



EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

Policy Statement

Dorset Sinfonia is an amateur orchestra based in the Dorchester/Weymouth area. We perform around three concerts each year and practice every week in preparation for these. The orchestra is open to members of the local community who can play to about a Grade 6 level.

This is the service we provide to our members and the local community.

Dorset Sinfonia's Statement on Equal Opportunities

Dorset Sinfonia is committed to implementing and promoting equal opportunities in its activities and practice. It realises that discrimination exists in society (whether protected by law or not), and believes that this prevents potential and ability from being realised in the young and old.

Dorset Sinfonia will not tolerate discrimination on the basis of:

- Race
- Colour
- Gender
- Sexual orientation or identity
- Ethnic or national origin
- Disability
- Partnership status or home responsibility
- HIV or AIDS status
- Age
- Political or religious belief
- Trade union activity
- Socio-economic background
- Refugee or asylum seeker status

As a provider of a service to the community, Dorset Sinfonia accepts the responsibility to promote equal opportunities and challenge discrimination wherever it occurs. This document sets out the main consequences of this commitment and the action to be taken in order to achieve equal opportunities.

Dorset Sinfonia recognises that some users of its services may, because of their past or present distress or illness, say or do things which would otherwise be unacceptable and incompatible with Dorset Sinfonia's Equal Opportunities Policy. Dorset Sinfonia will do all it can to challenge such behaviour. In cases where intervention is possible a gentle approach will be adopted which aims to alter attitudes and behaviour while maintaining support for the effected individual.

Dorset Sinfonia reserves the right to open its membership to any organisation who supports our aims and objectives. However, it will exclude from membership those organisations that actively work against the development of an equal opportunities policy over time, despite encouragement from Dorset Sinfonia.

Dorset Sinfonia realises that a genuine commitment to equal opportunities must operate on all levels:

- Dorset Sinfonia will prevent unfavourable treatment, directly or indirectly, upon individuals from any group facing discrimination in the delivery of its services. Where discrimination does occur, it will be dealt with through the procedures in this Policy.
- Dorset Sinfonia will seek to prevent discrimination and ensure equal representation in the services it provides and the practices through which it delivers these services. This involves the development of greater diversity in the management committee and membership, to ensure a genuinely wide representation.

Responsibility

The committee of Dorset Sinfonia has overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy. However, all members and service users have a duty as part of their involvement with Dorset Sinfonia to do everything they can to ensure that the policy works in practice. Those responsible welcoming new members, employees and volunteers to the orchestra are responsible for ensuring that they are aware of Dorset Sinfonia Equal Opportunities Policy and adhere to it while involved with Dorset Sinfonia.

Dorset Sinfonia will bring to the attention of all volunteers and service users the existence of this policy. It will endeavor to ensure that those involved with the orchestra understand their responsibilities in relation to equal opportunities.

If any service user or volunteer feels that they have been, or are being discriminated against, in any way, they are entitled to pursue the matter with the committee.

All instances or complaints of discriminatory behaviour will be treated seriously.

Complaints or allegations of an unfounded or malicious nature will also be treated as serious.

Disabled Access

Dorset Sinfonia will endeavour to ensure, as far as is practicable, that all the premises it uses have disabled access. When considering new premises, every effort will be made to ensure such premises are fully accessible.

Use of Language

Volunteers and service users should avoid and challenge the use of language which, in any way, belittles anyone.

Where the language used has a personal impact on others, and it has been made clear to the person concerned that their use of such language is unwelcome and/or offensive, disciplinary action may be taken if they persist with it.

All materials used or developed by Dorset Sinfonia will be judged in the light of the promotion of equal opportunities, and those considered to be discriminatory will not be used.

Sexual Harassment

No volunteer or service user should be subject to sexual harassment.

This is interpreted as unwanted behaviour of a sexual nature including:

- verbal sexual abuse
- physical contact
- repeated remarks which an individual finds offensive

If it has been made clear to the person concerned that their behaviour is unwelcome and they persist with it, then the service user or volunteer who is the recipient of the behaviour will be entitled to make a formal complaint.

Monitoring and Review

The Policy will be constantly reviewed by the management committee to ensure that no Member of the group is put to a disadvantage either, directly or indirectly. This monitoring will apply to the practices of members, employees and volunteers, the composition of the Management Committee and the provision of services.

It is the responsibility of every individual to eliminate discrimination and to ensure the practical application of this Policy.

The committee of Dorset Sinfonia will review this policy every 2 years.

Written: March 2015

Last reviewed: Sept 2025