



## **Equal Opportunities Policy & Code of Practice**

### **Main Outline Statement**

The TMSA recognises that the strength of the organisation is built on the understanding of individual strengths and differences and seeks to respect these.

The TMSA recognises that certain groups and individuals in society are disadvantaged because of discrimination experienced for example as a result of gender, race, colour, sexual orientation, nationality, religion, ethnic or national origin, language, age, marital or parental status, child care arrangements, carer status, employment status, disability, HIV status, physical or mental health, offender background, appearance, social or economic status, trade union membership or political belief or affiliation.

There may be other areas where people experience discrimination and the TMSA will work towards an anti-discriminatory environment within the organisation, based on an open discussion of staff, volunteers and users' perceptions of discrimination.

The TMSA further recognises that discrimination can be direct or indirect and takes place at both institutional and personal levels. The TMSA recognises and believes that such discrimination is unacceptable and is committed to ensuring that its policies and practices provide equal treatment for all - in terms of employment of staff, work with volunteers and in all aspects of its service delivery to members, project users and the general public.

The TMSA recognises that staff, volunteers and service users can experience discrimination for more than one reason, e.g. female with a disability, and in its work to achieve equality will take this into consideration at all times.

### **Policy**

The TMSA is committed, within the framework of existing legislation, to both the elimination of unfair discrimination and the promotion of equal opportunities wherever it is within its sphere of influence to do so.

This policy covers all aspects of the work of the TMSA, including the Management Board, committees at national and branch level, members, employees, volunteers and users of its services.

The TMSA codes of practice in employment and service delivery are designed to counteract and prevent discrimination.

The elected members of the Management Board are responsible for the implementation and monitoring of the policy. While it is recognised that the Management Board bears responsibility for the implementation of the policy, the TMSA expects every employee, volunteer and member to accept a personal responsibility for the practical implementation of the policy.

## **Equal Opportunities Code of Practice**

### Membership

Membership is open to any individual, family or organisation with an interest in the traditional arts of Scotland on payment of an annual membership fee. This membership fee is set by the members at an Annual General Meeting and will be set at a level not to discriminate against those who are unemployed or on low income.

### Management Board

The members of the TMSA elect fellow members to serve on the Management Board. These elections take place at the Annual General Meeting and any individual who has been a member for more than twelve months at the date of the AGM is eligible to stand for election. This is the only criterion for selection to the Management Board.

### Branch Committees

Branch committees are elected from within the branch members. This is the only criterion for selection as a branch committee member.

### Management Board and Branch Meetings

Members of these committees undertake to hold meetings in accessible venues and to uphold the commitment to equal opportunities policy and practice as outlined in this document.

### General Responsibility of Members

Members have a responsibility to abide by the commitments and codes of practice outlined in this document. Individual TMSA members are expected to bring any perceived discriminatory practice to the attention of the Convener who will instigate an investigation of the complaint.

### Employment & Recruitment of Staff & Volunteers

The TMSA is committed to ensuring that no applicant, employee or volunteer receives less favourable treatment on the grounds of gender, race, colour, sexual orientation, nationality, religion, ethnic or national origin, language, age, marital or parental status, child care arrangements, carer status, employment status, disability, HIV status, physical or mental health, offender background, appearance, social or economic status, trade union membership or political belief or affiliation.

To this end the TMSA will take every reasonable, practical step to ensure that:

- when personnel decisions are made, the only personal characteristics taken into account are those which are necessary for the requirements and proper performance of the work involved, as well as being consistent with relevant legislation.
- when a personnel decision is made about an individual, the decision is based solely on an assessment of the capability and suitability of that individual and not on any generalised concepts about the characteristics of categories or groups of persons.

An employee who believes s/he has not been treated equitably under this policy should raise the matter through the grievance procedure. Any job applicant who believes that s/he has not been treated equitably may write to the Convener of the Association who will investigate the complaint.

The Management Board will not tolerate unfair discrimination against any members of staff by any members of staff or other persons associated with the organisation. Any matters brought to the attention of the Association will be investigated by the Executive, and action will be taken where appropriate within the terms of the TMSA's disciplinary procedures.

#### Training of Staff and Volunteers

An Equal Opportunities Policy will not operate itself. It requires commitment, understanding and training where necessary for all people responsible for its implementation.

The TMSA is committed to ensuring that its staff, Board and, where possible, other volunteers are properly trained to help to fulfil the Equal Opportunities Policy. This should include refresher training when necessary.

#### Programming

Whilst acknowledging the specialist nature of its area of operation, the TMSA is committed to making its programming accessible to as wide a range of people as possible both on a participative and audience basis.

#### Venues

Although the TMSA recognises that totally accessible buildings are not always available, TMSA festival organisers are encouraged to use accessible venues as far as is possible within the confines of what is available in their local community. Access information should be included in all publicity material.

#### Education and Outreach

The education and outreach programmes will endeavour to address the issues of ensuring survival of extant tradition bearing communities while developing interest and

participation in urban and disadvantaged areas. In many instances this will involve taking events to the local community and thus making the programming accessible.

### Publications

The TMSA wishes to ensure that as many people as possible can access its information services and publicity, whether in printed format, via the telephone, via electronic mail or on the internet.

To achieve this, the TMSA will:

- make its printed material available in alternative formats upon request and to make this availability known on all publications
- ensure the maintenance of a website that meets current best practice in relation to accessibility
- investigate other methods of increasing accessibility to information
- ensure its staff and volunteers are trained in how to make such provision
- act sensitively in its use of images, colours and symbols