

Smoking Apples Theatre Limited

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Statement - Sept 2021

Smoking Apples Theatre Limited have always sought to tackle difficult subject matter, researching the subject matter of each production in detail as a standard phase of our devising process. We want truth and genuine human experience to be at the heart of what we do, and as a contemporary theatre company, this truth includes experiences and narratives from a wide range of people and communities. We tour our work across the country, and abroad, to theatre and non-theatre spaces, and want to reach audiences from all walks of life. We believe it is important to represent our audiences within our work, and to give voices to often unheard stories, so it is essential to us to actively seek out artists from a diverse range of backgrounds.

We are committed to ensuring that every individual has an equal opportunity to make the most of their talents, and to treating everyone with respect. We recognise our own life experiences are limited, and strive to educate ourselves and improve our understanding of the difficulties that communities may face. We acknowledge that we are a small company, with 3 directors and no more than 15 regular freelancers, but endeavour to improve our systems and processes through consultations and research, in order to make our application and work processes equally accessible, respectful and welcoming to all.

We champion 'relaxed' performances and workshops, and we aim to make all of our performances and workshops accessible in this way. We encourage our audiences to react and enjoy our work however they want to. We champion working with neurodivergent artists, which includes young people. We define Neurodivergency as individuals with ADHD, Dyslexia, Dyspraxia and Autism, however, we also include those who self-identify as Neurodivergent, which can include mental health conditions. Working and creating with Neurodivergent artists is an area of active development for us, as a company and something we will continue to nurture.

Protected Characteristics

Under the Equality Act (2010) people are not allowed to discriminate, harass or victimise another person because they have any of the protected characteristics. People are also protected from being discriminated against because they are perceived to have one of the protected characteristics or because they are associated with someone who has a protected characteristic. The protected characteristics are:

- Age
- Disability (visible or invisible)
- gender (sex)

- gender re-assignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- religion and belief
- sexual orientation.

Definitions

The following definitions of equality and diversity are taken from Arts Council England's Equality Action Guide:

Our definition of diversity encompasses race, ethnicity, faith, disability (visible or invisible), age, gender, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity, and marriage and civil partnerships. We also include class and economic disadvantage and social and institutional barriers that prevent people from participating in and enjoying the arts.

The difference between equality and diversity:

Equality is ensuring individuals or groups of individuals are not treated differently or less favourably because of a characteristic that they share. However, this does not mean treating everyone the same. It means making sure that no one is disadvantaged from participating in art and culture because of barriers that disproportionately affect people who share the same characteristics as them. Equality recognises that historically, certain groups of people with protected characteristics may have experienced discrimination and that it may be necessary to take positive action to address this.

Diversity is about recognising, respecting and valuing people's differences to contribute and to realise their full potential by promoting an inclusive culture for all.

Smoking Apples uses the social model of disability. The social model is based on the principle that disability is caused by the way society is organised, rather than by a person's impairment or difference. It puts the emphasis on what needs to be done to identify and remove barriers. Working with diversity and access consultants who actively champion the social model of disability has become an integral part of working practice. We will endeavour to ensure that these people are not from within the core team so that they can provide objectivity to the matter and ensure a robust, fair approach.