

## **West End Operatic Society Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Policy**

### **Introduction**

Diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI), is a term encompassing broad and relevant concepts that build upon the progress made through equal opportunities. Diversity is about recognising differences and is focused on the protected characteristics under the Equality Act (2010) covering age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. There has been a cultural shift from the word “equality” to “equity” which now recognises that treating everyone equally does not recognise that some individuals are more disadvantaged than others. Equity seeks to provide equal opportunities by accepting that additional resources and opportunities may need to be allocated to disadvantaged or under-represented groups.

### **A Society encouraging DEI can help:**

- Make it more successful with shows that are better attended
- Keep everybody involved happy and motivated
- Prevent serious or legal issues arising, such as bullying, harassment and discrimination
- To better serve a diverse range of audiences and participants
- Improve ideas, decision-making and problem-solving
- Attract and keep members

West End Operatic Society (WEOS) recognise that it is unlawful to treat anyone with a protected characteristic less favourably than someone without it, if that treatment is not a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim. Diversity also includes broader characteristics such as gender identity, social and demographic background and neurodiversity. Inclusion is about welcoming and giving people a feeling of belonging and ensuring that everyone in the society feels they have a voice. It is about valuing and respecting differences in their ideas and views and procedures are in place for members to express their views. WEOS encourages DEI to enable more people to perform with the society and to be able to access the shows. Consideration is given to better serve a diverse range of audiences and participants.

Complaints will be dealt with sensitively maintaining the society's reputation. Anti-bullying, and harassment policy is in place and adhered to and anyone found to be discriminating will be subject to disciplinary procedures. WEOS does not support any of its members or societies affiliated to them that unlawfully discriminate against or harass or victimise anyone including current and former employees, applicants, customers, audience, members of the public, suppliers and society members. It is everybody's responsibility to make sure the policy is implemented.

WEOS has a duty to make reasonable adjustments to allow all disabled persons to access the Society's Activities. It is not enough to say we are open to all to meet best practice (and the conditions of some funding) putting the policy into practice requires careful thought. It's not just about physical provision. DEI may affect every aspect of our rehearsals, meetings, events and productions, from where it is advertised to how bookings are made and

consideration is given to the programming choices, marketing and membership drives and access to tickets. For example scripts or scores in large print or on off-white paper may be provided, an audio recording of the information in the programme can be made available.

Details of some protected characteristics are required to maintain a duty of care but are treated as sensitive personal data in accordance with GDPR and this data will be only shared where it is in the best interest and destroyed once it is no longer relevant.

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