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## Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy 2023

Date Policy Approved:	May 2023
Date Policy to be Reviewed:	February 2024
Date Last Updated:	April 2023
Date Originally Created	December 2018

### 1 Purpose and Scope

November Club's board of trustees and staff team recognises that our work is strengthened through the inclusion of individuals from all walks of life. We believe that we better meet the needs of our audiences by enabling them to see themselves, or their lives, represented in the work we produce. This purpose of this policy is to explain how we:

- comply with equality and anti-discrimination laws and regulation;
- go beyond legal requirements to understand, implement and promote greater equity, diversity and inclusion;
- live November Club's values of being joyful, ethical, welcoming and brave, by embracing and promoting diversity, equity and inclusion throughout our artistic work; collaborations and opportunities we offer as part of our practice.

Our Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan provides a mechanism that enables us to deliver on the intent of this policy.

This policy applies to all individuals who work for November Club on a paid or voluntary basis, including its trustees.

Our use of language and the definitions we use are explained in Appendix A.

### 2 Aim of policy

The purpose of this policy is to outline our guiding principles in respect of ensuring that our artistic work provides diverse, equitable and inclusive opportunities to all people who access our services or who are employed by us in any capacity.

The Equality Act 2010 covers nine protected characteristics, and it is against the law to discriminate against someone because of any of these characteristics, but we recognise that to be inclusive we need to consider other characteristics including socio-economic background. We also recognise the importance of considering intersectionality and how different combinations of characteristics can increase barriers to participation.

We understand that individuals may be categorised (and categorise themselves) in multiple way and that these categorisations can increase privilege for some and cause added

discrimination for others. We treat people fairly and include them in our work regardless of how or whether they categorise themselves.

We aim to create 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.

### **3 Policy Statements**

#### **3.1 Artistic Delivery**

Through its artistic programme November Club will ensure that work takes place in a range of locations, including rural areas, where access to performance may be difficult and/or where communities may be easily ignored for a range of reasons.

We will work with artists from a diverse range of practices and lived experiences.

We will always consider the needs of people with access requirements, and where possible, will work to ensure that we provide a meaningful engagement with our performances. This could include, for example:

- BSL assisted performances.
- Relaxed performances
- Digital opportunities to stream work from locations that cannot be easily accessed by all
- Concessionary pricing

#### **3.2 Participatory Work**

We will actively seek to work with underserved communities.

We will take steps to ensure our participatory programmes are designed to enable a wide range of individuals to participate.

#### **3.3 Workforce**

We aim to have a staff team with diverse lived and learned experience, relevant to their job roles.

We will ensure that anyone wishing to be considered for work with November Club is dealt with fairly and that no one, who meets the essential requirements of the job, is denied access to information or an opportunity to interview for a job or audition. Job requirements will be designed to ensure that individuals are not discriminated from applying for reasons not related to the requirements of the role. We will take legally allowable, positive action to support applications from individuals from backgrounds that are underrepresented in the arts.

We recognise that including individuals from a wide range of backgrounds can enhance a workforce. Inclusion within our team will allow us to understand our communities and enable us to work with them, and for them, through our productions and projects. We will promote equity, diversity and inclusion by making sure that any workforce decision-is based

on knowledge, skills, qualifications and experience. In particular, decisions about an individual's participation in work activity, training, career development, career advancement or redundancy will be taken fairly and equitably based on their skills, needs and ability. Where individuals who are not well represented in the arts need us to take legally allowable, positive action to enable them to participate on an equal footing, we will do this.

We will ensure staff keep up-to-date on changes in working practices and legislation related to equity, diversity and inclusion and provide training where needed.

We will take seriously complaints of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination by fellow team members, freelancers, 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. Particularly serious complaints could amount to gross misconduct and lead to dismissal without notice. Further, sexual harassment may amount to both an employment rights matter and a criminal matter, such as in sexual assault allegations. In addition, 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.

#### 3.4 Board Recruitment and Inclusion

We aim to have a Board that is broadly reflective of the diversity of the North-East and the various protected characteristics (and other characteristics e.g. socio-economic background) that are part of the region.

We will use a range of recruitment methods to reach into communities not currently represented on the Board. We understand that a diverse Board is able to make decisions more effectively by reducing the risk of 'groupthink'. Trustee Role Descriptions will be designed to ensure that individuals are not discriminated from applying for reasons not related to the requirements of the role. We will take legally allowable positive action to support applications from individuals who are not well represented on the boards of arts organisations.

We will organise Board meetings in an accessible manner, at a time that is convenient to all, so that all members have an opportunity to attend meetings. We will negotiate expenses such as travel and childcare and consider holding meetings at times where freelance workers do not risk losing income.

Trustees who breach our policies and behave in a manner that is bullying, harassing, victimising or unlawfully discriminatory will be subject to a fair review process as described in the Bullying and Harassment section of the Trustee Handbook. Depending on the outcome of the review and the severity of the breach, trustees may be asked to undertake training and development, may be asked to leave and/or may be reported to the Police.

### 3.5 Marketing

We recognise that our marketing materials attract our future employees, trustees, freelancers, participants and audiences. We will design our materials so that they are accessible to all, meeting recognised standards for people with access requirements and reflecting the community within which we work. We will be sensitive to our choice of language recognising that being welcoming is a key value for November Club and we do not want to unintentionally exclude or offend by our choice of words.

## **4 Responsibilities**

The Board of Trustees is responsible for authorising this Policy, appointing a trustee to act as the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Champion and, ultimately, for ensuring that November Club meets its commitments as laid out in this policy.

The Business and Operations Director will be responsible for creating and maintaining the Policy and the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan, supported by the staff team and the Inclusivity Champion.

The Inclusivity Champion is responsible for holding the operational team to account for achieving the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan and for reporting concerns to the Board.

The Artistic Director and Chief Executive Officer is responsible for ensuring that the artistic programme achieves our equity, diversity and inclusion aims as expressed in the Investment Principles Plan.

The Business and Operational Director is responsible for meeting the administration and recruitment requirements of the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan

The Participation Producer is responsible for ensuring that the participatory work achieves our equity, diversity and inclusion aims and targets as expressed in the Equality and Inclusion Action Plan and the Creative Case for Diversity Action Plan.

The Marketing and Audience Development Manager is responsible for ensuring that the marketing and audience development plans achieve our equity, diversity and inclusion aims and targets as expressed in the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan.

All trustees, members of staff and other workers are responsible for reading and taking steps to understand and execute these policies.

All trustees, members of staff and other workers are responsible for behaving in an inclusive and non discriminating way towards individuals they meet as part of their work.

## Appendix A: Definitions, Terminology and Use of Language

**Protected characteristics** are defined in the Equality Act 2010 as:

- age
- disability (a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term effect on your ability to do normal day-to-day activities – it includes learning disabilities, autism spectrum disorders, sensory impairments, mental health issues, dementia and impairments resulting from injuries),
- gender reassignment (transitioning from one gender to another),
- marriage or civil partnership for same- or opposite-sex couples
- pregnancy or maternity (if you are expecting a baby and the period after birth),
- your race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin
- having a religion or belief (including no religion) which affects the way you live,
- your sex (whether you are a man or woman)
- sexual orientation (whether you are sexually attracted to men, women or both).

The Act also covers people who care for someone who is elderly or disabled as being ‘associated’ with someone whose characteristics are legally protected.

We recognise that the terminology used in the Act is not necessarily that which other groups recommend we use, for example the Independent Theatre Council advise us to refer to ‘trans equality’ rather than ‘gender reassignment’. ‘Sex’ and ‘gender reassignment’ are the terms used by the Equality Act.

**Diversity:** is about recognising difference. It’s acknowledging the benefit of having a range of perspectives arising from different experiences, identities and points of view in all decision-making by having a diverse workforce and Board of Trustees.

**Equality:** is about treating everyone in the same way. This term does not take into account that some people face barriers to participation that preclude them being treated in the same way as others. Equality works on the assumption that treating everyone in the same way will result in equality of outcomes.

**Equity:** recognises that treating everyone in the same way doesn’t result in equality of outcomes. This is because some people face barriers to participation that need to be addressed before they can participate. For November Club treating everyone equally is not enough – we will strive to remove barriers that people face to participation whether it be as an audience member, participant, member of staff or trustee.

**Inclusion:** is where people’s differences are valued and used to enable everyone to thrive at work. An inclusive working environment is one in which everyone feels that they belong without having to conform, that their contribution matters and they are able to perform to their full potential, no matter their background, identity or circumstances.<sup>1</sup> For November Club inclusion also means striving to work with underrepresented communities.

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<sup>1</sup> [Inclusion and Diversity in the Workplace | Factsheets | CIPD](#)

**Learning difficulties:** the Department of Health defined this as a “significant reduced ability to understand new or complex information, to learn new skills (impaired intelligence), with a reduced ability to cope independently (impaired social functioning), which started before adulthood”. Some people with learning difficulties find their ability to understand information is linked to the way that visual information is processed.

**Discrimination:** is action that treats people differently because of their individual characteristics. Under the Equalities Act 2010, discrimination is usually unlawful if the treatment relates to the individual’s protected characteristics. Discrimination can be **Direct, Indirect** or **by association**. **Direct discrimination** means someone is treated differently because of their individual characteristics. **Indirect discrimination** is discrimination that applies to all, but only affects individuals with certain characteristics. **Discrimination by association** means someone is treated differently because of their connection to someone with a certain characteristic.

**Positive action:** is action that compensates for disadvantages that are faced by individuals who share a particular protected characteristic. Positive action is intended to reduce the barriers to participation.

**Positive discrimination:** Under the Equalities Act 2010, positive discrimination is action that selects an individual for an activity based upon their protected characteristic. Except in exceptional circumstances that November Club is unlikely to face (defined as an ‘occupational requirement’), positive discrimination is unlawful.

**Visually impaired:** is a loss of sight that cannot be corrected through glasses or contact lens. Visual impairment may occur as ocular visual impairment (OVI) or cerebral, or cortical, visual impairment (CVI). OVI occurs when diseases or conditions affect the eye and/or the optic nerve. CVI is significant visual dysfunction caused by injury to visual pathways and structures.

### Terminology and Use of Language

We are aware that an Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy will use terminology to categorise groupings of individuals with a common identity that may be welcomed by some of those individuals and not by others. We recognise that many of these categorisations are socially constructed, that some individuals consider such categories to be othering and that some individuals do not wish to with engage with such categorisation. We aim to use the social model of disability which understands that people are disabled by barriers in society, not by their impairment or difference. We wish to use the terminology that means the most to the individuals we encounter: Understanding, for example, that some people with disabilities may **not** use the social model of disability when describing their own health conditions or impairments. The terms we use are subject to review as our understanding develops. Specific examples that we will use in documentation include.

**“People with health conditions or impairments”:** as opposed to “people with disabilities” or “disabled people”.

**Ethnic minorities:** for individuals from non-white British ethnicity. This is based on the usage applied by Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities in their report from Apr 2021.

## Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan 2023

Action	Outcome	Lead, Resources. Timescale
<b>Governance &amp; Board Development</b>		
Board Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Champion (EDIC) challenges the November Club staff and trustees on the content and implementation of the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan (EDIAP).	The organisation meets the commitments contained in the EDIAP.	EDIC with Artistic Director/CEO (AD/CEO) and Business & Operations Director (B&OD).  Board appoint EDIC annually.
Audit all Board Members on equalities experience and knowledge.	A clear picture of the knowledge and experience of the Board and an understanding of gaps, enabling the board to target its recruitment to create a board membership that better reflects the diversity of the community we serve.	EDIC with AD/CEO and B&OD.  By end Dec 24.
Ensure trustees annually review the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy and EDIAP; and understand their responsibilities for ensuring November Club is a fair and equitable company.	The Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy and EDIAP are kept up to date with changes in custom and practice and staff and trustees are aware of these.  November Club demonstrates its commitment to ongoing self-evaluation, <del>sharing best practice</del> and continued learning around inclusion.	AD/CEO and B&OD  Included with trustee induction, updated when Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy, EDIAP, employment practices or legislation changes.
Set 'SMART' targets for trustee recruitment linked to the gaps identified in the annual Inclusivity Report and the Board Audit.	Board membership better reflects the diversity of the community we serve.	AD/CEO and Chair of Board of Trustees.  In time for the next trustee recruitment drive.



Analyse the achievement of the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan.	Identify and implement the changes that need to be included in the annual review of the EDIAP and therefore improve it.	Trustees to discuss the review which will be conducted by the B&OD with help from staff team.  Annually in January.
Administration and Recruitment		
Ensure the importance of equity, diversity and inclusion are better reflected on the website.	November Club's various stakeholders see its commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion and want to engage with the organisation.	B&OD and M&ADM.  When website redesigned, by 30 Jun 23.
Ensure job descriptions, role descriptions, person specifications and recruitment packs do not directly or indirectly discriminate and positively encourage individuals from a wide range of backgrounds to apply.	Recruitment packs that are accessible to all and an increase in the diversity of individuals applying for the roles and becoming trustees.	B&OD.  When we recruit staff, trustees.
Ensure recruitment and selection procedures do not directly or indirectly discriminate and positively enable individuals from a wide range of backgrounds to participate in the process.	Recruitment and processes are seen to be equitable. This increases the chances of November Club recruiting a diverse workforce and of its reputation as an inclusive employer being enhanced.	B&OD.  When we recruit staff, trustees.
Ensure adverts for work opportunities are spread throughout a broad range of channels.	An increase in the diversity of individuals applying for the roles and becoming trustees.	B&OD.  When we recruit staff and trustees.
Build mutually beneficial relationships with organisations/individuals from underrepresented communities and seek their advice on how to increase access.	A clearer understanding of how to engage underrepresented communities resulting in changes to the way that November Club operates and ultimately in a more inclusive organisation.	Staff team.  Ongoing.  It may be best to target communities who are the priority for Board

		recruitment or to deliver the artistic programme.
Audit staff on equalities experience and knowledge	A clear picture of the knowledge and experience of the staff team and an understanding of gaps, enabling the organisation to target its recruitment to create a staff team that better reflects the diversity of the community we serve.	B&OD to analyse data from audit and identify gaps.  By Sept 23.
Deliver training to resolve knowledge gaps, where appropriate. Consider whether 'allyship' training might be valuable.	November Club's board understand the behaviours needed to build supportive relationships with individuals from groups that are under represented on the board/staff team.	B&OD  By Mar 24
Ensure staff read the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy and EDIAP, and understand how to support individuals from a wide range of backgrounds to fully participate in the work and services of the organisation.	The Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy and EDIAP are implemented effectively resulting in a more diverse, inclusive and understanding organisation.	AD/CEO and B&OD.  At induction; when Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy, EDIAP, employment practices or legislation changes.
Ensure the Inclusivity Monitoring Form reflects the terminology that underrepresented communities prefer to use.	November Club's stakeholders feel included by the terminology used and its reputation as an inclusive organisation is enhanced. Therefore, the organisation gets better quality and quantity of data that helps plan future activity.	B&OD.  Ongoing.
<b>Artistic Programme and Development</b>		
Plan artistic, talent development and participatory activity that:	Diversity is embedded across all aspects of the programme and is a key driver for	AD/CEO with PP.  Plan created annually as part of Business Planning and/or

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Takes place in a range of locations, where access to performance may be difficult and/or where communities may be easily ignored.</li> <li>• That works with artists from a diverse range of practices and lived experiences.</li> <li>• That considers the needs of people with access requirements, and works to ensure that we provide a meaningful engagement with our performances.</li> </ul>	<p>informing and shaping the artistic programme.</p> <p>November Club supports artistic talent development and provides platforms for showcasing work from diverse artists and companies.</p> <p>November Club is responsive to challenges and barriers facing underrepresented groups in participating and engaging with the sector.</p>	<p>Outcomes Activity Plan procedure and monitored quarterly through Company Report and/or Outcomes Activity Plan.</p>
<p>Communications and PR</p>		
<p>Ensure all text based digital and paper products/materials supplied to potential trustees/staff/freelancers, audiences or participants use clear English and are of an acceptable accessibility standard. This will include providing large print materials.</p>	<p>Improved access to November Club's work for visually impaired people or for people with learning difficulties whose difficulties are impacted by visual stimulus and subsequently more engagement by these individuals in November Club's work.</p>	<p>M&amp;ADM, PP. As products are developed.</p>
<p>Investigate options for supplying products/materials in formats other than text.</p>	<p>Improved access to November Club's work for individuals that have difficulty accessing text based products/materials and subsequently more engagement by these individuals in November Club's work.</p>	<p>M&amp;ADM, PP. As projects/productions are developed.</p>
<p>Develop partnerships with appropriate voluntary groups operating locally and regionally that support individuals who require specialist assistance and consult them on the means to effectively communicate with their beneficiaries.</p>	<p>Improved access to November Club's work for individuals with specialist access needs and subsequently more engagement by these individuals in November Club's work.</p> <p>November Club participates in sector led or wider initiatives</p>	<p>PP / M&amp;ADM. Ongoing.</p>

	promoting equality and inclusion in the arts and cultural sector.	
Ensure print and website images represents all the communities with which we work and of those with whom we wish to engage.	November Club's community will see themselves represented in its work.	M&ADM. Ongoing.
Participation and Audience Development		
Continually improve monitoring systems allowing us to accurately record activity, participation and audiences.	Improved data about audience and participant demographics enabling November Club to adapt its artistic and participatory plans to be more inclusive.	Team. Ongoing.
Set measurable targets for audience and participant engagement and review achievement against those targets.	The target gives November Club the means to focus its PR and Marketing plans.  The review improves its knowledge about its audience demographics and those it is not reaching enabling it to adapt its artistic and participatory plans to be more inclusive.	M&ADM with AD/CEO and PP.  Targets set annually and reviewed in Company Report and/or Outcomes Activity Plan.
Set measurable targets for website and social media engagement and review achievement against those targets.	The target gives November Club the means to focus its PR and Marketing plans.  The review improves its knowledge about its audience demographics and those it is not reaching enabling it to adapt its artistic and participatory plans to be more inclusive.	M&ADM.  Targets set annually in Business Plan and/or Engagement Strategy and reviewed in Company Report.