

The Telling

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

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NEXT BOARD REVIEW DUE: 14.3.2024

Policy statement

As a disability-led organisation, The Telling is committed to encouraging equality and diversity in all its work and to eliminating unlawful discrimination.

This EDI Policy **underpins our expectations for inclusive values, culture and practice**. It underlines that, for The Telling, an inclusive culture is **everyone's business** through setting explicit expectations.

Our aim is for all our personnel and stakeholders – including trustees, employed and freelance administrative staff, artists, creative team, trainees, volunteers, workshop leaders and also audiences, adult participants, teachers, children and young people and their families with whom we work - to be:

1. truly representative of all sections of society
2. for all involved in the services and activities we provide to feel respected, valued and able to give their best.

The Telling aims to:

- promote equality, fairness and respect for all associated with The Telling and our work
- ensure that no-one associated with The Telling's work is subjected to unlawful discrimination because of age, disability, gender confirmation, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race (including colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origin), religion or belief, sex (gender) or sexual orientation. These are the protected characteristics set out in the Equalities Act 2010.
- eliminate all forms of unlawful discrimination

We commit ourselves to:

- encouraging equality and diversity at work and in all The Telling's activities
- creating an operational environment that is free of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, that promotes dignity and respect for all, and where individual differences and the contributions of all are recognised and valued
- promote best practices via regular communications with those associated with The Telling (e.g. freelance tutor team, Ambassadors)

1.0 Policy principles

The Telling's Equality and Diversity Policy describes how The Telling aims to avoid discriminating against people, and how we will work to create a safe and inclusive atmosphere for all our stakeholders.

It will also guide us in how to manage any situation in which someone may have been treated unfairly or disrespectfully.

This policy will be available to all associated with The Telling and its activities, so everyone understands clearly as part of their induction the behaviours that we expect them to share. We will strive to provide guidance and training where appropriate in support of the aims of this policy.

Decisions concerning the recruitment, management and promotion of The Telling personnel will be based solely on merit (apart from in any necessary and limited exemptions and exceptions allowed under the Equality Act).

The Telling will review employment practices and procedures when necessary to ensure fairness, and strive to ensure they are updated when necessary to take account of any changes in the law.

To the extent permitted by data protection legislation, The Telling may monitor our pool of creatives, artists and administrators, as well as the audiences we engage and the participants we work with by characteristics including age, gender, ethnic background, and disability. This will help us ensure that this policy is working in practice, assist us with reviewing it, and enable us to consider and take action to address any issues.

2.0 Definitions

'Discrimination' is when a person is prevented from taking part in something based on a particular characteristic they have.

'Harassment' is when someone behaves in a way that makes another person feel distressed, humiliated or threatened.

'Protected characteristics' are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation.

3.0 Code of conduct

All who are associated with or encounter The Telling's work will be treated with dignity and respect.

We will strive to make sure that people's feelings are valued and respected, and take care to ensure that no language or humour is used which might be found offensive or derogatory.

No one will be harassed, intimidated or abused on the grounds of any protected characteristic they may have. Incidents of harassment will be taken seriously.

We will work to ensure that The Telling projects, sessions and activities are open and welcoming to everyone entitled to join in, with everyone given a voice.

We will take care to ensure that all audience's, participants' and artists' views are respected, and that they are able to engage with and contribute to The Telling activities. For example, as part of our data protection obligations, we will provide audiences and participants with a Privacy Notice that sets out how The Telling uses their personal information and the rights they have.

4.0 Positive Action and Training

The Telling strives to take positive action through the following actions:

- To facilitate mentoring and sharing skills sessions and provide accessible opportunities for the sharing of best practice

- To open up recruitment of freelance artists, the creative team, administrative roles and trainee opportunities to strive for a more representative workforce
- To be inclusive of under-represented artists and genres in the repertoire we present or new work we create
- To continue to offer professional development opportunities for employees, contracted staff, freelance artists, creative team engaged with our work
- To build awareness and knowledge through annual equality training for core team and Trustees
- To identify a Mental Health First Aider on The Telling staff team

5.0 Dealing with discrimination or harassment

All personnel should understand that in the course of their employment or engagement they, as well as The Telling, may be held liable for acts of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination against fellow employees, contractors, suppliers and the public.

The Telling will take seriously complaints of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination in the course of our activities.

Any such acts will be dealt with as potential misconduct under the organisation's grievance and/or disciplinary procedures, and any appropriate action will be taken. Particularly serious complaints could amount to gross misconduct and lead to dismissal without notice.

Sexual harassment may amount to both an employment rights matter and a criminal matter, such as in sexual assault allegations. Instances of harassment that fall under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 – which is not limited to circumstances where harassment relates to a protected characteristic – are criminal offences.

Harassment based on disability, race, religion, transgender identity or sexual orientation is considered by the law to be hate crime, and can be reported to the police.

5.0 Making a complaint

Currently we have no employed staff: only contracted staff but The Telling's Trustees are due to discuss requirements for grievance and disciplinary policies and procedures which will be added to the Policies Dropbox folder. This includes details of whom an employee or contracted member of staff should raise a grievance.

Complaints by artists and workshop leaders engaged for projects should be directed to Clare Norburn, Artistic Director clare@thetelling.co.uk in the first instance. If this is not appropriate, the Chair of Trustees may be contacted in confidence.

If the complaint is made against The Telling, the Board will investigate it.

In any investigation, people involved will have the opportunity to express their point of view. The Telling will endeavour to support those who feel they have been harassed or discriminated against, and will not victimise or treat them less well because they have raised concerns.

Any investigation will include recommendations to ensure that the conduct or action that is the subject of the complaint is not repeated in the future.