

SCOTTISH YOUTH THEATRE

POLICY DOCUMENT

Name of policy	Equity and Justice Policy
Date of Board approval	16 May 2023
Effective from	May 2023
Frequency of review	Every 3 years
Date of next review	June 2026

Scope and Purpose of the Policy

This policy applies to all permanent and temporary employees, the Board, participants, freelance and sessional workers, trainees, work placements, agency staff and anyone working or volunteering on behalf of Scottish Youth Theatre.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that Scottish Youth Theatre is responsible and accountable for an equitable and just organisational culture, workforce, national programme of delivery and audience engagement that is representative of the intersectionality and diverse lived experiences of Scotland now. The policy sits alongside the **Equity & Justice Action Plan** that captures the company's ongoing practice and development priorities.

Youth theatre is fundamentally about amplifying the creative voices of young people. It is Scottish Youth Theatre's artistic duty to platform the voices of Scotland's young theatre-makers and ensure fair and equitable representation of Scotland's diverse communities in all our activities.

Scottish Youth Theatre's Purpose

To **collaborate** with young theatre artists to **create** experiences and events that **reverberate** in their lives, their communities and their country.

Scottish Youth Theatre is a national young artists' development organisation. Our belief in the power of theatre to instigate change and transform lives informs the range of learning, performance and development opportunities we offer. We believe in supporting and enabling all young people with an interest and passion for theatre and the arts to achieve their creative potential. New voices and new theatre are at the heart of Scottish Youth Theatre; a failure to represent all voices in our work is a failure of mission.

Systems Change

Scottish Youth Theatre is committed to developing an organisational culture, structure and suite of practices that represent systems change. This extends our thinking and practice from equality, diversity and inclusion to equity and justice.

'Equity based approaches emphasise that different populations are differently situated in society ... so it may be necessary to treat people differently based on how they are positioned in society rather than judging and treating everyone the same.'

ACEVO Report: Undoing racism and delivering real diversity in the charity sector

The company recognises that equity and justice is an active approach that forms part of our ongoing thinking and delivery. We commit to consistently challenge ourselves to do better; to be alert to and address assumptions, language and actions that are exclusive, dehumanising or stigmatising and attentive to how our working practices may exclude or negatively impact individuals.

Diversity and Inclusion		Equity and Justice
Count how many young artists from non-mainstream backgrounds are in the room.	→	Identify who is absent from the room. What are the structures we have in place that perpetuate majority representation?
Identify and remove barriers to access.	And in addition	Create bridges to access.
Ask -whose ideas are represented?	→	Ask -whose ideas have not had the opportunity to be heard? Why?
Create safe spaces.		Design spaces that incorporate the needs of those present to create the safety they need to flourish.

Legal & Advisory Framework

This policy sits in the context of the following legal requirements and good practice guidance:

- The Equality Act 2010
- Children’s Rights and the UNCRC in Scotland Guidance
- The Human Rights Act 1998
- The Employment Rights Act 1996
- The Employment Protection Act 1975
- The Part-time Workers (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2000
- The Employment Act 2008
- The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974
- The Data Protection Act 2018

Scottish Youth Theatre has a legal obligation to provide equity of opportunity to nine groups of people who hold ‘protected characteristics’ as defined by the Equality Act 2010 (listed below). ‘People’ include Scottish Youth Theatre participants, employees, freelancers, contractors, job applicants, partner agencies, Board members, audience members and anyone else engaged with us.

We recognise the rich artistic and cultural potential of being an organisation untethered to a venue or premises with entry-points for all young artists regardless of their:

- | | |
|------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1) Gender | 6) Marital Status |
| 2) Race / Ethnicity | 7) Disabilities (physical and mental) |
| 3) Religion and Belief | 8) Gender reassignment |
| 4) Sexual Orientation | 9) Pregnancy and Maternity |
| 5) Age | |

In addition, and relevant to our services, Scottish Youth Theatre recognises inequality caused by socio-economic disadvantage and by geographic location.

The company recognises that socio-economic deprivation has a central role to play in intersectional exclusion, limiting educational opportunity, travel, career choice, access to ticketed culture and inhibiting the belief that change is possible. We recognise that careers in arts and culture remain amongst the most exclusive and elite in the country.

Scottish Youth Theatre seeks to address the negative impacts of poverty on equity in the arts. All activity is delivered on a no-fee basis and additional costs for travel, accommodation, access and wellbeing are covered by the company, within available resources, to alleviate financial barriers to participation. At the same time, the company recognises the need for the growth of relationships in relevant sectors to raise awareness of our work, delivery of projects with targeted communities and explicit recruitment of young people from low-income backgrounds to address previous lack of opportunity and attitudinal barriers to participation.

The company also recognises that there are higher levels of cultural opportunity in urban, more populated areas of Scotland, especially in the Central Belt. For young people living in more rural, remote and island locations, this can significantly limit their introduction to youth theatre activity, progression in the art form and their access to professional theatre performances. Scottish Youth Theatre explicitly grows relationships and devises activity to meet the creative needs of young people with limited or no access to youth arts activity where they live.

Company Culture and Ethos

Scottish Youth Theatre’s **values** are central to our work, guiding and shaping the approach to equity and justice within the organisation. Aligned to our values, Scottish Youth Theatre will strive for equity and justice by:

<p>Cultivating creative possibility</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating time and space to listen and respond to the ongoing needs of participants, freelancers and core staff • Positively promoting diversity of thought and lived experience through all aspects of our work, challenging the status quo • Recognising that diverse voices are fundamental to the urgency and relevance of theatre as an artform and maintain consistent creative dialogue with young artists and artistic partners • Creating nurturing and generous learning environments appropriate to participants, where young people feel safe to create, express, challenge and fail
<p>Weaving collaboration and connection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committing to an ongoing practice of intersectional collaboration with all key stakeholders • Recognising that Scottish Youth Theatre may not have all the answers or be best placed to provide opportunities for all young artists and therefore it is important to nurture a network of partner organisations in a position to provide support, guidance and opportunities • Ensuring promotional material, including social media, is accessible and representative of the communities we serve
<p>Embedding wellbeing and care</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foregrounding our values in induction sessions for all within scope • Co-creating safe-space guides bespoke to each project with participants • Providing a suite of robust access and wellbeing support to reinforce equity of opportunity and retain participants • Offer space for questions, discussion, feedback and addressing concerns • Safeguarding young people, freelancers and core staff to the best of our ability through the necessary checks and clearly signposting pathways for reporting abuse, harassment, discrimination and concerns about child protection
<p>Grounding integrity in all things</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognising that our work on equity and justice is one of continuous learning and we remain open to questions and feedback to improve our practice • Monitoring equity and justice performance and committing to continuous improvement through our Equity and Justice Action Plan

- Ensuring all activities are free to participate, with no additional cost for participants and recognising that cost is not the only barrier to accessing opportunities
- Understanding the systemic barriers to access in relation to equity and justice and taking positive action when recruiting staff, freelancers, board and participants
- Providing appropriate training opportunities for core staff, freelancers and participants where possible and maintaining an audit of that training

Recruitment and Career Development

Scottish Youth Theatre maintains open, accountable and transparent employment practices as laid out in our suite of staff related policies including our Fair Work Policy and Recruitment Policy. The company recognises the benefits a diverse and intersectional workforce of different lived experience brings. We aim to foster a culture of safety, equity and justice for everyone who engages with us, with a workforce that is representative of contemporary Scotland.

In recognition that recruitment can be used as a tool of inclusion and exclusion, we reserve the right to use recruitment to address under-representation through targeted recruitment and/ or positive action. This applies to recruiting participants, core staff, freelance contractors and members of the Board.

We acknowledge that some people from under-represented and marginalised groups do not have access to career development opportunities. As such we commit to supporting training and advancement for the benefit of the employee/participant.

Scottish Youth Theatre is committed to providing ongoing training for all core staff and Board members in the areas of anti-racist practice, disability awareness, LGBT+ awareness, trauma informed practice, mental health and wellbeing, suicide prevention, safeguarding and other applicable learning in the areas of equity and justice. These training opportunities are extended to freelance contractors, trainees and participants where appropriate.

Communications

Scottish Youth Theatre recognises that language in relation to equity and justice can be problematic, constantly evolves and can be the source of distress or offence. We commit to constantly check our language, to be clear about what we mean by using certain words or phrases and open to feedback and questions.

In our published communications we seek to constantly improve our practice to achieve clear and accessible communication. This includes following good practice in the use of captioning, screen readable text, website and graphic design, inclusion of transcripts and plain English.

Monitoring and Reporting

Scottish Youth Theatre monitors, evaluates and continually seeks to improve our performance in areas of equity and justice, including identifying any impediment in progression or implementation of this policy.

The company offers different mechanisms for support and feedback to ensure people with different lived experiences can share and discuss their experience of working with the company. This is designed to be appropriate to the role and level of engagement of an individual and, in a delivery context, is available during the delivery period of a project and/or as a reflective exercise after it is completed. It may form part of established management or evaluation processes and may include the offer of 1-2-1 sessions with a wellbeing specialist or a person with similar lived experience.

To ensure proper investigation and appropriate action, any incidents or serious concerns related to equity and justice should be raised with the following personnel using the reporting framework below:

- Chief Executive: Jacky Hardacre jacky@scottishyouththeatre.org
- Creative Director: Rikki Payne rikki@scottishyouththeatre.org
- Lead Board Member: Naomi Shoba
- Chair of the Board: Paul Zealey

Incident or allegation relating to	Incident or allegation relating to	Incident or allegation relating to	Incident or allegation relating to
↓	↓	↓	↓
SYT staff (apart from CD or CEO), freelance contractor, participant	Creative Director	Chief Executive or Board Member	Lead Board Member for Equity and Justice
↓	↓	↓	↓
Report to	Report to	Report to	Report to
↓	↓	↓	↓
Creative Director or Chief Executive	Chief Executive or Lead Board Member for Equity & Justice	Lead Board Member for Equity & Justice	Chair of the Board or Chief Executive

Equity & Justice and other company policies

This policy should be read alongside Scottish Youth Theatre policies and procedures on:

- Safeguarding
- Digital Safeguarding
- Fair Work
- Anti-bullying
- Health & Safety
- Recruitment, induction and training
- Social Media
- Code of conduct
- Complaints
- Data Protection

Policy Review

Scottish Youth Theatre is committed to reviewing this policy and good practice every three years and at any time when there is a change in the law or in response to a specific incident or political context.

Further reading

- Recalibrating Equity and Social Justice in Scottish Education: <https://education.gov.scot/improvement/research/recalibrating-equity-and-social-justice-in-scottish-education-after-covid/>
- The Race Equality Framework for Scotland 2016-30: www.gov.scot/publications/race-equality-framework-scotland-2016-2030/
- Undoing racism and delivering real diversity in the charity sector: <https://www.acevo.org.uk/reports/home-truths/>
- Language of Appeasement by Dafina-Lazarus Stewart: <https://www.insidehighered.com/views/2017/03/30/colleges-need-language-shift-not-one-you-think-essay>
- Intercultural Youth Scotland published reports: www.interculturalyouthscotland.org/reports
- Gender equality in the workplace: <https://www.gov.scot/policies/gender-equality/workplace-gender-equality/>
- Poverty, economy and mental health: <https://www.povertyalliance.org/summary-briefing-poverty-economy-and-mental-health/>