

Shobana Jeyasingh Dance

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy and Procedures 2020

Document control information

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Governing Policy	
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Document approved by	SJD Board of Directors
Lead contact	Lise Smith, SJD Company Manager

Introduction

This Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy has been written to fulfil statutory requirement and provide clear guidance to employees and stakeholders. Shobana Jeyasingh Dance (SJD) is committed to a policy of equal opportunities employment and integrated casting in which individuals are selected and treated on the basis of their relevant merits and abilities without regard to age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation (referred to as 'protected characteristics') and are given equal opportunities within the company.

The aim of this policy is to ensure that no job applicant, employee, volunteer, freelance worker, audience member or project participant receives less favourable treatment on grounds related to any protected characteristic. Shobana Jeyasingh Dance monitors all recruitment processes and this policy is reviewed by the SJD Board at least every three years (or earlier if there are significant changes to law or industry guidelines).

This policy document is divided into the following sections:

- (1) Written Policy Statement of our commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
- (2) Responsibility for Policy Communication and Implementation
- (3) Recruitment Practice and Procedures (including Record Keeping)
- (4) Grievance Procedures
- (5) Policy Review timetable

1. **Written Policy Statement**

1.1 Shobana Jeyasingh Dance policy and practice is that entry into employment with the company and progression within employment will be determined only by personal merit and the application of criteria which are related to the duties of each particular position. In all cases, ability to perform the job will be the primary consideration.

1.2 The organisation commits to:

- Encouraging equality, diversity and inclusion in the workplace as they are good practice and beneficial for the organisation as a whole as well as for our staff, volunteers and service users.
- Creating 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.
- Making opportunities for training, development and progress available to all staff, who will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential, so their talents and resources can be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the organisation.
- Making all decisions concerning staff (including recruitment and progression as outlined above) based on merit, apart from in any necessary and limited

exemptions and exceptions allowed under the Equality Act.

- Reviewing employment practices and procedures when necessary to ensure fairness, and also update them and the policy to take account of changes in the law.
- Monitoring the make-up of the workforce regarding information such as age, sex, ethnic background, sexual orientation, religion or belief, and disability in encouraging equality, diversity and inclusion, and in meeting the aims and commitments set out in the equality, diversity and inclusion policy. Monitoring will also include assessing how the equality, diversity and inclusion policy, and any supporting action plan, are working in practice, reviewing them annually, and considering and taking action to address any issues.
- Ensuring all SJD staff, freelance workers, volunteers and service users understand the procedures for reporting grievances relating to bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination (please see clause 4.2 below for reporting procedures).

NOTE to support this commitment we could consider joining the Guardian scheme run by the Old Vic? <https://www.oldvictheatre.com/about-us/guardians-programme>

- Taking seriously complaints of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination by fellow employees, customers, suppliers, visitors, the public and any others in the course of the organisation's work activities. Such acts will be dealt with as misconduct under the organisation's grievance and/or disciplinary procedures, and appropriate action will be taken. Please also see clause 4.3 below.
- 1.3 This commitment includes training managers and all other employees about their rights and responsibilities under this policy. Staff will proactively help the organisation provide equal opportunities in employment, and prevent bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination.
- 1.4 All staff should understand they as individuals, as well as SJD as an employer, can be held liable for acts of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, in the course of their employment, against fellow employees, customers, suppliers and the public
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2. Responsibility for communication and implementation of policy

2.1 Overall and day-to-day responsibility

- The overall and final responsibility for ensuring the implementation of equality, diversity and inclusion within all aspects of the organisation's work, including discussion, approval and regular review of this policy, rests with the Board of Directors.
- The Artistic and Executive Directors are directly responsible to the Board, as the senior managers of the Company.
- The SJD senior management is responsible for ensuring policies and practices are properly implemented on a day to day basis, ensuring that all members and freelance artists are properly aware of the policy and its implications for their involvement with the organisation, and taking appropriate action in the event of discriminatory language or behaviour towards any of the groups mentioned in this policy.
- For all Learning and Participation projects (including workshops and performance projects), the Learning Manager is responsible for implementation of the policy.

2.2 Workforce responsibility

All members of SJD staff, including freelancers working on fixed-term contracts, have an individual responsibility for ensuring the personal implementation of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy in their work with SJD.

2.3 Communication of Policy

This policy will be distributed to all employees, the Board of Directors and key stakeholders, and kept on the company server. The policy will be shared with all new staff joining SJD or working with us on a fixed-term or voluntary basis. The policy will be made publicly available on our website, and will be additionally available to anyone who requests it.

Any amendments or updates to the policy will be notified to all of the above groups and placed on the company server.

3. Recruitment Practice and procedures

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- The company welcomes diversity amongst its employees and seeks to ensure that all candidates for employment are treated fairly, and that selection is based

solely on the individual's abilities and qualifications. The company will use the following procedure for recruiting and selecting individuals for all positions:

a. Selection Criteria: The selection process will be carried out consistently for all jobs at all levels. Selection criteria for all positions will be clearly defined and reflected in the further particulars sent to applicants which will also include details of the company's commitment to equality of opportunity. Job qualifications or requirements which would have the effect of inhibiting applications from members of particular groups, such as those of one sex, persons of a particular religion, marital status or sexual orientation, persons of a particular racial group, persons within a certain age bracket or those with a disability, will not be demanded or imposed except where they are justifiable in terms of the job to be done.

b. Advertising: Job vacancies and castings will be advertised widely to enable and encourage applications from all suitably qualified and experienced candidates. Shobana Jeyasingh Dance will endeavour to ensure that advertisements are not restricted to areas or publications that would exclude or disproportionately reduce applications from a particular gender, religion, age group or racial group and should avoid prescribing requirements as to marital status or age. All job advertisements placed on behalf of the company will state the company's commitment to equality of opportunity.

c. Selection Methods: The selection process will be carried out consistently for all jobs at all levels. All those handling applications and conducting interviews must be aware of the principles of the Equality Act 2010. The selection of new employees will be based on job requirements and the individual's suitability and ability to do the job and information sought from candidates will relate only to the qualifications for or requirements of the job. To enable this, where possible applications will be anonymised to remove reference to protected characteristics.

d. Interviews and auditions: The staff responsible for shortlisting, interviewing or auditioning and making or recommending an appointment will be clearly informed of the selection criteria and the need for consistency. Wherever possible, at least two people will interview applicants and all questions will relate to the selection criteria. No questions will be based on age, health (except where permitted by the Equality Act 2010), assumptions about roles in the home and the family or the assumed suitability of different ethnic groups for the post in question. Where it is necessary to assess whether personal circumstances will affect the performance of the job (for example, if the job involves irregular hours or extensive travel) this will be discussed objectively and will be asked equally of all candidates. In the case of disabled applicants who identify themselves at the application stage, appropriate interview arrangements (such

as accessible interview rooms or the assistance of a sign interpreter) should be offered to enable candidates to compete on an equal basis.

e. Casting: The principle criteria for selecting an individual should be the person's ability to fulfil the role/task(s) irrespective of his/her sex, sexuality, race or disability. Casting for SJD touring projects will seek to reflect the composition of society as a whole in terms of race, sexuality, sex and disability. Casting will additionally promote positive images and not perpetuate traditional stereotypes of race, disability, sexuality and sex.

f. Record Keeping: Details of candidates and of selection decisions (including the rationale for selection or rejection) will be kept for at least six months after an appointment has been made in case they are required as evidence by an employment tribunal or for other proceedings. The company will keep anonymous records of the sex, ethnic group, age and any disability of its employees and of all candidates and of those shortlisted and appointed. Records may be used to determine whether members of one sex or persons of a certain racial group, religion or age bracket or those with a disability do not apply for employment or apply in smaller numbers than might be expected or are shortlisted or appointed in a lower proportion than their application rate or are concentrated in certain jobs. Records will be stored, maintained and made accessible in line with our company Data Protection Policy.

4. **Grievance procedures**

- 4.1 All allegations of discrimination against a person because of a protected characteristic will be dealt with seriously and confidentially.
- 4.2 Employees, freelance workers or volunteers are encouraged to approach their line manager in the first instance to discuss such allegations confidentially. If the employee's allegation relates to concerns regarding their line manager (or if the nature of the allegation is such that the employee would not feel comfortable raising it with their line manager due to the proximity in which they work), the employee should approach the Executive Director. If the allegation relates to the Executive Director, the employee should approach the SJD Chairman of the Board of Trustees.

Any allegations relating to dance artists or other freelancers or volunteers engaged on Learning and Participation projects should in the first instance be addressed to the Learning Manager.

- 4.3 Shobana Jeyasingh Dance takes contravention of this policy extremely seriously. All actual or alleged contraventions will be thoroughly investigated

and dealt with in line with the company's disciplinary procedure. Particularly serious complaints could amount to gross misconduct and lead to dismissal without notice. Harassment under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 – which is not limited to circumstances where harassment relates to a protected characteristic – is a criminal offence and will be referred to the relevant authorities.

5. Policy Review

- 5.1 Recruitment procedures and practices will be kept regularly reviewed to ensure that this policy is being adhered to, and to ensure that they do not include requirements or conditions which constitute, or may lead to, unlawful discrimination.

This Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy was reviewed and approved by the SJD Board of Directors November 2020

Date of next review: Nov 2023 at latest