



# Skimstone Arts



## Equality & Diversity ACTION PLAN May 2021

**In ANY case of concern contact:**

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***Our Mission Statement: Skimstone Arts supports diverse artists and those at risk of isolation to make work with, for and about the world that matters to them.***

**Skimstone Arts is a registered charity. Charity registration number: 1182284**

Charity name: SKIMSTONE ARTS

Skimstone Arts, Skimstone Studios, 2nd Floor, i4 Quayside,  
Albion Row, Newcastle upon Tyne NE6 1LL

[www.skimstone.org.uk](http://www.skimstone.org.uk)

## Introduction

“Our strength as a nation owes much to our diversity and to our ability to draw on all the talent we have at our disposal. A society built on inclusion and equality of access and opportunity will have the ideas and resources to meet the great challenges we all face. The arts [...] have an influential role to play in championing this. We hold a mirror up to society, and we can also show the wider world what is possible.”

- *Darren Henley, CEO Arts Council England*

Skimstone Arts is a charity dedicated to supporting a diverse range of artists, and providing a platform of equal opportunities without discrimination towards artist, audience or staff. This ethos of inclusivity is detailed in the Skimstone Arts Equality & Diversity policy, and maintained through the implementation of the action plan in this document.

The creation of this action plan was guided by the extensive advice given by *Arts Council England*, as well as the example set by *Birds Of Paradise Theatre Company*, which can be found at these web addresses respectively:

<https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/advice-and-guidance-library/equality-action-plan-guidance>

<http://www.boptheatre.co.uk/about-us/equality-action-plans/>

This document is by its nature perpetually unfinished; no guide to inclusivity is perfect, and this plan should and will be updated with new information as and when appropriate. We can always do better, and we should always strive to.

## The Goals

Below are the goals and standards which Skimstone Arts has committed to:

- provide equality, fairness and respect for all in our employment, whether temporary, part-time or full-time
- not unlawfully discriminate because of the Equality Act 2010 protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race (including colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origin), religion or belief, sex (gender) and sexual orientation
- oppose and avoid all forms of unlawful discrimination. This includes in pay and benefits, terms and conditions of employment, dealing with grievances and discipline, dismissal, redundancy, leave for parents, requests for flexible working, and selection for employment, promotion, training or other developmental opportunities
- encourage and develop equality and diversity in the workplace, communities and audiences, as they are good practice and make social and cultural sense
- providing proper guidance and training for Skimstone Arts staff to follow to uphold this policy

- create a working environment free of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, promoting dignity and respect for all, and where individual differences and the contributions of all staff are recognised and valued.
- Always considering the accessibility of every type of activity carried out by Skimstone Arts, ensuring no individual is discriminated against due to mobility or social/mental health issues.

For a full account of Skimstone Arts' Equality and Diversity Policy, please see the as-named document.

## Action Plan

The structure for Skimstone Arts' Equality and Diversity Action Plan is similar in nature to a risk assessment that would be carried out before a project or meeting. The difference is that instead of outlining hazards and mitigating actions, the Action Plan will outline a change or goal to be achieved by Skimstone Arts in accordance with the above standards set out by the company's policy, and the appropriate steps to be taken towards that change/goal.

The Action Plan will be reviewed at an appropriate interval (to be decided by the board) at which point new goals/changes may be added to the plan, and it will be noted whether the steps taken by Skimstone Arts were sufficient to achieve its' existing goals, and if not, new steps may be outlined to do so.

Action Plans will be discrete for each aspect of Skimstone Arts' practice, including but not limited to:

- employment practice
- company structure, organization and development
- artistic processes and programming
- marketing and publicity
- training and professional development

Below is an example of a filled out Action Plan.

Goal/Change	Steps To Take	When will this be done	How will we know it's done	Responsible Parties	Progress made
All of Skimstone Arts' Business Activity is in line with the values detailed above	Edit Skimstone Arts' Business Plan to reflect the policy	March 2022	New Business Plan written, edited and published		
The work produced by Skimstone	Review all policies yearly, and set targets	Annual review in June	Set targets will be met		See HOME Equality Policy

Arts reaches a diverse audience, both culturally and socially	for specific audience accessibility				
Audiences will never have barriers between them and Skimstone Arts' work	All buildings Skimstone Arts' uses must reach accessibility criteria, and Skimstone Arts will strive to provide alternative ways to reach audiences in order to be inclusive. Ticket prices will never stop audiences from viewing Skimstone Arts' work.	Review every venue before use, and consider alternative mediums/ticket prices when programming.	Every venue used will pass a review, and engagement with socially discriminated audiences will rise.		
Skimstone Arts' continues to work alongside and produce excellent work with people from marginalised groups	Skimstone Arts' provides activities and workshops targeted at individuals from groups who otherwise do not have their voice heard	Annual review in June	Skimstone Arts' will show through it's reports to funders and Arts Council that the work produced over the year consists of many pieces from a culturally and socially diverse group of artists.		
All staff must be aware of the importance of Equality & Diversity Issues.	Staff are always recruited with the use of the Equal Opportunities Form. During induction, new staff members will be made aware of the Equality and Diversity Policy, and given training where needed. Employment opportunities will	Reviewed alongside policy reviews annually.	All Skimstone Arts' staff are aware of and understand our Equality and Diversity policies, and people from marginalised groups are actively encouraged to apply for employment opportunities.		

	be advertised in publications that target marginalised groups.				
We are aware of and understand the people we create work with, for and about.	Monitor, evaluate and record all feedback from our audiences after shows or events. Ensure the feedback is heard and acted upon when necessary. Encourage an atmosphere of openness where artists/audiences' comments are always heard and valid. Use social media to connect with audiences and participants meaningfully.	Ongoing, plus annual review in June	All work created by Skimstone Arts and those we work with is authentic. Evaluation will show that work with co-creators is made ethically and with their wellbeing always in mind.		
Ensure Skimstone Arts is governed in line with the Equality & Diversity policy	Keep Board information up-to-date, and review composition. Board to oversee the reaching and exceeding of legal and internal targets for Equality and Diversity.	Annual Review (June?)	Skimstone Arts will, through the following of an edited business plan and the monitoring of internal activity alongside this policy, meet and go beyond our set targets for Equality & Diversity.		
Our diverse artists are supported to develop their practice and engagement	All artists are offered support and learning opportunities throughout their time working with Skimstone Arts to build their experience and improve their work/practice	Ongoing review with individual artists through meetings, reports, and self-assessments	Through the use of evaluation and monitoring, it will be ensured that the young and diverse artists Skimstone Arts works with will be enriched		

			through their experience in the organisation, and their progress as an artist will be prioritised.		
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## Identifying Goals/Necessary Change

To identify the goals that Skimstone Arts should be striving towards in order to achieve the standards outlined in the Equality and Diversity Policy, we must look at whether Skimstone Arts is doing as much as we can to:

- Eliminate discrimination
- Advance Equality

This means that whenever the Action Plans are reviewed, goals should be introduced to accomplish:

- The removal or minimisation of disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics (See Figure 1)
- Taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people
- Encouraging people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low

## Actions We Can Take Towards Goals

The goals above may be accomplished by taking 'positive action', for example:

- help people with a particular protected characteristic overcome their disadvantage, for example, by offering internships or placements
- encourage the participation of people with a particular protected characteristic in employment or training, for example, by reserving places on a training course
- meet their needs, for example, by providing support or mentoring

Positive action must not be confused with positive discrimination, as the latter is illegal. Use [this guide](#) from the government to ensure good practice.

More tips and advice towards taking steps to ensure Equality and Diversity can be found through the links below:

[https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/download-file/Equality\\_Action\\_Section\\_2.pdf](https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/download-file/Equality_Action_Section_2.pdf)

[https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/download-file/Equality%20Action%20Guide%20-%20Supporting%20Materials\\_0.pdf](https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/download-file/Equality%20Action%20Guide%20-%20Supporting%20Materials_0.pdf)

## Who Will Benefit From The Actions Taken?

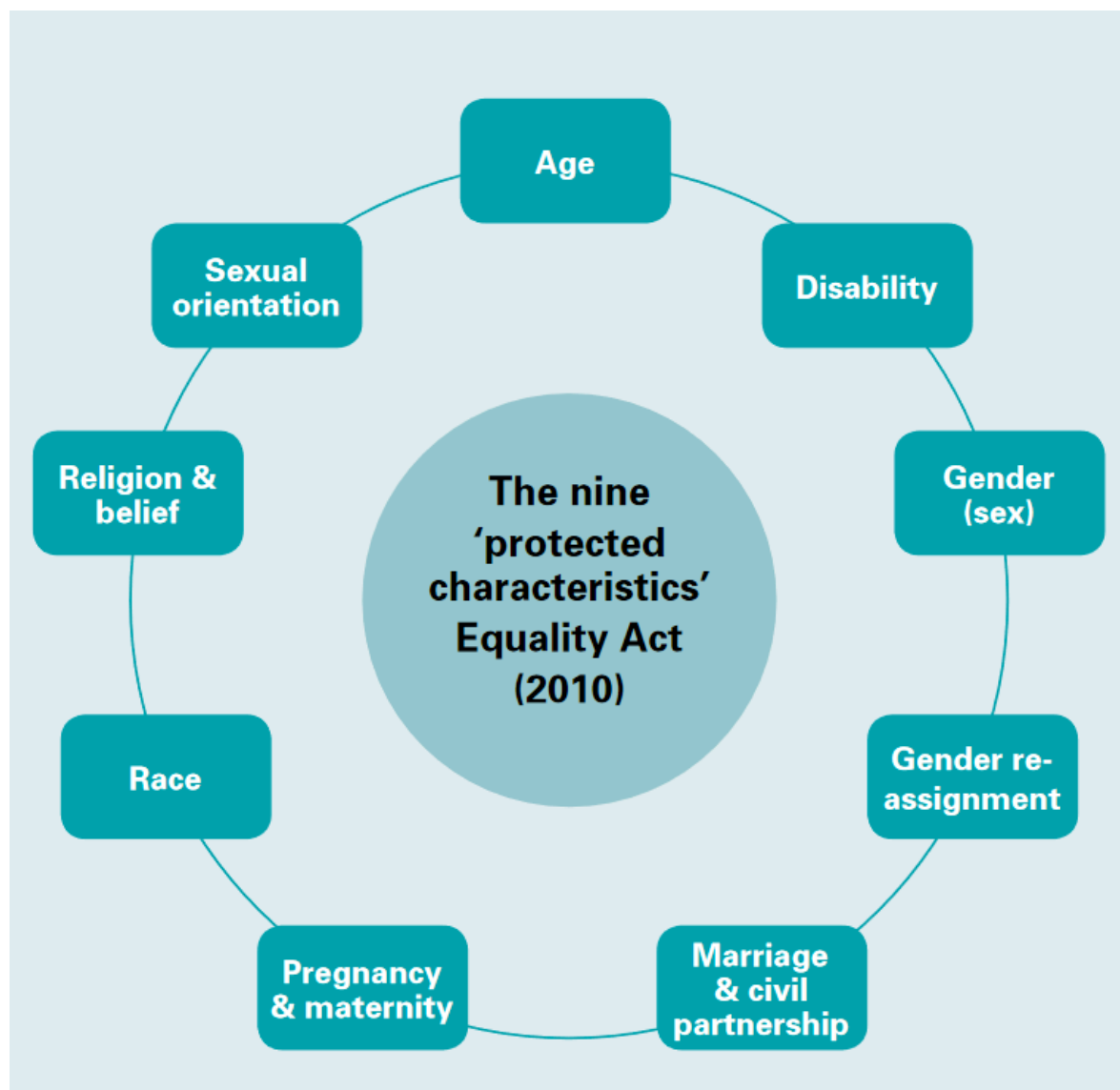


Figure 1 – The Nine 'protected characteristics' – Equality Act 2010

The Action Plan should be used to ensure no individuals who have a 'protected characteristic' are discriminated against, and that the proportion of staff/artists/audience of Skimstone Arts who have these protected characteristics reflect the demographic around us. One tool we could use to monitor this demographic is the Audience Finder:

<https://www.theaudienceagency.org/audience-finder>