

Creative Lives - Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

1. Statement of intention

Creative Lives' purpose is to celebrate, encourage and champion people expressing themselves creatively in their everyday lives and practising their creativity socially with other people.

Creative Lives acknowledges that discrimination, in many forms and complexities, exists in our society today and undertakes to play its part in reducing and eliminating such discrimination in all its activities. These acts of discrimination prevent our communities and society from benefiting from everyone and making everyone feel that they belong.

Creative Lives sees the value that different contributions bring to society and to the arts in particular and is keen to champion and celebrate the benefits and importance of diversity. We genuinely want to hear different perspectives and different points of view each time we make decisions about our future direction, activities and approaches.

We want to empower and mobilise people to help themselves and others to be creative: releasing 'lost talent', surfacing under-recognised creativity and improving social relations.

Equality, diversity and inclusion is an organisation-wide commitment to enable everyone to have their distinct voices and perspectives heard, empower those often marginalised and not active to participate fully and create a constructive programme, network, community and culture of inclusion and affirmation.

This positive commitment leads to mutual enrichment and permeates all aspects of our work and enables us to improve life experiences / opportunities through affirming the work/contribution as well as enabling them to fulfil their potential. Thereby recognising and removing barriers that inhibit people from fulfilling their creative potential.

The following values inform all our work:

- We value creative groups whose activities are shaped and directed by the people who take part in them.
- We value situations where everyone is treated with respect; enabled to feel included and are actively working to increase opportunities for people to be creative.
- We value the pooling of knowledge, skills, contacts, venues and equipment to enhance creative cultural activity, for the common good.

Creative Lives must conform to all relevant current legislative requirements in each country of operation, but our ambition is to go beyond compliance and make meaningful improvements to policies and practices.

2. Scope

This policy applies directly to Creative Lives' Board of Trustees; its paid staff whether salaried or contracted; and its volunteers.

3. Standards

- **We will check our progress.** Any new and reviewed projects, policies, programmes and decisions that will affect our people or audiences will undergo an Equalities Impact Plan. This is to ensure that any negative impact on those with protected characteristics is mitigated wherever possible at all levels of the organisations and in all of our activities.
- **We respect people.** No unlawful discrimination shall occur in the support and management of our people and delivery of our services, and all decisions shall be objective and fair with individual circumstances taken into account.
- **We are fair to all.** Our work will take a person-centred approach, and diversity considerations will be incorporated into processes and delivery to ensure that we are as inclusive as possible.

3a. Employment

- **We strive to be the best employer possible.** We are committed to ensuring that recruitment and selection is fair, transparent, and based on merit. We will provide recruitment and selection training to support these objectives. We will also ensure that all managers are trained and supported to deliver their best and be their best selves. Open Conversations (see below) are an integral part of Creative Lives practice and therefore training.

3b. Staff

- We care about the welfare and wellbeing of our staff and volunteers and regard the creation of an effective, supportive work environment as of paramount importance, helping to create the conditions for people to grow and give their best.
- We commit to providing and supporting channels for all staff and volunteers to have their voices heard.
- We value difference and will work to create a working environment that values difference and is free from discrimination, victimisation, bullying or harassment. Any individual who experiences or witnesses' discrimination or harassment is encouraged to report it and where appropriate intervene and support (See Creative Lives' Harassment, Bullying and Sexual Harassment Policy)
- We invest in staff development and require staff to attend training including specific training (within broad categories) that everyone should have.
- We also provide training to cover practicalities such as access and inclusion; and wider awareness, understanding bias etc. We will make other training available as required, e.g. people skills, coaching and mentoring, life skills, supportive management.
- We have a safe means to question or challenge inappropriate behaviour or communications.

3c. Premises

- Creative Lives is committed to adopting modern flexible working practices where appropriate to do so and will consider requests from any staff who wish to work from home either on a temporary or permanent basis. (See Creative Lives' Working from Home Policy)

- For office-based roles, we are committed to ensuring all our staff are based in fully accessible premises. Where reasonable we will make tailored adjustments to accommodate the needs of staff and volunteers, including those seeking to join Creative Lives as staff or volunteers.
- Premises will not be purchased or leased if they don't meet our accessibility standards or cannot be adapted to do so. Where our existing buildings do not meet these standards, we will have a clear exit / adjustment plan so as to be able to replace these buildings with more accessible premises within a reasonable timeframe.
- Our aim is to be a flexible employer and ensure that workspaces are 'personalised'. (See Creative Lives' Flexible Work Policy)
- We will ensure that all venues for meetings, events, etc. will always be accessible. While access is often considered in terms of mobility it should also expand to places that are not conducive for communities to use because they have a practice or history of discrimination on any grounds.

3d. Communications

- We aim to be mindful, considerate, and constructive in our communications.
- All our written and digital communications will comply with accessibility standards and be available in alternative formats on request.
- All complaints will be taken seriously, promptly, and thoroughly investigated, and dealt with in a sensitive and effective manner. (See Creative Lives' Grievance Procedure)
- Creative Lives is committed to ensuring that its clients, volunteers, and staff in Wales have equal right to services through the medium of Welsh in Wales as through the medium of English. (This specific commitment is detailed in the Creative Lives Welsh Language Policy.)
- The portrayal of under-represented groups within our campaigns and materials should be balanced, proportionate to our relationships, and not reinforce stereotypes.
- We will maintain clear policies in place to ensure that fundraising practices do not put pressure on or take advantage of people in vulnerable circumstances. This could include, for example, speakers of English as an additional language, older persons, or disabled persons / persons with disabilities.

4. Responsibilities

Creating a positive place to work and relations with different communities requires that the Creative Lives Board of Trustees owns the policy and is responsible for ensuring that resources, support, and leadership are provided to ensure this policy can be meaningfully implemented. The Board is also responsible for ratifying changes to this policy.

The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for ensuring that the policy is fit for purpose and up to date.

The Senior Management Team is responsible for championing this policy on behalf of the Board of Trustees and ensuring compliance with policy and the effective development, implementation and monitoring of equality and diversity objectives and related action.

The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Panel is responsible for monitoring compliance with this policy; reviewing the policy on an annual basis; and reporting on its delivery on a quarterly basis to the Board.

(The Diversity Panel is composed of at least two trustees, at least one of whom should be the Chair or Vice Chair, Chief Executive Officer, and a member of the Senior Management Team.)

All staff, volunteers and Board members are responsible for championing equality, diversity, and inclusion; understanding how the policy relates to their role; and reporting diversity statistics in their activities.

5. Implementation

Creative Lives is committed to ensuring that this policy is implemented throughout its activities. Examples of implementation include the following Initiatives:

5a. Open Conversations

The Open Conversations methodology emphasises the importance of wanting to listen, using the skills of active listening. People have a need to speak, to be heard and seen – and to talk to others doing the same thing elsewhere.

Open Conversations:

- Are long-form exploratory conversations
- Take place in informal settings - with us going to talk to people where they are, rather than requiring them to come to us
- Are deliberately unstructured conversations, the agenda/shape and direction of the conversation being determined by those in the room.
- Start by simply asking people to talk about their creative cultural activity
- Encourage and enable all voices to speak, share their stories, experiences, and thoughts/feelings
- Emphasise the importance of attentive listening
- Provide space for more open-ended exploration and responses
- Work best while sharing food and drink
- Are documented immediately after (rather than during) the conversation
- Keep note-taking to a minimum - encouraging active listening and conversation in the moment
- Can be facilitated group conversations as well as one-to-one conversations
- End by asking those present to recommend who we should go to speak to next, thereby extending beyond our existing networks and contacts
- Open Conversations are, in themselves, collective acts of cultural creativity.

5b. A Wider Range of Voices

Creative Lives developed a new approach to ensuring that we implement equality of opportunity and a diverse range of views and experiences throughout all our work. We call this 'A Wider Range of Voices'.

This involves identifying every decision-making or planning process within our organisation. For each of these moments we will ensure we involve a wider range of voices by inviting partners, observers, peer organisations, funders, experts, or volunteers

to take part in our internal discussions. Similarly, to Open Conversations (above), we will conclude by asking those present to recommend who we should go to speak to next, thereby extending beyond our existing networks and contacts.

Approved by the Creative Lives Board in March 2024. Annual review by March 2025.