EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

SCHA is committed to establishing a culture of equal opportunities and inclusion for all: users, audiences, workers, prospective workers, members and directors, and opposes all forms of unlawful or unfair discrimination.

We recognise the aim of the Equality Act 2010 is to 'harmonise discrimination law and to strengthen the law to support progress on equality. It replaces and extends the existing equality legislation on race, disability and gender and covers a total of 9 '**protected characteristics'.**

These are:

1. Age
2. Disability
3. Sex
4. Gender Reassignment
5. Marriage or civil partnership
6. Pregnancy and maternity
7. Race
8. Religion or belief
9. Sexual orientation

Every possible step will be taken to ensure that individuals are treated equally and fairly and that decisions on recruitment, selection, development and programming are based solely on objective criteria. SCHA will treat all persons according to the gender in which they identify.

STATEMENT OF INTENT:

SCHA strives to take an equitable approach to all aspects of the delivery and the development of the organisation. The organisation will endeavour to take account of the complexity of difference, widen access and wherever possible provide an equal experience for contractors, members, stakeholders and visitors. In addition, we seek to engage those who have previously felt excluded from culture, art and heritage.

We will consult with and involve our members, communities and partner organisations, to encourage participation in our decision and planning processes.

We aim to help identify improvements in the quality of services we deliver

We recognise that the arts and heritage are both manifestations of culture as well as the means of communication of cultural and historical knowledge. We will encourage debate; foster an environment where questions can be asked and voices heard.

SCHA will seek professional advice to support it where necessary. In supporting our members, we will consider the importance of referencing specialists and seeking advice from practitioners, arts and heritage organisations who have expertise with specific target groups. SCHA will work with these experts and with the target groups themselves to consider how best to widen accessibility.

SCHA recognises the importance of developing programmes of events and projects that widen access to all. The Gaelic language is of particular importance and SCHA strives to include the language whenever possible.

Awarding Contracts; Professional, Voluntary and Educational Work Opportunities

We will strive to be a good employer and commissioning body.

SCHA demonstrates fairness within systems and processes for uptake of opportunities and award of contracts.

The organisation observes the following procedures and all opportunities will be publicly advertised:

- Recruitment and provision of service opportunities will be advertised on the SCHA website
- Opportunities will be advertised on relevant culture, arts and heritage, national online portals, as appropriate.
- All opportunity notices will be publicly advertised for at least 10 days
- Recruitment panels will constitute at least two members of the board.
- Where partner agencies are involved, their inclusion in selection processes will be invited.
- For the avoidance of doubt towards majority decision; an odd number of people will constitute any selection panel
- All parties responding to SCHA opportunities will receive a response
- Feedback to unsuccessful applicants with interest in professional, or other opportunity, will be provided on request

Service Standards

SCHA is committed to meeting legal obligations in respect of Access and Equality laws when buying goods or services.

Equalities and Diversity Training

The SCHA board values opportunities for training to develop the organisation. Trustees and staff will have opportunities to undertake equalities training as appropriate, to:

- Increase understanding of the SCHA workforce, membership and their needs
- Ensure communication barriers to accessing services and facilities are reduced
- Ensure physical barriers to accessing services and facilities are reduced
- Assist in the monitoring and evaluation of our work on delivering commitments to promoting equality and access for our members, participating communities and our workforce. SCHA will continually review progress to develop services that are accessible to all and identify where we need to do more.

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