



## UO EQUALITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION POLICY

### 1. POLICY STATEMENT

The Ulster Orchestra is committed to equality and diversity in the workplace and to creating an inclusive culture. We strive to ensure that no job applicant, employee or service user receives less favourable treatment on any grounds, particularly of any of the protected characteristics. \*

We commit to regularly reviewing our policies and practices to ensure that we are always compliant with legislation, and we will proactively encourage a culture that always supports equality, diversity and inclusion.

NB. the ED&I policy does not cover bullying and harassment, which is covered in our Dignity at Work policy.

***\*Protected Characteristics:** These are the specific grounds on which discrimination is unlawful: age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage & civil partnership; ethnic or community background; pregnancy or maternity; race and nationality; religious belief or political opinion; sex; sexual orientation.*

### 2. WHAT DO WE MEAN BY EQUALITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION?

Equality is about making sure everyone is treated fairly and given an equitable chance to access opportunities. It is not about treating everyone the same way as they may have different needs to achieve the same outcomes.

Diversity means 'difference'. When it is used in the same context as equality, it is about recognising and valuing individual as well as group differences. It also means treating people as individuals and placing positive value on the diversity they bring because of them belonging to a certain personal protected characteristic or their cultural background.

Inclusion is where difference is seen as a benefit and where perspectives and differences are shared, leading to better decisions. An inclusive working environment is one in which everyone feels valued, their contribution matters, and they can perform to their potential, no matter their background, identity or circumstances.

## **2.1 Why is this important for The Ulster Orchestra?**

The Ulster Orchestra is a diverse organisation and it's important that all our employees feel like they are part of the team and valued, in line with our core values – 'We Care about our Colleagues; We Commit to being World Class; We Engage with our Community'. This helps us as an orchestra to be more creative, perform better, and be more sustainable.

We aim to provide equal access to careers in the orchestral sector and to recruit and retain the most talented and committed people to work with us from all backgrounds so we can better represent society.

We are also committed to pursuing equal access to orchestral music for all members of society, ensuring that we deliver culturally sensitive, inclusive, accessible and appropriate events and activities, without discrimination.

## **3. RESPONSIBILITIES**

We all need to work together to make sure we put our ethos into practice.

### **3.1 What you can expect from The Ulster Orchestra:**

- To actively support equality, diversity and inclusion and to ensure that all our employees are valued and treated with dignity and respect.
- To strive to provide employees with a working environment free from discrimination.
- To ensure managers work in partnership with employees to create and sustain an inclusive working environment where everyone's unique contribution is valued.
- To ensure that decisions affecting employment, training and career development are based on an individual's ability and genuine requirements of the job.
- To comply with relevant legislation by requiring all employees to meet the minimum standards of behaviour and conduct in relation to how they treat their colleagues and other people they have contact with as part of their work with UO.
- To regularly review the policy and its practical application and make any updates to continue to work towards identifying and eliminating any potentially discriminatory practices.
- To provide employees and managers with the appropriate information, via this policy, on equality, diversity and inclusion in the workplace, as well as to provide relevant training for all employees.
- To adjust to meet the needs of and provide the relevant accessibility measures to those with disabilities where reasonable and practicable to do so.
- To ensure all publications and material reflect diversity in the language and images used.

- To provide access to our events and activities without any form of unlawful discrimination.

### **3.2 What the Ulster Orchestra Expects from You:**

- To familiarise yourself with this policy and to act in accordance with UO's commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion at all times.
- To not discriminate against colleagues and other people you have contact with as part of your work with the UO, treating everyone with respect and helping to create an environment that is free from discrimination of any kind.
- To be sensitive to the potential impact of your behaviour on others.
- To recognise and challenge instances of perceived discrimination. To work in partnership with management to create and sustain an inclusive working environment, in which everyone's unique contribution is valued.
- To cooperate with management in eliminating discriminatory practices.

## **4. EQUALITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION IN PRACTICE**

### **Recruitment and Selection**

The Ulster Orchestra aims to attract applications from a global market, and we will ensure fair treatment through the recruitment process which will include:

- Checking that job descriptions and person specifications are relevant and non-discriminatory.
- Ensuring that the wording and images used in job adverts reflect and appeal to all sections of society and comply with the law.
- Conducting an anonymous, objective and structured short-listing process where used.
- Ensuring all auditions are screened where possible.
- Using a competency-based scoring process.
- Keeping records of the recruitment and selection process.
- Monitoring recruitment and selection to ensure equality of opportunity throughout the process and taking steps to eliminate any discriminatory practices.

### **Career Development**

Decisions in respect of career development focus on skills and talents rather than assumptions based on any protected characteristic.

## **Training**

The role of training is to improve performance in the job, to develop skills, and to prepare individuals for other roles and responsibilities. As career development, decisions in respect of who is trained and how that training will be facilitated will be based on individual development needs and not on any protected characteristic.

## **ED&I Action Plan**

We aim to enact our ED&I policy by committing to relevant, specific and continuous improvement through our ED&I action plan which strives to build inclusive practices into all areas of our operations.

## **ED&I Committee**

Our ED&I Committee is made up of a diverse range of people from across the company, all of whom are passionate about making UO a fully inclusive place to work. The group meets regularly throughout the year to discuss issues, review our policies, monitor the progress of our ED&I Action Plan and implement ED&I initiatives. Meeting minutes are shared with everyone in the company via SharePoint, and new members are always welcome.

## **External Relationships**

UO seeks to work with external bodies and partners, e.g. Black Lives in Music (BLiM), University of Atypical, to raise awareness of opportunities to engage with the orchestral sector, develop musicians with the potential to perform with professional orchestras and remove barriers to playing and hearing orchestral music. As part of our relationship with BLiM, we have signed up to the Ten Point Action Plan for Inclusive Recruitment in Orchestras.

## **5. RAISING CONCERNS**

You have the right to equality of opportunity, and we want you to feel confident to raise any concerns you may have in this area.

We encourage you to raise your concerns in the first instance with the Orchestra Manager/your Line Manager (admin staff) in the first instance. Alternatively, you may contact the People & Culture Leader or a member of the Senior Management team in confidence, who will advise on the best course of action.

You may also raise your concerns via the appropriate policy, through informal or formal processes. All concerns will be taken seriously, and we will work with you to investigate these as quickly and sensitively as possible and seek to resolve these in a timely manner.

NB. Where you raise your concerns informally with a manager, a senior manager or the People & Culture Leader, where they believe the concern is sufficiently serious, they may instigate a formal process on your behalf.

If any employee acts in a discriminatory manner, appropriate action will be taken under the UO Disciplinary Policy. This also applies where the actions have taken place outside of normal working hours and where it impacts on either the working environment, or where it could potentially affect the UO's reputation.

## **6. DIVERSITY MONITORING**

To get an accurate picture of The Ulster Orchestra and to identify any potential inequalities, we will collect, on a voluntary basis, individual personal information on the diversity of potential recruits and existing employees and freelancers and artists.

You are not obliged to answer monitoring questions, particularly as they can be perceived to be very personal, but the quality of our monitoring is only as good as the quality of the data and so it is worthwhile and necessary for us to have this information to make our policy a reality. Monitoring can also help us to ensure that everyone has equal access to opportunities at UO.

All personal data is held securely and processed in compliance with the relevant legislation and our Data Protection policy and will be treated as strictly confidential.