



Arts and Health South West

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY & ACTION PLAN

Introduction: AHSW

- Arts and Health South West (AHSW) is an information, support and advocacy organisation for people who believe in the value of creativity in enhancing health and wellbeing.
- AHSW is a National Portfolio, charity organisation which is core funded by Arts Council England

The main aims of AHSW are:

- To empower those in the region who are trying to deliver creative arts for health and wellbeing
- To identify and meet the needs of members, organisations and networks involved in this work
- To facilitate collaborations and build opportunities

Summary of AHSW's engagement with equality and diversity:

Over the last two years (2016-2018) AHSW's staff and trustees have actively engaged with the diversity agenda by:

- Focusing our 2018 away day entirely to the theme of diversity, with guidance through presentations and interactive sessions from diversity consultant Byron Lee
- Dedicating our 2018 2-day annual conference to explore the theme of 'Diversity and Inclusion in Arts and Health'
- Employing Diversity Consultant Sado Jirde (Director of Black South West Network) to help the staff team develop the annual conference and also guide our approach to diversity and inclusion in the culture of our organisation, particularly at board level
- Creating ways for young people and people with lived experience of mental health issues to contribute to decision-making at AHSW through establishing an artists-with-lived-experience advisory group and shaping a new 'associate board member' role for young people.
- Commissioning a new website and building accessibility features into the brief.

These points demonstrate tangible steps the organisation has taken towards engaging with equality and diversity, demonstrating how AHSW has placed concerns about inclusion in a more central position in decision making.

The board also believes that AHSW has gone through a shift over the last two years, orienting its approach more towards thinking about diversity as an ongoing journey which is about striving to make reasonable adjustments which acknowledge and address barriers. We see this as being a process that has at its heart a commitment to lean into the challenges and difficulty that are part of actively working with diversity and inclusion. As illustrated above, we have made important steps to respond to the challenge proactively, seeking guidance from professionals where appropriate.

AHSW's Equality and Diversity Policy:

1. We will ensure that our policy and plans are in line with those of Arts Council England and its diversity agenda (The Creative Case for Diversity)
2. We celebrate diversity amongst our members, and those who are accessing creative activities for health and wellbeing, and will take steps to representing diversity through our online presence, resources and content.
3. We are committed to equality of opportunity in all aspects of our activities, including within our Trustees, employees, volunteers and service users (please see our equal opportunities statement).
4. We are committed to working with accessibility and inclusion at the heart of management-level decision making and also in our core activities (listed below), particularly considering how we can make reasonable adjustments to address barriers that prevent people from being able to access our resources, attend our events, or in other ways make them feel that AHSW is 'not for them'.

Current Core Activities within AHSW

- The AHSW Website and monthly e-bulletin
- The AHSW Annual Conference
- The AHSW Challenge Fund
- The AHSW Spring School (residential)
- Action Learning Sets
- Sub Regional Leads Meetings
- Web-based Resources
- Podcast
- 'Culture, Health and Wellbeing' international conference every 4 years.

The Main Equality and Diversity Challenges for AHSW

1. Ensuring that our core activities, meetings, events and resources are informed by an engagement with issues around diversity and inclusion. For instance, considering topics and speakers at our conferences that **resonate** with, are **relevant** to, and **represent** people from different socio-economic backgrounds, ethnicities, sexual orientations, genders, abilities and ages.

2. Ensuring that our core activities, meetings, events and resources are accessible to those with physical disabilities, learning disabilities, mobility and sensory problems, Deaf people and BSL speakers, and people with mental health issues.
3. Ensuring that the culture of our organisation, both in day-to-day working situations and at board meetings, is an accessible environment that can accommodate and respond to the needs of people from diverse backgrounds and living situations.

Action plan, 2018 et seq.

(We intend to update this action plan on an annual basis)

1. AHSW will appoint a Trustee to have specific responsibility for the Equality and Diversity Policy and Action Plan of the Charity.
 - Status: Trustee appointed September 2016: Paul Dieppe

2. We would like to broaden the demographic and diversity of our Trustees, employees and members, and in particular to include more young and BME people.
 - Status: ongoing

3. We will work with a diversity consultant to identify what barriers exist to attending events, or using materials we produce, so that we can work to make reasonable adjustments.
 - Status: consultant employed October 2018

4. We will make sure that web based activities, resources and information are accessible to people with sensory problems.
 - Status: Current website redesign to begin November 2018, with accessibility improvements a key feature. Content of web resources and information has been improved (in terms of representations of diversity) since speaking to diversity consultant in August 2018 and this will be developed further once the new website is up and running in Spring 2019

5. We will create an AHSW lived-experience advisory group with a view to board involvement.
 - Status: First meetings expected spring 2019, 2 members recruited, call-out for further members planned Nov 2018 – Jan 2019.

Last updated: 29th October 2018

Due for review: December 2019 Board Meeting

Responsible Trustee: Paul Dieppe