



## Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

### 1. About Dance Network Association

Dance Network Association (DNA) is a dance charity that enables people to live more connected, joyful and aspirational lives through dance. Over the past eleven years, DNA has built inclusive dance communities across Greater Essex and outer London boroughs, providing access to high-quality dance for people of all ages and abilities in a wide range of settings.

Each year DNA engages approximately **30,000 participants**, supporting people to improve their physical and mental health and wellbeing through opportunities for joy, connection and creative expression.

### 2. Definition of Workforce

For the purpose of this policy, **workforce** includes:

- Employees
- Freelance artists and practitioners
- Volunteers
- Students and interns
- This policy applies to everyone working on behalf of DNA.

### 3. Policy Statement

Dance Network Association believes that **everyone should have the opportunity to participate in and experience the arts.**

We are committed to creating welcoming, inclusive and respectful environments where people of all backgrounds, identities and abilities feel valued and able to take part.

We actively work to remove barriers to participation by embedding inclusive practice across:

- our programmes and activities
- workforce development
- organisational culture and governance
- This includes making reasonable adjustments, encouraging open conversations about access needs and supporting our workforce to deliver accessible and inclusive experiences.

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We recognise that **inclusion is an ongoing process of learning, reflection and improvement**. We continue to develop our practice through training, collaboration with communities and partners, and by listening to the experiences of the people we work with.

We welcome conversations about access and are committed to working together to make participation possible.

## 4. Organisational Commitments

DNA commits to:

- encouraging equality, diversity and inclusion within our workplace and across our programmes
- creating an environment free from bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination
- promoting dignity and respect for all individuals
- recognising and valuing individual differences and contributions
- ensuring staff understand their rights and responsibilities under this policy
- addressing complaints of discrimination, bullying or harassment seriously and in accordance with organisational procedures
- providing training and development opportunities to help staff and artists develop inclusive practice
- ensuring decisions regarding employment and engagement are based on merit, except where lawful positive action may apply
- reviewing policies and procedures regularly to ensure fairness and compliance with current legislation
- monitoring workforce diversity where appropriate to support equality and inclusion objectives
- Monitoring information will be handled in accordance with data protection legislation.

## 5. Inclusive Practice in Programmes and Participation

DNA aims to create inclusive dance environments where people feel welcomed and supported to participate.

We recognise that participants may have a wide range of experiences, abilities and access needs. Our approach includes:

- anticipating common accessibility needs within programme planning
- encouraging open, non-intrusive conversations about access requirements
- making reasonable adjustments where possible
- supporting practitioners to deliver accessible sessions
- developing practical guidance for inclusive delivery
- Participants will not be turned away solely because of emerging access needs, where reasonable adjustments may enable participation.

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- Where additional support is required, DNA will consider appropriate solutions such as:
- adapting activities
- providing additional support artists or assistants
- modifying environments or delivery methods

## 6. Learning and Policy Development

DNA is committed to continuous learning and reflective practice in relation to equality, diversity and inclusion.

A review of this policy and its practical implementation was undertaken by the **Board of Trustees on 24 February 2026**. The review considered how inclusive practice is embedded within programmes, onboarding processes and workforce training.

During this review, the Board considered a practical scenario in which a visually impaired participant attended a session without previously disclosing access requirements. Initial uncertainty among staff about how to support the participant highlighted the need for clearer organisational guidance, increased practitioner confidence and improved processes for identifying and supporting access needs.

This discussion reinforced several organisational principles:

- inclusive practice should be anticipated within lesson planning
- staff should feel confident responding to emerging access needs
- participants should be welcomed wherever reasonable adjustments can be made
- the organisation must continue developing workforce knowledge and skills in inclusive delivery

Following the review, the Board agreed that further development work would be led by the **DNA EDI Sub-Group**, including the development of practical tools and guidance to support implementation of this policy.

## 7. Workforce Development and Training

DNA recognises that inclusive practice requires ongoing learning and support for our workforce.

We will:

- provide training in inclusive practice and unconscious bias
- develop practical guidance materials for practitioners
- create onboarding guidance and session planning tools
- encourage reflective practice among staff and artists
- support the sharing of learning and experiences across the organisation
- Where appropriate, mandatory training may be supported through payment at meeting rates or integrated into existing workforce development structures.

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- DNA will also seek accessible online training resources and sector guidance to support staff development.

## 8. Reasonable Adjustments and Access Riders

A reasonable adjustment is a change made to remove or reduce a disadvantage experienced by someone with a protected characteristic, particularly in relation to disability.

Adjustments may include:

- changes to the physical environment
- changes to working practices
- providing equipment or support
- adapting communication methods
- When determining whether an adjustment is reasonable, DNA will consider:
  - how effectively the change removes the disadvantage
  - practicality
  - cost
  - organisational resources
  - availability of external financial support

The aim is to remove or reduce barriers wherever possible.

DNA welcomes **access riders from disabled artists and freelancers**. An access rider is a document outlining the adjustments required for an artist to carry out their work effectively.

We encourage artists to provide access riders in advance where possible so that reasonable adjustments can be planned. DNA will work collaboratively with artists to understand their needs and evaluate adjustments after projects to continually improve practice.

## 9. Recruitment

Our recruitment practices aim to attract applicants with the knowledge, skills and experience required for each role, regardless of background.

We aim to:

- attract a diverse workforce
- anonymise applications where appropriate
- offer adjustments during recruitment processes
- take positive action where appropriate to improve diversity
- DNA is committed to safer recruitment practices, which are detailed in the Safeguarding Policy.

## 10. Equal Opportunities in Employment

DNA will avoid unlawful discrimination in all aspects of employment, including:

- recruitment

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- promotion
- training opportunities
- pay and benefits
- disciplinary processes
- redundancy selection

Decisions will be based on objective criteria, and reasonable adjustments will be considered both during recruitment and throughout employment.

## 11. Types of Unlawful Discrimination

The Equality Act 2010 identifies several forms of unlawful discrimination, including:

- **Direct discrimination**  
Treating someone less favourably because of a protected characteristic.
- **Indirect discrimination**  
Applying a policy or practice that disadvantages people with a protected characteristic without justification.
- **Harassment**  
Unwanted conduct related to a protected characteristic that violates dignity or creates an intimidating or offensive environment.
- **Associative discrimination**  
Discrimination because of association with someone who has a protected characteristic.
- **Perceptive discrimination**  
Discrimination based on the perception that someone has a protected characteristic.
- **Third-party harassment**  
Harassment of an employee by service users or others connected to the organisation.
- **Victimisation**  
Treating someone unfairly because they have raised or supported a complaint under the Equality Act.
- **Failure to make reasonable adjustments**  
Failing to remove barriers that place a disabled person at a disadvantage.

## 12. Responsibilities

All members of the workforce share responsibility for supporting this policy.

Staff are expected to:

- treat others with dignity and respect
- avoid discriminatory behaviour
- raise concerns if discrimination occurs
- support inclusive practice in their work

Concerns should be reported to a **line manager, DNA contact, the CEO or the Board of Trustees**.

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Complaints will be taken seriously and addressed through the organisation's **grievance, disciplinary or dignity at work procedures**.

Acts of discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation may constitute **gross misconduct** and could lead to disciplinary action or dismissal.

### 13. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be monitored periodically to assess its effectiveness and updated in response to changes in legislation, organisational learning or sector practice.

The **Board of Trustees** will receive reports on actions taken to improve equality, diversity and inclusion.

The policy is fully supported by the CEO and the Board of Trustees.

**Signed off by the Board:** 30 September 2024

**Policy review discussion:** 24 February 2026

**Amends to policy from board review and discussion:** 10 March 2026

**Next full review:** September 2026