

Appendix G: Equalities and Diversity Policy

South East Museum Development (SEMD) is governed by a consortium of four leading museum organisations in the south east through the Museum Development Coordination Group (MDCG). The membership of this group comprises the senior representatives from: Royal Pavilion and Museums Trust (lead partner); Hampshire Cultural Trust, Oxfordshire County Museums Service (Oxfordshire County Council), and Chatham Historic Dockyard Trust.

The mission of the SEMD is to sustain an inclusive, thriving and dynamic museum sector, reflecting the diverse narratives and cultural heritage of the South East of England. We will achieve this by being a trusted critical friend providing grassroots support to museums in the region. Our team of experts provide relevant and timely advice, strategic funding and training that our museums need to flourish. We also champion the region's museums to ensure that the positive impact they have on the communities they serve is recognised, supported and advocated for.

This Equalities and Diversity Policy reflects the need to deliver our mission fairly, appropriately and proactively across diverse groups, including those protected in law and those facing socio-economic deprivation.

The programme is delivered through a small team of staff, employed by one of three host organisations: Royal Pavilion & Museums Trust (eight posts), Oxfordshire County Council (one post), and the Hampshire Cultural Trust (two posts).

SEMD will adhere to the equality policies and protocols of the lead body, but it is acknowledged that each of the other employing organisations will have their own Equal Opportunities Policy (or equivalent), informed by the Equality Act 2010 and the duties and protected characteristics the Act defines. This SEMD Equalities and Diversity Policy is similarly informed by the Equality Act 2010 and intended to complement, rather than take precedence over, the pre-existing policies of the employing authorities

Core Principles

SEMD is committed to working in a fully inclusive and fair manner, with regard both to those employed through the programme, and those engaging with its services, either as users or delivery partners. It is also committed to being a champion for equalities and diversity within and on behalf of the museums sector in the region. Each of the above aspects is fully integrated into the main SEMD Programme Plan.

The SEMD team will participate in the national inclusivity and equalities training organised by the Museum Development Network to ensure that these principles are embedded into our practice with museums.

SEMD recognises the characteristics protected within the Equality Act 2010: age, disability, ethnicity/race, gender reassignment, religion or belief, sex/gender, sexual orientation, pregnancy/maternity status, marriage or civil partnership status, as well as those facing socio-economic deprivation and will actively promote and encourage good practice across the consortium and in other agencies/organisations/groups it works with. It will enable and support the sharing of good equalities practice, in relation to increasing access, removing barriers to involvement with museum activities, and fostering good relations between groups engaging with the museums.

Employment Practices

SEMD will actively promote equal opportunities in its activities to ensure that individuals receive treatment that is fair and equitable and consistent with their relevant aptitudes, potential skills and abilities. Employees will be recruited and selected, promoted and trained according to the prevailing protocols of the employing organisation.

SEMD will treat unfair or discriminatory conduct by any member of staff as a disciplinary offence and will work with the employing organisation within their protocols to respond effectively to a given situation. Similarly, SEMD will treat unfair or discriminatory conduct towards any member of staff as a very serious matter and will work with the employing organisation to respond effectively to a given situation.

Service Delivery

SEMD will apply this policy to its services through its approved Programme Plan for 2021-22, in which the Equality and Diversity Action Plan is embedded. These principles will be underpinned by effective equality monitoring and an equality impact assessment approach, both of which will enable us to demonstrate how we are meeting the duties contained within the Equality Act 2010.

Monitoring and Review Arrangements

SEMD Programme Manager and Assistant Programme Manager will regularly monitor the effectiveness of this policy as part of its risk management process, reporting to the Museums Development Coordination Group (MDCG). The equalities actions will be reviewed quarterly by the MDCG in line with established review and reporting procedures, and the policy and plan will be updated when required. Remedial action will be identified where needed and delegated to the appropriate member(s) to implement.

Grievance and Disciplinary Procedures

SEMD must necessarily defer to the grievance procedures of the relevant employing organisation but will ensure that any team member who feels that she or he has been treated unfairly or subjected to direct or indirect unfair discrimination by their host organisation, or client museum, or individual in connection with their work, can raise the matter through the appropriate grievance procedure, when every effort will be made to secure a satisfactory resolution.

What we understand by Equality, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

Equality: Equality means ensuring every individual has equal opportunities. By being conscious of and actively challenging bias or prejudice we make sure no-one is treated less favourably because of who they are or what makes them different from other people. This requires a proactive approach to make reasonable adjustments that address the visible and invisible barriers people face.

Equity: Equity means treating people in ways that make sure they are not unfairly prevented from accessing resources and opportunities nor that others have an unfair advantage. Simply providing the same opportunities to everyone is not an effective way to create equality of outcomes. Equality of outcomes highlights rather than giving everyone the same thing, it is about giving people what they need for fair access. This is about removing inequalities to make sure everyone has the chance to realise their ambitions. *It is in this context that equity is the preferred approach in our EDI work.*

Diversity: Diversity means having differences within an organisation or setting. Diversity recognises we are all different in many ways. People with differing identities, backgrounds and experiences should all have equitable access to resources and decision-making. Some people prefer to use the term 'representation' to focus on how organisations should be reflective of the society we live in and the communities we serve.

Inclusion: Inclusion means being proactive to make sure people of different backgrounds, experiences and identities feel welcomed, respected and fully able to participate. It is not only about creating a diverse environment but also about ensuring a culture exists where individuals can be their full selves.¹

¹ NCVO (30th June 2020) Get started with Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, Available at: <https://knowhow.ncvo.org.uk/organisation/equity-diversity-and-inclusion/get-started-with-equity-diversity-and-inclusion> (Accessed: 26th March 2021).