

# POLICY

## Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

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Policy Reviewed: April 2024  
Next Review: April 2026 (or sooner if required)  
Inclusive Language Annex C to be reviewed every 6 months – next review due Oct 2024

Spinning Wheel Theatre (SWT) is an East Anglian based rural touring company, creating work with and for families in communities across the region. We are passionate about providing our audiences with the opportunity to experience and participate in high quality, vibrant and accessible theatre on their doorstep. We are committed to promoting theatre as an activity for all, and do so by incorporating multi-rolling performances, puppetry, song, and accessible devices such as Makaton signing and relaxed performance spaces to create magical worlds which welcome young audiences to engage in shared cultural experiences. Alongside our touring work, we create bespoke community and schools' projects, providing opportunities to explore creativity, acquire new skills, build confidence, improve well-being and meet new people.

SWT strives to create an environment of acceptance, accessibility and enjoyment for all and, while recognising that there are many differences within the communities we work in, we strive to ensure that everyone is treated with respect and dignity.

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion goes beyond the requirements of the Equality Act 2010. Diversity is not about them and us. It's about including all of us. The range of perspectives and experience diversity brings is an asset to our organisation, and we strive to create an inclusive, welcoming environment for participants, creative practitioners and audiences alike, where individual differences and the contributions of all are recognised and valued.

SWT will seek to ensure that barriers to the public accessing services and/or SWT's artistic programmes are removed. To achieve this, SWT will:

- Keep ticket pricing constantly in review, providing a number of free tickets to food banks (or similar) and through schools to children in receipt of free school meals for as many performances as possible.
- Provide bursary places for participatory activity.
- Monitor the physical accessibility of venues we tour to, with a preference for venues with wheelchair access, automatic doors and accessible toilets.
- Continue to bring theatre into rural hubs to remove reliance on private or public transport and build trust by using familiar community spaces for performances.
- Incorporate Makaton signing into family performances and workshops with children whenever possible.
- Work with diverse cultures to explore their heritage and influence on storytelling, in order to present a reflection of their culture on stage.

### **Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy Statement**

Discrimination is unacceptable and SWT has measures in place to ensure that no-one experiences direct or indirect discrimination on the basis of the following protected characteristics: race, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, gender reassignment, religion or belief, disability, age and also national or ethnic origin (see Annex A for definitions). SWT is committed to working towards providing equality of opportunity in its employment practices, staff composition, marketing, artistic and education programmes and services offered to participants and audiences.

SWT's Board recognises its responsibilities in developing, implementing and monitoring the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy for the charity.

We will confront and challenge discrimination where and whenever it arises, in relation to SWT's work.

### **Objectives of the Equity, Diversity and Inclusivity Policy**

The objectives of the Equity, Diversity & Inclusivity Policy are based on definitions outlined in Annex A and an awareness of the following laws:

- Equality Act 2010 which from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2011 covers the following acts:
- Sex Discrimination Acts, 1975 and 1986
- Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003 and 2007
- Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003 and Equality Act 2006
- Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006
- Equal Pay Act, 1970
- Race Relations Act, 1976 and its amendments 2000 & 2003
- Disability Discrimination Act, 1995 and amendments 2005
- Disability Equality Duty 2006
- Sex Discrimination (gender reassignment) Regulations and Gender Recognition Act 2004
- Employment Rights Act 1996
- Employment Act 2002
- Civil Partnership Act 2004
- Rehabilitation of Offenders Act, 1974
- Work and Families Act 2006
- Part Time Workers Regulations 2000
- Fixed Term Employees Regulations 2002

The objectives of SWT in striving to be an Equitable, Diverse and Inclusive organisation are:

- To create work which enables anyone to feel welcome and able to share a cultural experience.
- Ensuring that no member of staff, Board member, volunteer, audience member / user group is subject to unfair or unlawful discrimination.

- Ensuring that staff and Board members understand the forms and effects of discrimination.
- Seeking to ensure the composition of the staff, Board and volunteers reflect the demographics of our region and the communities we serve.
- To work in a way which builds a greater insight into the participant/beneficiary demographic.
- To expand our world view and bring that to our audiences.
- Ensuring that performances and participatory activities are accessible for all, through considering the needs of all potential service users.
- Ensuring that issues of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion are central to the artistic approach, marketing and audience engagement, education and outreach activity and programmes.

### **Implementing the Policy**

The Artistic Director of SWT will be responsible for developing, implementing and monitoring the policy in conjunction with the Board. The Executive Director will assist the Artistic Director in implementing and monitoring the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy.

All staff connected to SWT will be required to advocate for the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy through the principles outlined in SWT Code of Conduct.

- All staff, Board, volunteers and participants will be encouraged to familiarise themselves with this policy, and understand the definitions listed. A copy of the policy will also be available on our website.
- Create a culture within the organisation which empowers anyone to be able to challenge discriminatory language or actions.
- SWT's Board and directors will receive training to support their understanding and confidence to deliver and support this policy.
- We will undertake annual protected characteristic reporting in line with GDPR regulations.
- We will actively seek to recruit staff and Board who will contribute a more diverse lived experience, and will welcome applicants with protected characteristics.
- We will develop work through co-creation with our intended audiences, in order to gain trust and understanding.
- Wherever possible, premises will be accessible for disabled people, in the ability to move around the building, use equipment (as appropriate and in line with health and safety provisions) and access services provided by the organisation.
- A private space will be provided for costume changes so individuals privacy and dignity is preserved.
- We commit to producing communications (written, visual and aural) using language which is easy to understand, and acronym and jargon free.
- We will work towards creating large print and audio versions of all of our official documents.

- We are developing a comprehensive inclusive language policy, for definitions and accepted terms. This is still a work in progress, but can be found in Annex C.

A clear procedure for reporting issues or concerns is in Annex B

### **Employment Practices and Terms of Employment**

The recruitment process will be tailored to reflect the role and skill set required. This process will be free from discrimination and will be designed to be as inclusive as possible. All communication will be treated confidentially.

Depending on the scope of the programme or project, roles will be advertised locally, nationally and in some instances internationally in all appropriate media.

A small selection panel will be convened to interview candidates for specific projects. This panel will invite candidates to express the need for reasonable adjustments prior to interview and these will be honoured wherever practical. All interviewed candidates not selected for the position will be informed in writing (or a more accessible method requested by the candidate). Contracts for all projects will be issued to successful candidates.

Selection for employment, promotion, training or any other benefit will be on the basis of aptitude and ability. All employees will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential and the talents and resources of the workforce will be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the organisation.

### **Marketing & Audience Development**

SWT will use language that is clear, unambiguous and direct.

Where appropriate, languages other than English, large print, audio or captioned video will be used, as resources permit, as well as making information easily available online.

We will continue to monitor our website, social media content and print to ensure it is accessible for all those with neurodivergence or sensory processing needs, including the use of appropriate fonts and text size, colour schemes, placement of images, moving elements, sounds etc. We will seek advice and accreditation on this where appropriate.

We will ensure that our current accessible facilities are well promoted to all service users and that we offer to cater for people with particular requirements.

Lastly, SWT will work to ensure that all visual representations of our activities represent diverse communities from across the region in a meaningful and non-tokenistic fashion.

### **Monitoring**

The Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy will be monitored and reviewed biannually by the Board of Trustees to measure its effectiveness and relevance.

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## ANNEX A - DEFINITIONS

**Direct Discrimination** - as defined in law, occurs when a person is dealt with less favourably than other people because of a 'protected characteristic'. These are defined in the Equality Act 2010 as being:

- **Race or national/ethnic origin** – a person or group of people defined by their race, colour, nationality, including citizenship, and ethnic or national origins. A racial group can include more than two distinct racial groups; e.g. Black Britons would comprise of those people who are both black and who are British citizens.
- **Sex** – a person who is a man or a woman.
- **Sexual Orientation** – a person's sexual attraction towards a person of the same sex, another sex, or people of both sexes.
- **Marriage and Civil Partnership** – Marriage is defined as a 'union between a man and a woman or between same-sex couples'. Same-sex couples can have their relationships legally recognised as civil partnerships. Civil partners must be treated the same as married couples.
- **Pregnancy and Maternity** – a woman who is pregnant has a protected characteristic for the whole pregnancy and for a period of 26 weeks from the day she gives birth (in the case of a still born child the 26-week period exists if the birth takes place after the 24<sup>th</sup> week of pregnancy). A woman who has given birth and is breast-feeding has a protective characteristic when accessing premises, services and public functions.
- **Gender Reassignment** – a person who is proposing to undergo, is undergoing or has undergone a process, or part of a process, for the purpose of reassigning the person's gender by changing physiological or other attributes of gender.
- **Religion or Belief** - a person's religion, religious or philosophical belief, lack of religion or lack of religious or philosophical belief. A belief will affect a person's choices or the way they live for it to be considered a protected characteristic.
- **Disability** – a person who has a physical or mental impairment, where the impairment has a substantial and long-term effect on the person's ability to carry out day-to-day activities.
- **Age** – a person of a particular age group, but does not apply to those under the age of 18.

This Policy uses a wider definition of characteristics and includes, caring responsibility, mental health, class, HIV status, employment status, unrelated criminal convictions, and union activities.

**Associated Discrimination** is discrimination against a person because they associate with another person who possesses a protected characteristic, e.g. a person is refused entry to a venue because the person they are with has limited mobility and uses crutches to help them move around.

**Discrimination by Perception** is discrimination against a person because it is perceived that they possess a particular protective characteristic, e.g. a man who is perceived to be a woman because they have a high voice on the phone is refused access to a men-only service. This would be sex discrimination because the man has wrongly been perceived to be a woman.

**Indirect Discrimination** occurs when an apparently neutral practice, provision or criterion puts people with a particular protected characteristic at a disadvantage compared with others who do not share that characteristic, and when applying the practice, provision or criterion cannot be objectively justified, e.g. an organisation has a policy of reminding people of forthcoming appointments by phone. This would indirectly discriminate against deaf people as they would not receive a reminder of their appointment.

**Victimisation** means subjecting a person to detrimental treatment because they are or are believed to be bringing proceedings under the Equality Act; giving evidence or information in connection with proceedings under the Equality Act; doing any other thing for the purposes or in connection with the Equality Act or making an allegation that a person has contravened the Equality Act.

A person must be able to act against unlawful discrimination without fear of reprisals or being subjected to a detrimental effect, e.g. a patient makes a complaint to a service provider where they were obtaining treatment because they felt they were discriminated against for being gay. The complaint is resolved, but if the person who provides the treatment refuses to treat the gay client, this would be victimisation.

**Harassment** means unwanted behaviour that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creates a degrading, humiliating, hostile, intimidating or offensive environment.

**Sexual harassment** is any conduct of a sexual nature that is unwanted by the recipient, including verbal, non-verbal and physical behaviours, and which violates the victim's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading or offensive environment for them. Harassment can be sexual, racial, ageist, directed against people with disabilities or indeed related to any protected or other characteristic exhibited by the individual, e.g. a male employee is disabled and is claiming harassment against his line manager after she frequently teased and humiliated him about his disability. A female employee shares an office with the male employee and she too is claiming harassment, even though she is not disabled, as the manager's behaviour has also created an offensive environment for her.

**Harassment by a third party** means unwanted, repeated conduct by a third party based on a protected characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating the dignity of a person or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for a person and where the employer does nothing to prevent it from reoccurring. A third party is defined in law as not being the employer or employees of the employer, such as customers or clients, e.g. a

manager hears from one of his staff, who is gay, that he is feeling unhappy after a client made homophobic remarks in his hearing. The manager is concerned and monitors the situation. Within a few days the client makes further offensive remarks.

The manager reacts by having a word with the client, pointing out that this behaviour is unacceptable. He considers following it up with a letter to him pointing out that he will ban him if this happens again. The manager keeps the gay employee in the picture with the actions he is taking and believes he is taking reasonable steps to protect the employee from third party harassment.

**Positive Action** can be taken when it is clear that a group of people who share a protected characteristic and who are, or could become, employees, volunteers or service users, suffer a disadvantage linked to that characteristic, have disproportionately low levels of participation, or have different needs from a service as compared to other groups.

The positive action must be proportionate and aim to increase participation, meet different needs or overcome disadvantage. The positive action must be appropriate to its aim and other actions would be less effective in achieving this aim or likely to cause greater disadvantage to other groups.



## ANNEX B – REPORTING PROCEDURE

We understand that from time to time our staff, Board, volunteers and/or participants may wish to raise problems or concerns and possibly seek redress for a grievance.

We want to ensure that these issues are properly aired and, as far as possible, resolved as quickly as possible to the satisfaction of all concerned.

All matters (including any records produced and any follow up action) will be handled with the utmost discretion and will, as far as practicable, be kept confidential to those involved.

Where it is necessary to speak to any others in connection with a problem or concern raised, the importance of confidentiality will be emphasised to them.

It may be necessary in some circumstances to explain or report the contents of the complaint or grievance to others, whether within or outside SWT, for example where this is the only way that follow up action can be taken. In serious cases it may be necessary to report the matter to the police.

### **Informal steps:**

If you wish to raise a concern or complaint, please *firstly do so informally* with either:

- Amy Wyllie (Artistic Director) – 07709 424948 or amy@spinningwheeltheatre.com
- Rebecca Gibbs (Executive Director) – 07812 130064 or becca@spinningwheeltheatre.com

This is usually sufficient to resolve an issue.

They will attempt to resolve the matter by discussing it with you and with any others involved in the matter, as they consider to be necessary and will report the outcome of such discussions to the Board.

### **Formal procedure:**

If the matter is not resolved informally, or where you consider the issue to be serious and not appropriate for informal discussion, you should send your complaint or concern in writing to the assigned trustee for grievances:

- Polly Ingham-Watts (SWT Trustee) – 07780 808132 or polly.ingham@googlemail.com

The issue will be considered by the Board (or an appointed panel, if the Board decides), at the next available Board meeting, or earlier if required. The Board may carry out such investigation(s) as it considers appropriate before reaching a decision, which may include meeting with you and with any others involved.

The Board's decision will be communicated in writing (or in an accessible format identified by you) to you as soon as reasonably practicable after the meeting and any further investigations and will be final.

Every effort will be made by the Board to resolve any problems or concerns as soon as they can. This will depend on the circumstances and the nature and complexity of the issues raised, the investigations, and the availability of people whose input is necessary to resolve the grievance.

## ANNEX C – INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE

*NB – this is a live document. By its nature it will continue to evolve, be regularly reviewed and updated and is not definitive on 'what you should say' but instead designed as a guide to help SWT staff, Board, volunteers and participants share resources and learning. We won't always get everything right, but hope by committing to sharing practice across the organisation we can make SWT a more inclusive place for everyone to feel welcome and do their best work.*

At Spinning Wheel Theatre (SWT) we want to create a culture that is inclusive, creative and collaborative. We celebrate all the ways we are different and aim to create an environment where everyone can thrive and do their best work. We ask everyone involved in making each project to approach it with generosity, curiosity, kindness and respect. We believe that we do better work together than we would apart and that our work is richer and stronger thanks to the different backgrounds and experiences that everyone in our company brings. Through our work we want to be connected and responsive to each other, our communities, our industry and the wider world.

At SWT we strive to create a practise that enhances our inclusive work and ensure we start any process in a safe and equitable space. This includes a daily check in and check out with the creative team. The use of pronouns should also be included in initial introductions.

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### **Disability**

SWT are committed to supporting disabled and neurodiverse young people, those with medical conditions, access requirements or any lived experience that may require adaptation, support or sensitivity.

At SWT we use 'D/deaf disabled and neuro diverse people' and 'disabled people', based on the social model of disability, as shared by Touretteshero and many others. [Read more about the social model of disability here.](#)

We don't use a person-first approach e.g. 'young people with a disability', unless that is how someone would prefer to be referred to. If in doubt, it's always best to ask!

We don't use the phrase 'special needs' and acknowledge the problematic nature of using 'SEN - Special Education Needs' but also recognise this language is used widely in the education sector. 'Non-mainstream' is a useful term to describe these schools.

We don't use 'differently abled', we use 'disabled person' instead.

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## Ethnicity

We prefer not to use the acronym 'BAME' and endeavour to be specific in our use of language around the ethnic background of our participants, staff, volunteers and audiences. Below are some phrases:

Instead of Asian you could use 'People of South Asian heritage', 'People of East Asian heritage', 'People of West Asian heritage', 'People of Central Asian heritage', 'People of South East Asian heritage', 'People of East Asian and South East Asian heritage' and 'Middle East and North African people'.

Instead of Black you could use 'African' for those born in the continent, 'African Caribbean', 'South Asian Caribbean' and 'East Asian Caribbean' for those born in the islands, 'African diaspora people' for people of African and Caribbean heritage, Or 'People of African or Caribbean heritage'

Please avoid using 'People of Colour', 'POC', 'BIPOC', although this term is used prominently in America, in the UK it has negative associations.

We advise not to use ethnic minority or minorities, or mixed heritage or mixed race.

Instead of 'BAME' or 'non-White' use the above OR 'people who are ethnically and culturally diverse' OR 'people who experience racism in our society'. Be specific to what you mean.

'Global majority' is another useful term, increasingly used in the arts. Please do not capitalise global majority so that it doesn't get shortened to GM.

Use 'Diverse' to refer to a group of people from different heritages, but not an individual.

Do not use the term 'Gypsy' - within the Roma community, the word 'gypsy' is widely considered a slur (especially by the older generations). It is not a term that has come from the community and has no roots in the language or culture. Roma originate from Northern India. You should use the term 'Romani' or 'Roma'.

The Irish Traveller community have only recently started being described as 'gypsy' and this is a completely different ethnic group with no common bloodlines or heritage. You should refer to them as 'Irish Travellers'. They are an ethnic group in their own right and originate from Ireland.

We recognise and acknowledge that while we correct our language on race and ethnicity there are external organisations that still use inappropriate wording such as 'BAME'. We understand that while external organisations gradually adapt their policies to use appropriate language, we may find ourselves in conversations and situations whereby dated language might have to be

used. We are aware this is an issue that relates to all categories across this document but currently ever more prominent when discussing ethnicity.

### **LGBTQ+ and Gender**

We encourage all staff to include their pronouns on their email signature and Zoom names, we encourage staff, volunteers and participants to introduce their pronouns when introducing themselves to a group of young people at NYT.

We don't encourage the use of 'female identifying' and 'male identifying' instead of 'male' or 'female' or any language that can 'other' in relation to gender.

We suggest avoiding using the word 'guys' to refer to a group and instead 'everyone'.

If someone misgenders or mispronounces someone in a group, simply correct the mistake and move on.

[A beginner's guide to pronouns and using pronouns in the workplace](#)

### **Socio-economic / Class / Poverty**

We believe as an organisation that nobody should be at a disadvantage or be unable to access the SWT opportunities due to socio-economic reasons, class or poverty. Within SWT there is always access to bursaries to ensure every opportunity is open to all. At the beginning of each project we unpack the 'privilege' each of us brings to the room in order to create an equitable and brave space.

### **Mental Health and Wellbeing**

We want to raise awareness around the use of the term 'anxiety' being a condition and that not differentiating that from feeling stressed can be problematic for those suffering from it. [Anxiety UK](#) defines an anxiety disorder in the following way:

*"Stress is something that will come and go as the external factor causing it (be it a work, relationship or money problems, etc.) comes and goes, anxiety is something that can persist whether or not the cause is clear to the sufferer. Anxiety can make a person imagine that things in their life are worse than they really are, and prevent them from confronting their fears. Often they will think they are going mad, or that some psychological imbalance is at the heart of their woes. What is important is the recognition that anxiety is normal and exists due to a set of bodily functions that have existed in us from our cave-man days."*

Please be mindful when using sensitive words such as 'crazy', 'mad' etc when communicating with others.