

Equality and Diversity Policy

Background

The Equality Act 2010 came into force on October 1st 2010 and replaced previous anti-discrimination laws with a single Act. It was updated on 16th June 2015. Its purpose was to simplify the law and strengthen it in order to tackle discrimination and inequality. Ashtead Choral Society (ACS) has a commitment to equality of opportunity for all and seeks to eliminate discrimination by recognizing the needs of the individual. ACS seeks to create an open and friendly atmosphere where there is mutual respect and where no individual feels isolated or uncomfortable participating in activities. This applies to members of ACS, volunteers and supporters. To this end we have used the Equality Act and the guidelines set out by Making Music as the basis for our policy.

The Chair of the ACS Trustees is responsible for providing advice and guidance on equality and diversity issues, and to ensure the Equality and Diversity Policy is kept up to date.

Equality of opportunity – Ashtead Choral Society aims to:

- promote equality for its members and potential members in access to membership and musical activities and opportunities. We aim to treat our members, volunteers and supporters equally, regardless of their age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, class and socio-economic background.
- ensure no member or potential member will receive less favourable treatment or is disadvantaged by the criteria and characteristics set out in the introduction to this policy.

Inclusion and Respect

ACS values its members, volunteers and supporters and will do all it can to treat them in a respectful manner and ensure they are made to feel equally welcome and included in all activities. We will provide a friendly environment in which the contribution and needs of everyone are fully valued and recognised.

All members, volunteers, supporters and those representing ACS are expected to treat each other with respect and dignity and ensure activities are welcoming and inclusive for all. Inappropriate, violent or abusive behaviour or otherwise offensive and inflammatory remarks and behaviour are not acceptable. These constitute harassment and have no place in ACS. ACS will support its members, volunteers and supporters in not tolerating any inappropriate, violent or abusive behaviour from other group members, volunteers, other organisations or customers.

Accessibility

ACS aims to use venues that are accessible to all for rehearsals, concerts and any other activities or events it undertakes.

Dealing with Complaints

- If any member, volunteer, staff or supporter feels they have been discriminated against or harassed they should raise it with the Trustees.
- The Trustees will take complaints of discrimination and harassment seriously.
- The Trustees will investigate the complaint, listening to all parties involved:
 - If the complaint is against a Trustee, that Trustee will not be part of the investigation.
 - If the complaint is against an individual, that individual will have the opportunity to express their point of view in a safe environment and accompanied by a friend.
 - The person making the complaint will have the same opportunity.
- If a complaint is found against ACS, the Trustees must work to ensure that such discrimination is not repeated in the future, and must inform the members of how they propose to do this.

Policy Review

The policy will be reviewed every two years by the Trustees. It will be available on the ACS website and members informed that it has been updated, and where to find it should they so wish.

April 2023