



Scary Little Girls Access, Equalities and Inclusion policy

The purpose of this document is to set out our commitment to designing and creating environments which will meet the needs of all our stakeholders.

Access for all is a key objective of Scary Little Girls (SLG), as building a diverse, engaged and loyal audience and employee base is essential to the long-term future of the company.

This document is in three parts:

- Definitions of terms
- Access to SLG's work offer
- SLG guidelines (This document does not preclude or supersede legislative or building code requirements or event specific risk assessments.)

1.0 Definitions of terms

Access

When we refer to access, we mean the opportunity to engage with our events including rehearsal spaces, shows, collections, content, expertise, programmes and people. There are a number of key barriers to access:

- Physical/sensory: e.g. people with physical disabilities, limited mobility, or hearing or visual impairments may not be able to access events, our website, social media channels or programmes.
- Intellectual: e.g. some people may find our work too specialist in its approach to subjects and how they are presented; some may have learning disabilities which affect their ability to engage with our work; and some may not be able to read or speak English.
- Attitudinal: e.g. some people may have a lack of interest in, or awareness of, our work and the subjects and issues it deals with, or our programmes and services.
- Cultural: e.g. some people may feel that our work is not relevant to them and does not reflect their cultural or social heritage, or their interests.
- Economic: e.g. some people may not be able to afford to take part in our work or in our programmes.
- Geographic: e.g. some people will live too far away to engage with us.
- Technological: e.g. some people may not have access to the internet or a mobile phone.

2.0 Access to SLG's work offer

SLG is committed to maximising access by, for example:

Physical and sensory access

- upholding the statutory requirements of the Equality Act (2010) by taking reasonable steps to ensure that policies, practices and procedures do not discriminate against disabled people; by providing auxiliary aids and services which enable disabled people to use our work; and by removing, altering or circumventing physical barriers within our spaces, both in actual space and online
- working with venues to ensure that lift access is provided to all possible public spaces
- working with venues to reduce barriers to all our shows, exhibitions (including temporary exhibits), learning spaces, flexible spaces, cloakrooms, locker rooms, toilets and information desks
- providing volunteers to help with mobility
- providing accessible seating throughout our work
- providing visitor services staff and volunteers who have the awareness and skills to successfully communicate with, and provide a quality service for people with additional needs
- following RNIB and Action on Hearing Loss good practice guidelines
- ensuring that shows and exhibitions use a good range of multisensory exhibits (e.g. to touch, smell, listen to)
- ensuring that as much as possible of our video-based content has subtitles if they use the spoken word
- ensuring that audio description is woven into our live and recorded work
- ensuring that our website meets the Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI) AA standard Intellectual access
- following guidelines provided by Mencap
- ensuring that the text used in our shows, exhibitions, educational resources, publications, website and social media channels is carefully tailored to meet the needs of our intended audiences, in line with SLG's style guide
- ensuring that the content and delivery of our learning programmes are tailored to the learning needs of our audiences
- providing a tailored programme for special schools and SEN units in mainstream schools and colleges
- providing accessible events, tours and programmes of activity

Attitudinal access

- ensuring that our promotional activities present SLG as welcoming, friendly, non- threatening, inclusive and interactive
- ensuring that audiences, participants, employees and other stakeholders are made to feel welcome on arrival and are put at ease
- creating environments in which people can feel comfortable, valued and able to learn, work, experience or participate at their own pace and level

Cultural access

- finding ways in for socially diverse audiences
- varied and far-reaching engagement activities to reach people not currently engaged in culture

Economic access

- maintaining saver tickets, group and residents deals and inclusive comps

- continuing to tailor pricing according to area and demographics (while ensuring SLG's financial sustainability)

Geographic access

- providing a rich online experience
- providing object loans (props, costume, set, etc) to other companies and artists locally and where possible nationally
- producing shows, touring, exhibitions, events and workshops in public spaces
- offering a programme of webinars and live streams
- Using varied marketing methods including print advertising, local media and radio to reach people without mobile phones or access to the internet.

2.1 Access, Equality and Inclusion consultation

2.1.2 What we will do

SLG's offer (for the staff, audiences, volunteers, stakeholders and participants) aims to provide access for all. Below are some specific areas of work towards addressing some of the identified intellectual and physical barriers:

Organisational development – In 2021, SLG consulted on and created a new Business Plan and took the opportunity to formalise our shared, value-based organisational culture. This will be achieved through an integrated organisational development programme encompassing the whole workforce, including volunteers, and those that reach out to us for professional mentoring. It will consist of:

- Ethics and values workshops
- Team development workshops
- Training programme (including training in a range of access needs)
- Positive staff review system
- A mentoring touring programme and annual targets
- Buddying
- Work shadowing

Audience testing interactives - Working with a variety of groups to test our approaches during development of projects.

- Activities linked to content - A range of interactive activities will be developed which will support many of our shows, tours and events.
- Access events – At key points during projects SLG will dedicate specific events to audience/participants with special access needs, e.g., relaxed performances, audio described or signed workshops or spaces created for female only survivors of male violence to engage with female only arts and culture.
- Access focus groups - Our advisory group was established in 2018 and comprises an all-female core team of 6 from a wide variety of ages and backgrounds. Since 2020 we have been actively recruiting specialists with an access focus to join this group, including young women still in education, lesbian, bi-sexual and gender non-conforming women, women with visual or hearing impairments or disabled women with a background in campaigning for disabled rights in the arts. This allows us to put together focus groups who work with us on the development phases of our projects and provide advice on matters relating to stakeholder experience and access barriers.

- They will also contribute to the design of interpretation, looking at how information is relayed for a range of audiences with different needs, and also at the sensitivity with which we explore aspects of our work, such as those dealing with or touching upon male violence against women and girls. They will also inform our marketing and communications activity to make sure those with additional needs are included and targeted in the right way, and are aware of our access provision. The group will also look at provision for disability and neurodiversity within the public programme.
- Access resources – Development of a suite of online and printable resources to help with access to our work. This could include access journeys, maps, description documents and films of event spaces.

SLG access, equality and inclusivity guidelines

3.0 Older people

Older people with walking and breathing restraints need a place to rest and catch their breath regularly throughout our walking, promenade, outdoor or site-specific events.

Older people will see themselves represented in SLG's work and SLG will have no policy on age, size, colour or background that precludes professional artists for consideration for appropriate work.

3.1 Stakeholders with dementia

There are 850,000 people with dementia in the UK, with numbers set to rise to over one million by 2025. This will soar to two million by 2051. There are over 40,000 people under 65 with dementia in the UK.

- **Welcome:** It is important to create a safe, supportive and social place. People living with dementia have problems with their memory and experience changes in the way they see or visualise their surroundings. Having a welcome area at events which is always staffed and clearly marked is beneficial to give people living with dementia a first point of contact. Wherever possible we will work with venues and collaborators to promote the following guidelines -
- **Furniture:** Chairs should be a different colour to the floor, as this can help someone with dementia differentiate between the floor and the chair and improve confidence in sitting.
- **Navigation:** Corridors should be adequately lit to avoid shadows which hide possible obstacles from sight. Limit use of colour-coding/using coloured strips on the floor in way-finding, as this can be problematic for people with dementia. Firstly, this person cannot easily learn the new colour code. They've forgotten which strip they are following after a few paces. Secondly, the person may have developed problems with depth perception and other visual processing issues that make a pattern on the floor appear to be a trip hazard and this momentary confusion can cause them to stumble and fall.
- **Flooring:** Flooring should be a consistent colour throughout, with clear colour definition to the walls. Dark shapes/mats on the floor may evoke the illusion of a hole for people with dementia and may cause them to fall. Changes in colouring can indicate a step or change of depth.
- **Finishes:** Shiny surfaces can take on the appearance of water and create a fear of slipping or falling.

2 2 Sources: www.mentalhealthequalities.org.uk and <http://dementia.stir.ac.uk/design>

3.1 Stakeholders with visual impairment

Almost two million people in the UK are living with sight loss, including around 360,000 people registered as blind or partially sighted. The number of people with sight loss is expected to double over the next twenty-five years from one in 30 to one in 15. Wherever possible we will work with venues and collaborators along the following guidelines –

- **Navigation:** Colour contrast between walls and floors is very important. When entering an unfamiliar area the vast majority of visually impaired people will stop. Sometimes they will take up to several minutes using their residual vision to process visual clues about the area they have entered. Visually impaired people continuously search for and compare any colour contrast between large areas.
- **Lighting:** In many interiors there are lighting conditions which produce glare and shadows. Whilst this adds interest to a space, it may also create an environment which is uncomfortable for visually impaired people. Large amounts of light on surfaces will cause contrast to reduce and glare to increase. This is a particular problem where light is reflected from shiny surfaces.
 - Poor colour rendering lamps can reduce the ability to perceive colour contrasts
 - Incandescent lamps may cause glare due to their high luminous intensity.
 - Point sources of light can be distracting for visually impaired people because they produce pools of light and shadows on internal surfaces.
 - Fluorescent lamps may cause glare when the fluorescent tubes are exposed.
 - Daylight may cause glare, particularly where the sun's path tracks across the window.
 - Strongly directional daylight from windows and roof-lights can also cause problems. The changing pattern of sky luminance may mean that there are moving patches of light and shadows within an interior space.
- **Colour differentiation:** Shiny surface finishes are confusing for visually impaired people and should therefore be avoided. Use matt or mid-sheen finishes. These features vary according to the building type and the following list is therefore not exhaustive. Small items need a bigger colour difference from their surroundings to differentiate them, including switches and control buttons. Particularly strong contrast is needed for features that extend beyond their support at ground level, such as signs, literature displays and coat stands.
- **Assistance animals:** Assistance animals will be welcomed at SLG events and in our rehearsal rooms and where possible we will accommodate well behaved or in need pets.
- **Other considerations:** SLG should also look to provide sound and smell-scapes within events, shows, exhibitions, workshops, as well as touch tours or handling sessions.
- Digital interactives should include audio instructions to enable access.

3.2 Stakeholders with hearing impairment

In the UK, hearing impairment is a common condition. The Royal National Institute for Deaf People (RNID) estimates that in the UK there are almost nine million hearing impaired people. Approximately 28% of people who are hearing impaired are between 16-60 years of age, and 72% are over 60 years of age. Wherever possible we will work with venues and collaborators along the following guidelines -

- Descriptive and sign interpreted talks, tours and events
- An audio induction loop including microphones for guides and our work

- Captions or a synchronized text transcript should be provided on all audio-visual exhibits
- Transcripts to audio-only work
- Visual information prompts on digital interactives
- Multi-sensory events

3.3 Stakeholders with autism

Levels of anxiety can soar in unfamiliar environments for people with autism. SLG may need to warn audience and participants about surprises and stimulation levels. The use of bright colours and a high level of interactivity can result in sensory overload. Tactile interactives (for example buttons or levers) and audio visuals can create a very positive experience for individuals with autism, provided they have a sense of control. Colour coded lines allow for logical navigation of builds or spaces. Provision of a quiet space to go will be provided wherever possible

3.4 Stakeholders with ADHD

SLG will wherever possible work with venues and collaborators to include a range of stimulating experiences and 'chill out' quiet zones to help prevent overstimulation.

3.5 Stakeholders with anxiety and panic disorders

A calm space away from the crowds is extremely important to people who suffer anxiety and panic disorders. Clear signage helps reduce stress and keeping surprises to a minimum can also support mental wellbeing. It is important that anxious visitors feel they are not trapped, know they are in a relaxed environment and have a clearly marked exit so they can come out if they wish.

3.6 Stakeholders with epilepsy

Seizures can be triggered by the following:

- Lighting: Fluorescent strip lights and light bulbs may trigger a seizure if they flicker because they are faulty
- Flashing lights: they should not flash at a rate that could trigger seizures in most people with photosensitive epilepsy
- Strobe lights: they should not be used at a rate that could trigger seizures in most people with photosensitive epilepsy
- Patterns: Some high contrast or moving patterns can trigger seizures in some people with photosensitive epilepsy
- Sunlight: Looking directly at certain patterns connected with sunlight could trigger a seizure, for example; sunlight through slatted blinds, reflection off moving water.

All possible care will be taken by SLG and any collaborators to safeguard against, or provide warnings about, these triggers.

3.7 Maternity and pregnancy

As a feminist company we actively support pregnant artists, women returning to work after maternity and women working around childcare. It's vital that female artists can support themselves and their children with properly paid work and wherever possible we adapt rehearsal and shows timetables to provide this. All our events have group saver tickets, making culture affordable for people with children. We programme workshops and events of reproductive and sexual good health for women and female bodied people.

Mothers and children will see themselves represented in SLG's work and SLG will have no policy on age, size, colour or background that precludes professional artists for consideration for appropriate work.

3.8 Race (incl. Cornish Minority)

We include Cornish language in all our events and many of our projects focus on Cornish heritage, culture, folklore and hidden histories. Our creative events and community engagement programmes promote Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly as a vibrant Celtic nation with its own identity, history and thriving arts sector. Through our national and international programming links and artist networks we also bring people of colour into our programming, reducing isolation that global majority people can feel in largely Caucasian regions like Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly.

People of all races will see themselves represented in SLG's work and SLG will have no policy on age, size, colour or background that precludes professional artists for consideration for appropriate work.

3.9 Gender reassignment

Several members of our core artistic team define as trans or gender non-conforming and through our storytelling we explore themes of 'outsider' art and encourage understanding and empathy through championing lesser heard voices. Through our projects, trans and gender non-conforming artists will gain professional experience & expand their CVs, giving them more opportunities to access further employment. The diverse artists on stage will reflect society and allow audiences who have or may transition to see themselves in their communities and stories.

3.10 Marriage and Civil Partnership

Our work is reflective of all relationships in modern society. While we don't have active campaigns around the rights of married people or those in civil partnerships, by documenting them and showing them in all their glory and possibility we give people permission to make the choice that's right for them and to see themselves in art, heritage and culture.

3.11 Religion and belief

Through our community engagement we uncover the rich religious heritage of Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly, which spans centuries and goes from pre-Christian and pagan to catholic, protestant, methodist and quaker. This work also gives voice to minority faiths in Cornwall today, such as the Buddhists in Camborne's Chinese population, or the Muslims in Cornwall's only Islamic Community Centre. Through our creative exploration of the local folklore, we'll shine a light on different forms of belief and engender an interest in and understanding of the many forms of faith in our culture, history and communities.

3.12 Sexual orientation

Core to our feminist and matrifocal principles is the championing of the rights of same sex attracted people; we are especially committed to promoting lesbian visibility throughout our programming as we recognise they are under-represented and rarely given their own voice in our culture. Many of our core artistic team are lesbian, bi-sexual or gay and they drive the work that makes up our vision, projects and programming, ensuring LGB audiences see themselves in the work and have a voice front and centre in it.

3.13 Sex

For 20 years, SLG has addressed the gender imbalance in the arts, celebrating and supporting female artists at a national, international and a Cornish level, telling stories of hidden histories to diverse audiences. We are the only organisation dedicated to this fusion of high-quality professional creativity and industry equality activism in Cornwall; one of the few in the UK. Promoting women's creativity, providing them with well-paid, enriching working environments and allowing female audiences of all ages, backgrounds, shapes and colours to see themselves in their cultural narratives has been our commitment and passion for 20 years and runs throughout all our work.

All women will see themselves represented in SLG's work and SLG will have no policy on age, size, colour or background that precludes professional artists for consideration for appropriate work. Our work shall celebrate women, tell their sides of the stories, create spaces of unconditional love for women to experience and try to keep the connection between multi-generations of women and girls - maidens, mothers, mayvens and crones – so that the evolutionary work, learning and opportunity of the Web is not lost or broken.