

VDT EQUALITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION POLICY 2022-2026

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VIRGIN TERRITORY Installation at Brighton Festival & Brighton Digital Festival 2017

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Statement

At Vincent Dance Theatre, we work to create the conditions in which **collaboration**, **safe practice** and **creative risk** can thrive, responding to the needs of a diverse society and strive to represent a diverse society. We believe that a diverse team leads to an organisation that is more innovative, more creative and better able to solve problems.

We work within the spirit and the practice of the Equality Act 2010 by encouraging and embracing difference in our staff, fostering a culture of inclusivity and actively challenging all forms of discrimination. We have a zero tolerance policy toward any form of discrimination or micro aggression. We remove unnecessary barriers for our employees seeking opportunities through training and development, promotion and career planning. We will continue to support our leaders, managers and employees to demonstrate the principles of diversity and inclusion in their everyday activities, roles and functions.

At Vincent Dance Theatre, we will continue to use our public platform specifically to provoke debate around sexual politics, equal opportunities, trauma informed practice and social change and continue to advocate for improving conditions for parents and carers working in the performing arts.

Vincent Dance Theatre is an equal opportunities employer, meaning we are committed to providing equality of opportunity in employment to all of our applicants, coming from different backgrounds or diversity groups included but not limited to age, gender, gender reassignment status, sex, disability, race, ethnicity or national origin, skin colour, language, sexual orientation, marital or civil partnership status, parental status, education, religion or belief, trade union membership or any other personal or protected characteristic. We believe a wider range of views and ideas within our team is vital to making our work stronger, more relevant and more inclusive and we welcome applications from people that bring difference. We particularly welcome applications from people of the Global Majority, people with disabilities (including 'invisible' disabilities or neurodiversity such as autism and dyslexia) and people from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, as these groups remain underrepresented in our sector.

As part of our commitment to Equality, Diversity & Inclusion, the Vincent Dance Theatre team has drawn up a '[Code of Conduct](#)', a set of guiding principles and rules for all staff and freelancers to sign up to, to cultivate a working environment where all staff and freelancers working for Vincent Dance Theatre to feel safe, supported and respected.

1. Purpose

This policy sets out Vincent Dance Theatre's (VDT) approach to equality, diversity and inclusion. VDT has zero tolerance policy towards any form of discrimination or micro aggression and is committed to promoting equality, diversity and inclusion. VDT is committed to promoting a culture that actively values difference and recognises that people from different backgrounds and experiences can bring valuable insights to the workplace and enhance the way we work.

VDT aims to be an inclusive organisation, committed to providing equal opportunities throughout employment including in the recruitment, training and development, and growth of employees, and to pro-actively tackling and eliminating discrimination.

2. Definitions

Equality

VDT considers that equality means breaking down barriers, eliminating discrimination and ensuring equal opportunities and access for all (including but not limited to staff, freelancers, volunteers, participants, audiences, partners and to those offering goods and services).

Diversity

VDT considers diversity to mean celebrating difference and valuing everyone. Each person is an individual with visible and non-visible differences and by respecting this everyone can feel valued for their contributions which is beneficial not only for the individual but for VDT too.

Inclusion

VDT considers inclusion to mean the practice of providing equal access to opportunities and resources for people who might otherwise be excluded or marginalised, such as those who have physical or mental disabilities and members of other minority groups.

We acknowledge that equality, diversity and inclusion are not inter-changeable but inter-dependent. There can be no equality of opportunity if difference is not valued and harnessed.

3. Responsibilities & Procedures

This Policy applies equally to all employees, whether part time or full time on a substantive or fixed-term contract, and also to freelancers, collaborators, volunteers, Board members, agency staff, contractors and/or others employed under a contract of service. You have personal responsibility for the application of this policy.

As part of your VDT induction, you are expected to read and familiarise yourself with this policy along with **VDT's Code of Conduct, Dignity at Work (Bullying & Harassment) Policy and Grievance & Disciplinary Procedure**, and ensure that all policy is properly observed and fully complied with at all times.

Overall responsibility for ensuring adherence to and implementation of this policy lies with the Board, and each member of staff has responsibility for their own compliance with the company's commitment to Equal Opportunities, while the General Manager is responsible for monitoring and reporting back to the Board. Specific responsibilities within the company are as follows:

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

1. To have final responsibility for Equal Opportunities issues, with day-to-day responsibility delegated to staff as detailed below
2. To have an understanding of Equal Opportunities issues and relevant legislation most recently set out in the Equality Act 2010 - (updating the Equal Pay Act 1970, Sex Discrimination Act 1975, Race Relations Act 1976, Disability Discrimination Act 1995, Employment Equality (Religion or Belief & Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003 and (Age) 2006; Equality Act 2006 and Equality Act Sexual Orientation Regulations 2007 - and to undertake training where appropriate
3. To discuss and adopt the Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Statement, responsibilities and procedures, and to discuss revisions to the policy at least every 2 years
4. To receive and discuss any reports of Equal Opportunities issues which arise, including reports of discrimination as detailed under Challenging Discrimination and Claims of Discrimination below
5. To be involved in implementation of the company's Grievance and Disciplinary Procedure where appropriate
6. To encourage and support all employees, freelance collaborators, volunteers and participants to reach their potential
7. To encourage the use of the appropriate language and an atmosphere of inclusion
8. To take appropriate action against discrimination by employees, colleagues or collaborators.

STAFF

1. To have an understanding of Equal Opportunities issues and relevant legislation most recently set out in the Equality Act 2010 - (updating the Equal Pay Act 1970, Sex Discrimination Act 1975, Race Relations Act 1976, Disability Discrimination Act 1995, Employment Equality (Religion or Belief & Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003 and (Age) 2006; Equality Act 2006 and Equality Act Sexual Orientation Regulations 2007 - and to undertake training where appropriate.
2. To encourage and support all employees, freelance collaborators, volunteers and participants to reach their potential
3. To distribute company's Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy to all employees, including freelance workers and employees on short term contracts and to answer questions about the policy and related matters
4. To ensure that Equal Opportunities are considered across the range of the company's work
5. To agree to VDT's Code of Conduct
6. To ensure fair investigation for any Equality, Diversity and Inclusion related concerns raised
7. To call out inappropriate behaviours and be an active ally for people from underrepresented and minority groups

ALL EMPLOYEES (FULL-TIME, SHORT-TERM AND FREELANCE)

1. To work with other staff and Board members to ensure that a positive equal opportunities climate exists within the company
2. To read the company's Equal Opportunities Statement and to ask the General Manager any questions
3. To undertake Equal Opportunities training where appropriate
4. To treat colleagues and the wider public with respect recognising the importance of individuality
5. To recognise and oppose any form of discrimination within the company and to notify the appropriate person within the company if they witness any discrimination
6. To agree to VDT's Code of Conduct
7. To call out inappropriate behaviours and be an active ally for people from underrepresented and minority groups
8. Not to make work which perpetuates stereotypes or is designed to be offensive to any of the groups outlined in this statement

3.1 Equality within VDT's Recruitment and Selection Procedure

To ensure that VDT recruitment is fair and complies with equality legislation, the company will adopt the good practice outlined in *ACAS Guide To Recruitment and Induction* that states that good practice recruitment should include:

1. A job description that is concise and straightforward and include: the title of the job, the aim of the job, the main tasks and who the employee will work with
2. A person specification that links the job description to the skills, experience, knowledge, aptitudes and personal qualities that a person needs
3. Any criteria relating to personal circumstances is only to be that is essential and related to the job
4. Fees and salary complying with National Minimum Wage Act 1998 and industry guidelines
5. An application form that has clear design and content, available in accessible formats, that concentrates on experience, knowledge and competencies needed for the job
6. A clear selection and interview process (VDT aims to provide interview questions to candidates prior to the interview process for Equal Opportunities purposes)
7. Ask applicants to state if they need any 'reasonable adjustments' for any part of the recruitment process
8. Share VDT's Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Statement and actively ask for applications from people of the Global Majority, people with disabilities (including 'invisible' disabilities or neurodiversity such as autism and dyslexia) and people from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, as these groups remain underrepresented in the arts sector

To ensure that VDT recruitment is fair and complies with equality legislation, the company will therefore:

1. Ensure that all advertising for employees (part, full time and those on short term contracts including performers), board members, volunteers etc. makes it clear that jobs are open to everyone
2. Scrutinise all job descriptions to ensure that there are no non-essential requirements which potentially discriminate against a particular group of people, working with a specialist to check, if appropriate
3. Publicise vacancies beyond the arts industry where relevant, making use of distribution networks such as those at Job Centre Plus (making use of their Disability Services Team), Employer Direct Online, Learning and Skills Council, Diversity job sites, as well as local and national newspapers and profession journals and on-line networks
4. Monitor the company's recruitment by ensuring that Equal Opportunities information is collated and reported to the Board
5. Check again if applicants need any 'reasonable adjustments' and make 'reasonable adjustments' if required

6. Share VDT's Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Statement and actively ask for applications from people of the Global Majority, people with disabilities (including 'invisible' disabilities or neurodiversity such as autism and dyslexia) and people from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, as these groups remain underrepresented in the arts sector

3.2 Equality within VDT's Audience Development & Participation Activity

To ensure that the company's work is accessible and available to a diverse audience, the company will:

1. Work with appropriate partners to broaden audiences for its work on stage, on film and online, challenging negative and stereotypical perceptions that target under-represented groups
2. Work with targeted groups through the company's programme of Participation and Professional Development activity, in line with VDT's policy for this area of work
3. Use its focus on digital platforms and corresponding content to engage with a younger generation, enabling young people involved in VDT's work to create their own content and provide content for those who are not dance or arts "literate" and to enable others to explain and champion VDT activity
4. Continue to work in a range of social contexts, including those connected to VDT's chosen target groups - Women and Children living with substance misuse and Domestic Violence; Looked After Children/adoptive families; Young People in areas of low arts access
5. Monitor the company's audience development and participation by enabling direct feedback from those participating and aiming to collate Equal Opportunities information where possible and report this to the Board

For the purposes of VDT's Business Plan 2023 - 2026, the diversity of attendance at, and engagement in VDT activity will be reviewed after PLAY in 2024 and then again in 2025 after ART OF RECOVERY with learning informing our approach thereafter.

3.3 Inclusion in the Creative Process – Procedure

VDT's work is made by and with a diverse range of voices and bodies, including those from specific targeted communities - Women and Children living with substance misuse and Domestic Violence; Looked After Children/adoptive families; Young People from areas of low arts access – with VDT offering skills development as part of the creative process. From 2023-2026, the company will:

1. Make work that integrates 'real life' voices and stories, often from marginalised community groups, into the main production work of the company – with individuals being part of the research, devising, making and production phases & being seen and heard on stage, on film & online
2. Develop relationships with organisations accessing/supporting the targeted groups with whom we are to make work
3. Ensure auditions/ways of identifying talent from diverse performers (professional & non-professional) to be involved in the creative process of ART OF RECOVERY are open and accessible. Use Foundation Workshops as a way of building informed consent to be a part of the creative process.
4. Actively mentor and develop skills of less experienced/non- professionals as part of the making process
5. Create and deliver an R&D/rehearsal/production process that allows for the inclusion and development of all including the less experienced & early career and/or non-professional performers

3.4 Challenging Discrimination – Procedure

Any direct or indirect discrimination, victimisation and/or harassment is a serious matter and any employee, freelance collaborator or volunteer who discriminates against a colleague or member of the public will be subject to the company's **Grievance and Disciplinary Procedure**.

Should employees or freelance collaborators witness or be the subject of discrimination, victimisation and/or harassment when working with people outside the organisation, e.g. in a teaching situation or at a tour venue, they must report the incident to the CEO/Artistic Director or General Manager (whoever is present or easier to contact), giving details of the incident including where and when it took place.

In this situation, they should make their own judgement as to whether to challenge the person responsible, to withdraw from the situation or to continue and report the incident later, and the company would support them in their decision. On receiving the report of the incident, the CEO/Artistic Director or General Manager will fairly investigate and discuss appropriate action with the individual or the organisation they represent and will also report back to the Board.

3.5 Claims of Discrimination – Procedure

An employee, freelance worker/collaborator or volunteer who believes they have been discriminated against by a VDT employee or colleague, should report the incident to the General Manager giving details including where and when it took place. If the complaint is against the General Manager, it should be reported to the CEO/Artistic Director. Such complaints will be dealt with through the company's **Grievance and**

Disciplinary Procedure, with the involvement of Board members. All employees, freelance staff and volunteers receive a copy of the company's Grievance and Disciplinary Procedure.

4. Monitoring and Review

VDT declared its commitment to establishing, developing, implementing and reviewing the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy. Effective record keeping and monitoring, and acting on information gathered, are essential in order to measure effectiveness and plan progress. The Board will review the policy every year.

To help identify areas of under-representation and monitor progress VDT aims to collect monitoring information (optional) from:

- employees (part, full time and those on short term contracts including performers)
- volunteers (including Board members)
- job applicants
- job interviewees
- workshop/project participants (where possible)
- audiences – through working more effectively with our partners and their box office monitoring and collecting info on audience make-up through Audience Finder surveys at VDT tour venues/events

Information collected about individuals will remain strictly confidential and be used only in its aggregated form and for general monitoring of equal opportunities or part of reporting requirements to major funders. All data collection is in line with the GDPR and ISDP risk assessment. Forms used to monitor job applicants are anonymous and are detached from application forms before short-listing takes place. Applicants are not obliged to complete monitoring forms.

Information collected will inform the process for reviewing the company's Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy and procedures.