# South London Theatre

# Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) policy

## Purpose

South London Theatre is committed to be representative of the community in which we are based and ensure there is no discrimination in the way we operate. We want our company to be one in which everyone feels respected, authentic and able to give of their best.

This policy provides a framework to ensure equity and fairness of opportunity for all.

## Why EDI is important to South London Theatre

It is vital if we want to remain a centre of excellence for theatre and remain relevant to our local community, as well as for our survival through a healthy membership and a full auditorium.

Diversity has been a challenge for amateur theatre, but we are committed to changing that. Sadly, there are people who think they might not fit in, and many who see it as “not for me”. But for South London Theatre, a prolific community theatre in the heart of London, diversity and inclusivity is essential for the range, quantity and quality of work we do. This means we need to continually attract and maintain a diverse range of people in our theatre - both as members and as our audience.

Legal Context and Definitions

**The Equality Act 2010**

Associations, clubs and societies are covered by the Equality Act 2010 which makes it unlawful to discriminate on the grounds of one of the nine protected characteristics of age, disability, **gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity (which includes breastfeeding), race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation**. See appendix 1 for further information about what this means.

**What do we mean by Equity, Diversity and Inclusion?**

Equity is the process of ensuring that processes and practices are impartial, fair and provide equal possible outcomes for every individual. Diversity is the presence of differences within a given setting. Inclusion is the practice of ensuring that people feel a sense of belonging.

**Related policies**

Please read the SLT Code of Conduct on expected standards of behaviour.

Objectives

There are three primary objectives of equity, diversity and inclusivity for South London Theatre:

### Unlocking our creativity

Any creative group benefits from a diversity of talent. As a theatre group, we believe we will be better and stronger, and produce richer and more informed work with a wider range of contributions. Having people from different backgrounds, with different personal experiences and different ideas will help create better theatre.

### Widening our reach into our community

We want to attract a wide range of people who are representative of the community we are based in to engage with our theatre. That may be as members, volunteers, audiences or parents of our Youth Theatre. People want to know that they will be welcome, that they can be a part of the theatre, that they will enjoy the productions that we produce.

### 3. Making our theatre a place to come back to

SLT strives to be a welcoming and inclusive place. For many of our members SLT has become a second home. We want to make sure everyone has the same welcome, their lived experiences reflected and valued, and have the same opportunities to get involved and explore their creativity. Anything we can do to make it more welcoming, to more people, will make our wonderful theatre an even better experience for everyone involved. And it’s a virtuous circle – the better experience people have, with a wide range of offers, the more people will want to join us, and come back again, and again, and again.

## What does this mean for how we operate?

Membership

* We will actively work to attract a diverse membership by developing an inclusive approach to our programming. We will encourage people from different backgrounds to submit work for production, to bring new ideas and new experience to the theatre.
* Our Theatre Committee will select productions and directors that will provide a broad range of opportunities across different seasons to provide opportunities for all.
* Directors will retain artistic and creative decision-making, but will be encouraged to consider gender-neutral and colour-blind casting, for example, and make sure all audition notices are clear about the opportunities.
* Our processes, publicity and communications for attracting members will be scrutinised to ensure they are fair and inclusive, to help us identify a wide range of talent.
* We are committed to nurturing an inclusive culture for theatrical and wider social activities where individual differences and the contributions of all are recognised and valued. Anyone should be able to be involved in the theatre, no matter what their age, race, sex, sexual orientation, disability, beliefs or socio-economic background.
* We will make sure that there are opportunities for all members to take part in productions and activities – onstage and offstage - and provide training or support to enable this to happen..

Audiences

* We will actively work to attract diverse audiences through an inclusive approach to publicity, marketing and communications.

Youth

* We will offer reduced cost memberships, tickets and places in our Youth Theatre to those who may not be able to afford full prices.
* We will provide opportunities for members of our Youth Theatre to get involved in SLT activities and productions, to encourage local participation.

Environment

* We will make our theatre space as accessible as we can for members and audiences with different needs.

Governance

* We will encourage people from different backgrounds to take an active part in the running of the theatre, to bring a wider range of experiences to our decision making.
* We will review the Articles and Memorandum of Association and Bye-Laws to identify and remove any barriers to our ability to harness more diverse participation at Committee level.
* We will **measure the diversity of our group annually**, using the protected characteristics in Appendix 2, to help understand how we can improve diversity.

## Concerns and Complaints

If you have a concern or a complaint about how you are treated at South London Theatre, or you wish to feedback on practices which can be improved to increase equity, diversity and inclusion please see our Feedback and Complaints policy or contact the Chair, Gerri Mc Andrew at chair@southlondontheatre.co.uk

## Review

This policy will be reviewed every two years and will be supported by a biennial plan, which is currently being developed.

Date approved: July 2025 Date of next Review July 2027

## Appendix 1 - The Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 covers associations, clubs and societies. In equality law, an ‘association’ is any group of 25 or more members which has rules to control how someone becomes a member, involving a genuine selection process. The rules may be written down, like a constitution, or may be unwritten.

A **club or society is not an ‘association’ if it has no form of selection** but a fee is paid either at the time of joining/on an ongoing basis or to use the services (or both).

For example:

A group of supporters attached to a theatre (sometimes called ‘Friends of’ the theatre) who receive information and access to special events and activities in exchange for an annual membership fee.

Equality law still applies to these organisations, but in a different way. It is possible to be both an association and a service provider.

In either circumstance you must not treat a member, associate member or guest (including a prospective member or guest, or a former member, associate member or guest) referred to as ‘members, etc’ less favourably than someone else because of a protected characteristic (this is called **direct discrimination**).

You must not do something to a member, etc. which has (or would have) a worse impact on them and on other people who share a particular protected characteristic than on people who do not share that characteristic. Unless you can show that what you have done is **objectively justified**, this will be **indirect discrimination**. ‘Doing something’ can include making a decision, or applying a rule or way of doing things.

You must not treat a member, etc unfavourably because of something connected to their disability where you cannot show that what you are doing is objectively justified (this is called discrimination arising from disability) or because they are associated **with** a person who has a protected characteristic or because you incorrectly think they have a protected characteristic (perception).

You must not treat a member, etc. less favourably because they have complained about discrimination or helped someone else complain or done anything to uphold their own or someone else’s equality law rights. This is referred to as victimisation.

You must not harass a member, etc.

The nine protected characteristics are age, disability, **gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity (which includes breastfeeding), race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation**.

The law does allow for artistic decisions and the use of general occupational requirements, e.g. it is permitted to audition a particular gender or ethnicity if the part requires it.

For further information read The Equality and Human Rights Guide to [What equality law means for your association, club or society](https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/publication-download/what-equality-law-means-your-association-club-or-society).

## Appendix 2 - Measuring Diversity

Characteristics that we will use to measure diversity in SLT:

* Age
* Sex
* Race
* Disability
* Neurodiversity
* Sexual orientation
* Religion or beliefs
* Length of membership
* Location (postcode)
* Carers and caring duties
* Skills - acting, directing, production, admin, marcomms