**An Comunn Gàidhealach**

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**Access Policy**

**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 Local Mòds. To ensure equality of opportunity in the access granted to the public, staff, volunteers and applicants in their dealings with An Comunn Gàidhealach**

**Summary: To address or remove physical, social, financial, cultural and other barriers to participation in The Royal National Mòd & Local Mòds. Fairness and respect are the main cornerstones of this organisation.**

**1 POLICY STATEMENT**

**1.1 An Comunn Gàidhealach 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 Local Mòds.**

**1.2 An Comunn Gàidhealach 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 An Comunn Gàidhealach - 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.**

**2 ACCESS TO MÒD ACTIVITIES**

**2.1 Physical and Sensory Barriers**

**Events run under the An Comunn Gàidhealach 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 An Comunn Gàidhealach or Mòd organisers (as appropriate) in advance of an event, to ensure that all individuals participating in a Mòd 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 activities to all ages. Most of our members provide bilingual activities in Gaelic and English, while some provide Gaelic medium activities only. Children attending a Gaelic-medium 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 Mòds 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 An Comunn Gàidhealach.**

**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 Mòds, or An Comunn Gàidhealach led 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, An Comunn Gàidhealach will make funding available to enable people with learning needs to participate in Mòd 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 membership and family discounts are generally available. An Comunn Gàidhealach and Local Mòds 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 CEO of An Comunn Gàidhealach.**

**3 ACCESS WITHIN AN COMUNN GÀIDHEALACH**

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

**An Comunn Gàidhealach 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.**

**An Comunn Gàidhealach 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 An Comunn Gàidhealach 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 An Comunn Gàidhealach, or the Chairperson of the Board, if the CEO is involved.**

**We will not tolerate unfair discrimination, harassment, or victimisation against any member of staff, a job applicant, a contractor, a tutor, or a participant, by a An Comunn Gàidhealach employee or by someone appointed to the service of An Comunn Gàidhealach, or its member Mòds. We will investigate any matters of such a nature brought to our attention.**

**It is An Comunn Gàidhealach’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 An Comunn Gàidhealach’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 An Comunn Gàidhealach, and portray the organisation as a welcoming and inclusive body. Materials in alternative formats can be made available if requested.**

**3.4 Monitoring & Evaluation**

**An Comunn Gàidhealach 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**

**An Comunn Gàidhealach 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**

**An Comunn Gàidhealach 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 An Comunn Gàidhealach, in consultation with the CEO and other staff. Local Mòds will also be involved in feeding into this process and with any necessary review following an incident or significant change.**

**3.8 Development**

**An Comunn Gàidhealach is both a custodian of Gaelic heritage and interpreter of its contemporary relevance, bringing past and present together to forge a continuing role going forward. As organisers, we share a responsibility to Scotland, with others, to ensure this vital part of its culture remains a dynamic part of its future.**

**The organisation is in a constant state of development, review and improvement, and all staff and members feed into its Programme Plans.**

**Key details:**

**Policy prepared by: James Graham**

**Approved by board/management: 19th May 2023**

**Policy became operational on: 19th May 2023**

**Next review date: May 2024**