

Equal opportunities policy

The Blue Light Symphony Orchestra



Aims

The Blue Light Symphony Orchestra (hereafter referred to as the BLSO) is a charity that provides musical activities for current and former employees and volunteers of the UK emergency services.

- We aim to ensure that activities are open and welcoming to everybody entitled to take part and will treat all participants 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.
 - We aim to treat our volunteers, staff 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.
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- The Chair of 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 – The BLSO aims to:

- promote equality for its beneficiaries and potential beneficiaries in access to musical activities and opportunities within the participation criteria.
- ensure no beneficiary or potential beneficiary will receive less favourable treatment or is disadvantaged by the criteria and characteristics set out in the introduction within the participation criteria.
- ensure no individual wishing to volunteer or work for (including on a freelance basis) the BLSO will receive less favourable treatment or is disadvantaged by the criteria and characteristics set out in the aims.

Inclusion and respect;

- The BLSO values its trustees, staff, 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.
 - provide an environment in which the contribution and needs of everyone are fully valued and recognised.

- Accordingly all trustees, staff volunteers, supporters, participants and those representing The BLSO 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 The BLSO
- The BLSO will support our trustees, participants, volunteers, staff and supporters in not tolerating any inappropriate, violent or abusive behaviour from trustees, participants, volunteers, colleagues, other organisations or customers.

Accessibility: The BLSO 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 trustee, participant, 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, or a committee appointed by them, will investigate the complaint, listening to all parties involved:
 - If the complaint is against a trustee or committee member, that person will not be part of conducting 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 The BLSO, the trustees must work to ensure that such discrimination is not repeated in the future, and must publish how they propose to do this.

Employment practices – general

- The BLSO aims to promote equality and inclusivity as an employer and shall ensure that no volunteer, employee, person engaged to provide a service (e.g. freelance) or job/volunteer applicant receives less favourable treatment or is disadvantaged by the characteristics set out in the aims of this policy
- The BLSO selects all candidates for interview based on their skills, qualifications and experience.
- Selection, recruitment, training, promotion and employment practices will be subject to regular review to ensure that they comply with the Equality and Diversity Policy.

- The BLSO regards discrimination, abuse, harassment, victimisation or bullying of staff or volunteers in the course of work as disciplinary offences that could be regarded as gross misconduct.

Request for DBS checks for current and potential members, staff and volunteers – with reference to ex-offenders

General:

- In assessing applicants' suitability for positions which are included in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order using criminal record checks processed through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), The BLSO complies fully with the code of practice and undertakes to treat all applicants for positions fairly.
- The BLSO actively promotes equality of opportunity for all with the right mix of talent, skills and potential and welcome applications from a wide range of candidates, including those with criminal records.

Request of DBS checks

- An application for a criminal record check is only submitted to DBS after a thorough risk assessment has indicated that one is both proportionate and relevant to the position concerned.
- For those positions where a criminal record check is identified as necessary, all application forms, job adverts and recruitment briefs will contain a statement that an application for a DBS certificate will be submitted in the event of the individual being offered the position.
- The BLSO can only ask an individual to provide details of convictions and cautions that the BLSO are legally entitled to know about, and where a DBS certificate at either standard or enhanced level can legally be requested (where the position is one that is included in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 as amended, and, where appropriate, Police Act Regulations as amended).
- The BLSO makes every subject of a criminal record check submitted to DBS aware of the existence of the code of practice and makes a copy available on request.

Outcome of check and selection process

- The BLSO undertakes not to discriminate unfairly against any subject of a criminal record check on the basis of a conviction or other information revealed.
- The BLSO undertakes to discuss any matter revealed on a DBS certificate with the individual seeking the position before withdrawing a conditional offer of employment.
- In an interview or separate discussion the BLSO will:

- only ask an individual about convictions and cautions that are not protected
 - ensure an open and measured discussion takes place on the subject of any offences or other matter that might be relevant to the position.
- Failure to reveal information that is directly relevant to the position sought could lead to withdrawal of an offer of employment.

Responsibilities

The BLSO ensures that all those who are involved in the recruitment process are:

- aware of the BLSO equality and diversity policy.
- aware of when and what type of DBS check is appropriate.
- have read the DBS code of practice.
- have read the Making Music guidance on safeguarding and DBS checks.

Policy review

The policy will be reviewed every two years by the board of trustees/management committee. Members of the BLSO will be informed of any changes to the policy and be invited to comment.