



Colchester Operatic Society Inclusion, Equality and Diversity Policy

This policy applies to Colchester Operatic Society (COS) and its committees, including Colchester Operatic Society Second Edition (CO2), who are collectively referred to as “The Society” and “Colchester Operatic Society”.

Colchester Operatic Society does not accept discrimination* towards its members, creatives or audiences and will treat all instances of discrimination* extremely seriously, taking appropriate action in line with the Society’s Complaints Policy and Procedures.

OUR MISSION

INCLUSION, EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

Colchester Operatic Society wants to proceed as a diverse and inclusive organisation, accessible, welcoming and truly representative of the population of Colchester and its surrounding areas, offering equality of opportunity to our current and potential audiences, creatives and membership.

OUR VISION

We believe that the only way for the Society to maintain a position at the heart of the community, is to ensure the community is put at the heart of the Society.

Our 2019 production of Oliver recorded an audience of nearly 8,000 people, so we are uniquely positioned as an amateur theatre society to bring our community together to experience the wide-ranging benefits of theatre and performance. Our role must be to provide a safe, social and inclusive space, giving people with different backgrounds and experiences opportunities to learn from one another, forge new friendships all whilst learning and developing new and existing skills.

Colchester Operatic Society, led by an Executive Committee of elected members, appreciate and understand the value of theatre as an important tool for physical and mental wellbeing, and the power of the platform for discussion and change.

OUR COMMITMENT

As a commitment to ensuring Inclusion, Equality and Diversity of our members, audiences and creatives, we have identified three key cases for an improved Colchester Operatic Society. These are:

- **The Creative Case** – with a diverse membership, we will ensure the Society creates high-quality, engaging entertainment that is honest, reflective and rewarding for its audiences and membership. We recognise that diverse teams in all areas of our activity will ensure the Society continues to be effective, adaptive and resilient



- **The Business Case** – since Colchester Operatic Society was formed over 90 years ago, audiences and society have changed and we want to reach the audiences and members of the future, recognising that our loyal supporters continue to expect best practice in diversity and inclusion
- **The Moral Case** – Creating a diverse and inclusive community of members and audiences has always been important to the Society. However, in hindsight we are aware that we haven't always got it right. Therefore, we will continue to review and improve our processes and understanding to ensure best practice.

OUR EXPECTATIONS

In order to enact and maintain effective transformational change with regards to Inclusion, Equality and Diversity, Colchester Operatic Society expects all members and employed creatives to adhere to the following rules:

- Value all members of the Society equally, irrespective of age, disability, gender, race, ethnicity, weight, socio-economic background, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation
- Treat all members of the Society fairly and with respect, irrespective of age, disability, gender, race, ethnicity, weight, socio-economic background, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation
- Recognise and value the individuality of members of the Society and ensure individual members receive any necessary support to participate in and access all opportunities that membership of the Society provides
- Make reasonable efforts and adjustments to remove barriers for individuals that may prevent them from participating in events, meetings, productions and performances
- Make reasonable efforts and adjustments to remove barriers for individuals that may prevent them from volunteering backstage. However, we recognise that backstage is an area in which safety is paramount and detailed risk assessments will inform us of the safest working arrangements and the most suitable and appropriate roles for individuals to undertake
- Report all instances of discrimination* to the Executive Committee, in line with the Complaints Policy & Procedures
- If instances of discrimination* are witnessed towards a member of the Society or employed creative, this **MUST** be reported to the Executive Committee (please see our Complaints Policy and Procedures for details on how to do this)
- All existing members should encourage the promotion of the Society as an Inclusive and accessible community

NB *Discrimination is defined as “The unjust or prejudicial treatment of an individual or group because of their protected characteristic/s.” It is against the law to discriminate against anyone because of their age, disability, gender, race, ethnicity, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation as detailed in the Equality Act (2010).