

Equal opportunities policy – Wessex Concert Orchestra

Aims

Wessex Concert Orchestra is a music group open to all subject to them being able to achieve the required playing standards. We aim to treat our members, volunteers, staff and supporters equally regardless of their age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, class and socio-economic background.

- The Administrative Manager is responsible for providing advice and guidance on equality and diversity issues, and to ensure the Equality and Diversity Policy is kept up to date.

Equality of opportunity - WCO aims to:

- promote equality for its members and potential members in access to membership and musical activities and opportunities [within the membership criteria].
- ensure no member or potential member will receive less favourable treatment or is disadvantaged by the criteria and characteristics set out in the introduction [within the membership criteria].
- ensure no individual wishing to volunteer or work for (including on a freelance basis) WCO will receive less favourable treatment or is disadvantaged by the criteria and characteristics set out in the aims.

Inclusion and respect;

- WCO values its members, staff, volunteers and supporters and will do all it can to:
 - treat them in a respectful manner and ensure they are made to feel equally welcome and included in all activities.
 - provide an environment in which the contribution and needs of everyone are fully valued and recognised.
- Accordingly all members, staff volunteers, supporters and those representing WCO are expected to treat each other with respect and dignity and ensure activities are welcoming and inclusive for all.
- Inappropriate, violent or abusive behaviour or otherwise offensive and inflammatory remarks and behaviour are not acceptable. These constitute harassment, and have no place in WCO.

- WCO will support our members, volunteers, staff and supporters in not tolerating any inappropriate, violent or abusive behaviour from other group members, volunteers, colleagues, other organisations or customers.

Accessibility: WCO aims to use venues that are accessible to all for rehearsals, concerts and any other activities or events it undertakes.

Dealing with Complaints

- If any member, volunteer, staff or supporter feels they have been discriminated against or harassed they should raise it with the committee.
- The committee will take complaints of discrimination and harassment seriously.
- The committee will investigate the complaint, listening to all parties involved:
 - If the complaint is against a committee member, that member will not be part of conducting the investigation.
 - If the complaint is against an individual, that individual will have the opportunity to express their point of view in a safe environment and accompanied by a friend.
 - The person making the complaint will have the same opportunity.
- If a complaint is found against WCO, the committee must work to ensure that such discrimination is not repeated in the future, and must inform the members of how they propose to do this.

Employment practices – general

- WCO aims to promote equality and inclusivity as an employer and shall ensure that no volunteer, employee, person engaged to provide a service (e.g. freelance) or job/volunteer applicant receives less favourable treatment or is disadvantaged by the characteristics set out in the aims of this policy
- WCO selects all candidates for interview based on their skills, qualifications and experience.
- Selection, recruitment, training, promotion and employment practices will be subject to regular review to ensure that they comply with the Equality and Diversity Policy.
- WCO regards discrimination, abuse, harassment, victimisation or bullying of staff or volunteers in the course of work as disciplinary offences that could be regarded as gross misconduct.

Request for DBS checks for current and potential members, staff and volunteers – with reference to ex-offenders

- WCO does not request DBS checks. This policy will be updated if the need changes as a result of an update to the Safeguarding policy.

Policy review

The policy will be reviewed every two years by the board of trustees/management committee. Members of WCO will be informed of any changes to the policy and be invited to comment.