

The Castle Players: Equality and Diversity Policy

Reviewed January 2024

The Castle Players Limited ("the Castle Players") aim to be a significant contributor to the cultural life of the people of Barnard Castle and its neighbouring areas, by providing organised – and impromptu – theatre performances (and associated activities) which promote wide community involvement.

The Castle Players has, therefore, opportunities for a wide range of participation – from performance, through backstage and technical support, to administration of the organisation itself.

The Castle Players is committed to the principle that all individuals participating in Castle Players activities are given equal opportunity to express and utilise their skills and talents, free of discrimination. We recognise that our organisation is enriched by the diversity of individuals and that all have a contribution to make.

We therefore aim to create a safe and welcoming atmosphere for everyone, where all are treated with dignity and respect and all are valued. We want to challenge all forms of conscious and unconscious bias including, but not exclusively, those based on age, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership status, pregnancy, race (including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin), religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, class, learning ability, physical impairment, mental illness, HIV status, occupation, income, wealth and unrelated criminal conviction.

We aim to design our activities to encourage and support participation from people who face disadvantage in society.

The Castle Players recognise discrimination as being any individual or systemic behaviour, (such as verbal comment, denigration, or failure to appreciate needs (or, indeed, the automatic assumption of such needs)) which denies a person – or a group of people – the opportunity to participate as they would wish, and as their talents allow.

The Castle Players believe that the value of an equal opportunities policy lies not merely in its intention, but in its practical delivery and, therefore, all Trustees, Members and Associates of the company being aware of this policy are required, when undertaking company business - or representing it in any way - to act in a way consistent with this commitment to equal opportunities.

It is the responsibility of the Chair of Castle Players to monitor, on an ongoing basis, effective delivery of this policy across the organisation and to take whatever action is required to ensure compliance.

Any individual – or group of individuals – who feel they have been discriminated against have the unequivocal right to make a complaint to which the company will respond.

As a principle, Castle Players would want any complaint to be dealt with at the lowest level of the organization and as speedily as possible. Therefore, it is encouraged that, in the first instance, any complaint should be made to the Director in charge of the particular production on which the individuals are presently engaged. It may be possible for the Director to take immediate action and this resolves the complaint to the satisfaction of all parties. In such cases it is the responsibility of the Director to retain a written record of the complaint and a note of any action taken, which is to be passed to the Chair for information.

However, not all complaints may involve a specific production, nor may they be readily resolved. In addition it maybe that the complainant may not feel it appropriate to approach the Production Director. Any complainant therefore has the right to raise their complaint with any of the members of the Board of Trustees, who must then raise it with the Chair. In addition the email address safeguarding@castleplayers.co.uk can be used to contact our safeguarding officers. This address can be used to email them confidentially with any safeguarding issues or concerns.

If the complaint cannot be readily resolved to the satisfaction of all parties by the Chair, it is then the Chair's responsibility to instigate a sub-group – of no less than two other Trustees not personally involved in the complaint – to investigate and make recommendations, which the Chair will then discuss with the full Board of Trustees to gain approval for any action.

In the exceptional case of any complaint being made about the Chair themselves, the responsibility for coordinating action will fall to the Vice Chair.

..... Chair - The Castle Players

Date:.....30th January 2024.....