



Risk Management and Policies

Access Policy

[Incorporating Equal Opportunities]

This policy forms part of the Fèisean nan Gàidheal policy portfolio

Date Approved	23.02.2018
Purpose	To ensure equality of opportunity in the access granted to participants in events run by the organisation, or on the organisation's behalf, including Fèisean which are members of the organisation. To ensure equality of opportunity in the access granted to the public, staff, volunteers and applicants in their dealings with Fèisean nan Gàidheal.
Summary	To address or remove physical, social, financial, cultural and other barriers to participation in the Fèis movement. Fairness and respect are the main cornerstones of this policy.



1 POLICY STATEMENT

- 1.1 Fèisean nan Gàidheal is committed to equality of opportunity in the access granted to participants in events run by the organisation, or on the organisation's behalf. This extends to Fèisean which are members of the organisation.
- 1.2 Fèisean nan Gàidheal believes participation in the arts and creativity promotes equality and diversity, contributes to wellbeing and to the economy of Scotland. We are committed to ensuring that individuals (including staff, participants, volunteers, contract workers and tutors) who wish to take part, can participate in any event run by Fèisean nan Gàidheal - and individual Fèisean - regardless of race, colour, ethnic or national origins, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, disability, age, whether pregnant or a parent/carer, social background, religious beliefs or if they are resident in an area experiencing socioeconomic deprivation.
- 1.3 Creative Scotland is subject to the Equality Act 2010 (the Act) which replaced all existing equality legislation such as the Race Relations Act 1976, the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and the Sex Discrimination Act 1975. To help deliver on its duty under the Act, Creative Scotland requires organisations funded by it, such as Fèisean nan Gàidheal, to implement an Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Action Plan. Fèisean nan Gàidheal's EDI Action Plan was developed in consultation with Board and staff, approved by Creative Scotland in 2016 and is currently being implemented and will be revised and renewed at regular intervals to ensure ongoing implementation. It is available on our website.
- 1.4 It is the duty of all our staff and members to ensure that fairness of access and opportunity are applied. However specific responsibilities fall upon the Fèis committee members (in relation to Fèisean) and the Fèisean nan Gàidheal Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and Board of Trustees (in relation to Fèisean nan Gàidheal).

2 ACCESS TO FÈIS ACTIVITIES

2.1 Physical and Sensory Barriers

Events run under the Fèisean nan Gàidheal banner are most often situated in public buildings such as halls and schools. They are selected for ease of accessibility and use by the able bodied, those restricted in movement, those who experience sensory loss (such as deafness or visual impairment), and those using a range of mechanical aids for mobility. Mobility and sensory loss are identified to Fèisean nan Gàidheal or Fèis organisers (as appropriate) in advance of an event, to ensure that all individuals participating in a Fèis are fully included in activities and may fully engage with the staff and other participants. Regular training events are run within the organisation which help staff and volunteers to understand and overcome physical and sensory loss in participants, parents, other staff and volunteers.

2.2 Cultural Barriers

The main purpose of the organisation is to provide Gaelic-based arts tuition festivals to children aged between 0 and 25. Most of our members provide bilingual activities in Gaelic and English, while some provide Gaelic-medium activities only. Children attending a Gaelic-medium Fèis would be expected to have a sufficient level of fluency in Gaelic to be able to participate fully and enjoyably in the event. Participation in the bilingual Fèisean will normally involve some engagement with Gaelic language activities such as Gaelic Song, drama, language, etc. These conditions are not intended to be barriers to participation as the organisation's object is to increase the number of activities available for children through the medium of Gaelic, to engage them with Gaelic culture and to celebrate Gaelic culture within the arts sector as a whole. A respect for Gaelic culture and language would be expected from participants, a respect which is reciprocated for other cultures and languages by Fèisean nan Gàidheal.

2.3 Attitudinal and Emotional Barriers

The organisation seeks to be welcoming and understanding to all participants and members of the public with whom it comes into contact, and to ensure participation in the Fèisean, or Fèisean nan Gàidheal events, is an enjoyable and meaningful experience for all concerned.

2.4 Intellectual Barriers

The organisation will consider whether people with additional learning needs can engage with and enjoy the events and engage with other participants. In cases where that is not deemed possible, Fèisean nan Gàidheal will make funding available to local Fèisean to engage an appropriate additional tutor and/or carer to enable people with learning needs to participate in Fèis activities.

2.5 **Financial Barriers**

The organisation will consider whether the cost of events is a barrier to individual participation and will act appropriately. Prices are kept within reasonable limits, and bursaries and family discounts are generally available. Fèisean nan Gàidheal and most Fèisean may also grant free, or reduced price, access to children from families experiencing financial difficulties.

It must be expected that, occasionally, the financial restraints incumbent upon a voluntary body may be such that it would be impossible to offer full access to all members of the community, regardless of all barriers, due to prohibitive cost or high risk which cannot be adequately controlled within economic limits.

- 2.6 Anybody who believes that s/he has been treated unfairly may raise the matter initially with the Chairperson of the Fèis involved, or the CEO of Fèisean nan Gàidheal if the Chairperson of the Fèis is involved.

3 ACCESS WITHIN FÈISEAN NAN GÀIDHEAL

3.1 **Employment (Including staff, contract workers, tutors and volunteers)**

Fèisean nan Gàidheal undertakes to treat fairly all applicants for positions within the organisation. We are committed to ensuring that individuals are selected on the basis of relevant merits and abilities. We aim to ensure that no potential or actual employee, contract worker, tutor or volunteer receives more or less favourable treatment on the grounds of race, colour, ethnic or national origins, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, disability, age, whether they are pregnant or a parent/carer, their social background or religious beliefs.

Fèisean nan Gàidheal also operates a policy on the recruitment of ex-offenders and undertakes to treat all applicants for positions within the organisation fairly, and not to discriminate unfairly against an individual on the basis of spent convictions depending on:

- Whether the conviction is relevant to the position being offered
- The seriousness of the offence revealed
- The length of time since the offence took place
- Whether the applicant has a pattern of offending behaviour
- Whether the applicant's circumstances have changed since offending took place

Any information disclosed to Fèisean nan Gàidheal will be handled under the terms of our Data Protection and PVG Policies.

It is a contractual obligation on the part of all our staff to accept responsibility for ensuring that fair employment practices are applied, but specific responsibilities fall upon the CEO, other senior staff and Trustees involved in recruitment, and staff involved in employee administration.

Any employee who believes that s/he has been treated unfairly may raise the matter with the CEO of Fèisean nan Gàidheal, or the Chairperson, if the CEO is involved.

We will not tolerate unfair discrimination, harassment or victimization against any member of staff, a job applicant, a contractor, a tutor, or a participant, by a Fèisean nan Gàidheal employee or by someone appointed to the service of Fèisean nan Gàidheal, or its member Fèisean. We will investigate any matters of such a nature brought to our attention.

It is Fèisean nan Gàidheal's policy to ensure that, as far as possible, the organisation takes a family friendly approach to dealing with employee's personal circumstances where they have an impact on their work. We offer a policy of flexible hours working (where appropriate) and offers time off in lieu (TOIL) for hours worked outwith the designated number of hours for any post. Maternity and Paternity Leave is available as is an entitlement to time off for dependents and compassionate leave.

Staff training and professional and personal development are considered at staff appraisals, and sabbaticals and secondments are available for eligible staff. All of those possibilities are considered in consultation with the CEO and/or line manager. Further information on these policies and arrangements is available in Fèisean nan Gàidheal's Staff Handbook which all members of staff receive on appointment, along with any updates as appropriate.

3.2 Training

The organisation operates a training plan which is open to staff, local organisers, volunteers, tutors and frequently to members of the public. It offers short courses on relevant topics at various times throughout the year.

3.3 Marketing

The ability of individuals with physical, sensory, learning, or other disabilities and the needs and sensibilities of all, detailed in 1.3, are considered in all marketing materials relating to Fèisean nan Gàidheal, and portray the organisation as a welcoming and inclusive body. Materials in alternative formats can be made available if requested.

3.4 Monitoring & Evaluation

Fèisean nan Gàidheal is committed to making this policy properly effective, and will regularly review its effectiveness through evaluation of events, and reviewing practices with regard to recruitment and marketing of events.

3.5 Consultation

Fèisean nan Gàidheal keeps up-to-date with legislation and guidance in all areas of access, including equal opportunities, employment, inclusion, and disability. It draws its Trustees from many different employment and experiential backgrounds, and regularly attends sector briefings with relevant training providers and organisations.

3.6 Premises

Fèisean nan Gàidheal does not currently own property, and rents offices and other premises from private landlords and public organisations and local authorities, in a range of buildings ranging from listed period buildings to modern purpose-built offices. This, in effect, means that there may be limitations on structural work that may be carried out to enable access for people with physical disabilities. Offices offer ground floor level meeting areas to ensure access for all visitors.

3.7 Responsibilities & Reviewing Access Issues

This policy will be reviewed regularly and certainly following an incident or significant change. The policy will be reviewed by the Board of Trustees, in consultation with the CEO and other staff. Fèis organisers will also be involved in feeding into this process and with any necessary review following an incident or significant change.

3.8 Development

Fèisean nan Gàidheal is a dynamic organisation which has grown from a very small part-time organisation to a serious sector leader responsible for a number of full-time staff as well as hundreds of individual tutors, performers, administrators and volunteers. The organisation is in a constant state of development, review and improvement, and all staff and members feed in to its Programme Plans.

Fèisean nan Gàidheal
February 2018