclude
- Ensure our buildings are as accessible as possible by making all necessary reasonable adjustments
- Ensure equal access to The Academy of Music & Sound's complaints procedure
- Ensure that all publicity materials present appropriate and positive images of women, disabled people and other minority groups
- Encourage (and, where legally possible, require) others to adopt this Policy and, associated equality schemes including those who provide goods and services on behalf of The Academy of Music & Sound

The Academy of Music & Sound as an Employer

The Academy of Music & Sound will:

- Follow its approved recruitment and selection specification and procedure
- Give training on equal opportunity issues to all employees involved in recruitment and selection
- Review job descriptions regularly and remove any requirements that are unnecessarily restrictive or which might exclude particular groups
- Use only selection criteria that are relevant to the job and do not contain unjustifiable elements, including those relating to, gender, race, disability, age or personal circumstances
- Advertise all vacancies externally (except in exceptional circumstances to be agreed Senior Management team in consultation with the Human Resources department) and make sure that advertisements do not contain any wording or conditions which might be discriminatory in the context of this Policy
- Encourage applications from under-represented groups, including using ethnic or special groups press for job advertisements where appropriate
- Ensure full job details, employment information and the Comprehensive Equality and Diversity Policy are available to all applicants, and make arrangements to have information available in alternative formats
- Interview all disabled applicants who meet the selection criteria for a job vacancy
- Ask interview candidates if they have any special facilities/requirements at interview because of any disability they may have
- Keep full details of decisions about each applicant at each stage of the selection process

The Academy of Music & Sound as a Community Leader

The Academy of Music & Sound will:

- Listen and respond to the views of our learners and staff through appropriate consultation and participation
- Celebrate, respect and make known the variety of identities, lifestyles, culture and religions within our communities
- Work with others to provide an environment that is free from discrimination, harassment and violence
- Encourage and support local people to be active in public and community life

Review and Annual Reporting

We will report annually on the progress we have made towards promoting Disability, Gender, Race and Age equality. To help us do this effectively, we will ask all members of our learner community and staff for feedback. As part of these reviews, we will consider the information we collect on how our communities, learners and

staff are accessing our services and employment opportunities to ensure that we are making progress.

This Comprehensive Equality and Diversity Policy will be subject to on-going review.

Policy Created: August 2016

Policy Reviewed: March 2018, Nov 2019, June 2020, Sept 2021, Jan 2023

To be Reviewed: Jan 2025

Agreed by: Steve Ryan, Mel Baxter