

PENTABUS

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy 2023-27

Diversity, accessibility and inclusivity are some of the core principles of Pentabus and we recognise that artistic excellence relies on the richness and innovation that diversity brings. We expect commitment and involvement from all our staff, board, partners and providers of goods and services in working towards the achievement of our vision of a workforce (including staff, board members and freelance creative teams) representative of the make-up of contemporary Britain.

Pentabus is signed up to the [Anti Racism Touring Rider](#), the [More than a Moment](#) pledge, the [Trans Casting Statement](#) and is part of the Producing and Touring companies' **anti-ableism focus group**. We commit to creating opportunity, particularly for marginalised and under-represented staff and freelancers. All staff and freelancers are expected to work in an inclusive manner and sign up to this Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy.

As a rurally based arts organisation reaching a predominantly rural audience (in the face of the urbanisation of culture) equality of practice and access is at the heart of who we are and what we do.

Fundamental Values:

- We are committed to ensuring a work environment for contracted staff, freelance staff, volunteers and board members that is fully inclusive and that nobody is discriminated against, or feels discriminated against, on grounds of any protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010.
- Our employment practice will not discriminate on grounds of any protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 (or any other discrimination outside the parameters of the protected characteristics).
- Recruitment processes (for external candidates, internal opportunities and training) will be based on individual merit and where candidates meet the minimum criteria for a role, we will operate a 'guaranteed interview' or 'guaranteed shortlist' policy for people identifying as global majority, trans or disabled.
- Intolerance towards anyone from, or perceived to be from, a protected characteristic group is unacceptable at Pentabus. Any instances of intolerance from contracted, freelance staff, volunteers, board members and/or participants may result in a written warning. Three written warnings may result in dismissal (adhering to company disciplinary procedures as set out in the staff handbook).
- This Equality Policy is an active policy which will be monitored and reviewed annually – with open feedback sought from those that engage with us.

Current position: Our work tours nationally, predominantly, to isolated rural areas. Characteristics that these areas share include; limited access to culture, poor access to public transport and in the last government census the 'white ethnic' group accounted for 96.8% of the population. We have a particular responsibility to target areas of inequality where we know we can have an impact. In addition, we will continue to be at the forefront of gender and race equality throughout all our productions, elevating the most marginalised stories and voices.

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All our artistic and organisational activities are guided by the Arts Council Equality Objectives*. We commit to ensuring that at least 50% of our production teams represent diverse backgrounds and protected characteristics. We are dedicated to creating and delivering engaging art experiences for isolated rural communities with limited access to the arts. We will continue to champion and amplify diverse rural voices.

Aims:

- To engage isolated rural audiences in areas with limited access to the arts
 - To become sector leaders in accessibility in small-scale touring
 - To inspire diverse people from areas of socio-economic need
 - To nurture and develop a creative workforce representative of the diversity of contemporary Britain
 - To platform stories and elevate voices of the most marginalised rural voices.

***Equality Objectives:** Arts Council England has a legal duty to consider equality in its policy making. We are committed to creating a more inclusive creative and cultural sector that promotes fairness and opportunity for everyone. Through our work we aim to promote equality, diversity and inclusion, and prevent all forms of discrimination across the protected characteristics defined under the Equality Act. We also want the sector to be more representative of England in relation to socio-economic background. Our Equality Objectives, set out in the Delivery Plan for our 10-year strategy, Let's Create, include a commitment to achieving a more equitable distribution of our investment to support a sector that becomes more inclusive and representative of the communities it serves across the country.

***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. Protected Characteristics are:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage or civil partnership (in employment only)
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

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Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan 2023-27

This plan will be led by the Co-Directors, with support from our nominated board champion, Tilly Branson.

Area of Focus	Objectives	To be achieved by	Led by
Company wide	Nominate an Equalities Champion on the board of trustees	April 2023	Artistic Director
	Publish our Pro Human Rights Statement on our website	April 2023	Artistic Director
	Ensure that all Board and Staff Members have received appropriate briefing on the Equalities Policy, are aware of their obligations under the Equalities Act 2010. Have engaged with the organisations Investment Principle and Activity Plan to ensure delivery.	April 2023	Executive Director
	Maintain 'Season Stats' – to annually monitor diversity of staff, freelance workforce and board	Annual	Executive Director
Engage isolated rural audiences in areas of least engagement			
	50% of the halls on each Village Hall Tour will be new to the company/Levelling Up areas or Priority Places	Each Village Hall Tour	Producer / Artistic Director
	Ring-fence audience development budget to subsidise shows in village halls in areas of least engagement and who have never before presented theatre and studio theatres in Levelling Up areas and Priority Places.	Each Village Hall Tour	Head of Engagement / Producer/ AD
	Work in partnership with local rural touring schemes to build theatre audiences in new communities of least engagement.	Year 1	Artistic Director/ Head of Engagement/Producer
Become sector leaders in accessibility and small-scale touring			

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	Integrate access into all our productions in new and innovative ways. Including audio description, creative captions and touch tours.	Each tour	Artistic Director/ Producer
	Actively engage the D/deaf, Blind and Partially Sighted and Disabled communities in seeing our work via accessible or relaxed performances	All tours	Producer/Head of Engagement/ Marketing
	Make closed captions available in all venues local to Pentabus (Shropshire and Herefordshire)	All tours	Artistic Director/ Head of Engagement
	Employ at least one disabled artist on every production	All tours	Artistic Director/ Producer
Inspire diverse people from areas of socioeconomic need			
	Work with at least 16 young artists per year through our Young Company, widely promoting the opportunity and ring-fencing funds to pay for travel and access for young people of limited means	Annual	Head of Engagement
	Work in 6 rural primary schools and 3 rural colleges each year to provide creative opportunities and pathways to young people in areas where access to culture is limited.	Annual	Head of Engagement/ Artistic Director
	Where appropriate to present work in Studio Theatres to engage urban audiences in rural issues.	Ongoing	Producer / Artistic Director
Nurture and develop a creative workforce representative of the diversity of contemporary Britain			
	Commit to equal opportunities in recruitment for all staff positions and operate a 'guaranteed interview policy' for disabled, global majority and gender questioning groups	Continuous	Executive Director
	Commission and produce at least one production by a global majority artist.	Within this funding round	Artistic Director
	Develop and present at least 1 new production with a disabled actor	(2 in the last 18 months)	Artistic Director

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	Improve Board diversity	Continuous	Executive Director / Artistic Director / Chair
	Engage at least 3 Associate Artists per year, targeting artists with protected characteristics* for these positions.	Annual	Artistic Director
	Maintain a commitment to diverse casting and creative teams in all productions.	Continuous	Artistic Director