



**MANIFESTO
FOR
CASTING**

INTRODUCTION

A successful casting process is crucial for the UK creative industries.

This manifesto sets out Equity's vision of how the process of casting can be made clearer, fairer, less stressful and more inclusive for everyone.

It seeks to widen the net and open up opportunities for all parties: performers, casting directors, agents and engagers.

Our industries will only thrive by attracting and retaining professional talent, regardless of background or circumstances, to meet the ever growing demands

for audio and audio-visual creative content on stage, on screen, online and on demand.

This manifesto will be used by the union to seek the changes that will ensure the continued success of our creative industries.



Christine Payne
GENERAL SECRETARY

Malcolm Sinclair
PRESIDENT

The casting situation in the UK

- ▶ The skills and talents of Equity members are respected and recognised worldwide
- ▶ Talented performers are available throughout the UK, not only in London and the South East but also within the nations and English regions
- ▶ There is a range of representation from corporate agencies to boutique to co-operative and some performers represent themselves
- ▶ All partners in the casting process face pressure to deliver professional casting standards, often within a short timescale and tight budget in an environment where script preparation is time consuming and the cost of travel is high
- ▶ Self-taping is becoming more widespread and is an opportunity to widen access to the casting process
- ▶ Women, black, South Asian, East Asian and minority ethnic, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT+), Deaf and Disabled



An increasingly diverse audience both wants and expects to see and hear itself reflected authentically in the media

- and older artists continue to experience discrimination across the industry
- ▶ Social class remains a barrier to accessing and sustaining a career
- ▶ An increasingly diverse audience both wants and expects to see and hear itself reflected authentically and its expectations are even higher of publicly-funded theatres and broadcasters
- ▶ Productions that embrace diversity have demonstrated a wide appeal to all audiences and deliver real commercial success
- ▶ It is unlawful to discriminate in the engagement of performers on the grounds of their Protected Characteristics as defined in the Equality Act 2010

MANIFESTO FOR CASTING

Equity already has agreements with engagers that cover the casting process. This manifesto is our vision of how casting can be made better for everyone:

CASTING PREPARATION

Job advertisements

- ▶ Where roles are advertised, the casting breakdown should be presented in the most inclusive way possible

Inclusive casting

- ▶ A diverse range of performers should be auditioned for every production, including voice-only performances. Greater consideration should be given to specific characteristics for any given role

Local talent

- ▶ Consideration should be given to professional talent from where the production is made

Access

- ▶ The building where auditions are held should be accessible and reasonable adjustments (a legal requirement) should be made to the audition process to ensure all performers can participate ▶

Contract

- ▶ It should be clear what kind of contract is being offered

BEFORE THE AUDITION

Submissions

- ▶ Submissions made should be relevant to the role and performers' information should be up-to-date

Access

- ▶ A question requesting the access requirements of performers should be included in every invitation to audition

Nudity/simulated sex

- ▶ No sex act should be requested at any audition
- ▶ A performer should not be requested to undress in whole or in part unless a mutually agreed observer is present

Professionalism

- ▶ Equity members have a responsibility to turn up on time, be prepared and give the earliest possible notice of cancellation
- ▶ All involved in the casting process have a responsibility to ensure performers are given the opportunity to prepare and give of their best

Preparation time

- ▶ Castings should be planned, where possible, with a realistic time frame to allow casting directors and agents enough time to enable performers to prepare properly

Cost

- ▶ Reasonable consideration should be given to the cost to performers when attending auditions

Caring responsibilities

- ▶ The caring responsibilities of performers should be recognised and, wherever practicable, accommodated

AT THE AUDITION

Self-taping

- ▶ Performers should be given clear direction on what is required and a realistic time frame. There should also be a timely acknowledgment of its receipt

Time keeping

- ▶ Every attempt should be made by all concerned to keep to the agreed audition time

Data protection

- ▶ Information provided on the head sheet or the artist declaration form or equivalent must be treated in accordance with data protection law

Appropriate questions

- ▶ In line with the law and with specific exceptions, performers should not be asked for personal information, verbally or in writing, as part of the audition. This includes actual age, ethnicity, disability, pregnancy, marital/civil partnership status or sexual orientation ▶

Filming auditions

- ▶ If an audition is to be filmed, the film (or self-tape) should not be used or distributed for any other purpose without the consent of the performer

AFTER THE AUDITION

Outcome

- ▶ Performers/Agents should be informed when they have not got a role at the earliest opportunity

Pencilling

- ▶ A pencil is not a firm booking. All parties should be clear about the number of performers pencilled and the time frame for a decision to be made. A pencil can be withdrawn by performers or agents without repercussions. Notice of withdrawal of a pencil by any party should be given as soon as possible

Recalls

- ▶ All those who are essential to casting decisions should work with performers to minimise the number of recalls

PMA & CDG statements on diversity

“The PMA – a network of talent agencies in the UK – is committed to working towards an inclusive and diverse cultural industry. Our vision encompasses diversity in its fullest expression to include race, background, age, gender, sexuality and disability. As an organisation we can achieve this aim by promoting and engaging with campaigns that identify and tackle discrimination. As individual agents we recognise our responsibility to engage with our colleagues across the industry – including producers, casting directors and most importantly our own clients: to understand the complexity of diversity; to challenge assumptions; and to play our part in creating stories that are a bold reflection of the world we share.”

PERSONAL MANAGERS' ASSOCIATION



“The Casting Directors’ Guild of Great Britain and Ireland is committed to diversity in the performing arts in all its forms. The Guild and its members recognise that the live and recorded arts should reflect our society and the world that we live in and encourages all its members to be mindful that audiences are diverse and that diversity in casting is crucial to engagement with those audiences. It is the aim of the Guild and its members to achieve a balanced portrayal of women, Black, Asian and minority ethnic, LGBT+ and Deaf and Disabled people. The Guild and its members shall strive to enable the casting of actors from all backgrounds, regardless of socio-economic status and to engage with producers and directors to create opportunity and access. The Guild will continue to engage in collaboration and discussion around the subject of diversity with our industry colleagues and other professionals.”

CASTING DIRECTORS GUILD



Spotlight & CPMA statements on diversity

“Spotlight has always been committed to ensuring that professional performers of all backgrounds have the opportunity to be cast in productions for live or recorded media. We aim to develop tools and services which promote a diverse and inclusive casting process. By supporting the Equity Manifesto for Casting and working with partners such as the CDG, PMA and CPMA, we aim to use our influence to encourage industry decision-makers to consider the most diverse range of talent when casting a production. We work to ensure that Spotlight gives casting directors access to a range of performers who represent society and the stories that are being told. We are committed to working with organisations which encourage people of all backgrounds to consider a career in the performing arts, to provide a constant flow of new and diverse talent into our industry. We support performers throughout different stages of their career, doing all we can to help them to continue working professionally. We are committed to developing our services and resources to allow all users of Spotlight to take advantage of them, regardless of any specific access requirements.”

SPOTLIGHT



“The CPMA represents the UK's actors' co-operative agencies. Co-operative agencies strive to achieve diverse client lists and look forward to helping casting directors achieve the widest diversity in casting. The CPMA welcomes Equity's Inclusive Casting Policy and the Manifesto for Casting, and we are pleased to be working with our colleagues in the PMA and CDG to develop more inclusive casting in live and recorded media.”

CO-OPERATIVE PERSONAL MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION

CPMA

How the manifesto was created

Many issues about the casting process have been brought by members to the Equity Council and the union's Annual Representative Conference (ARC) in the past three years. These concerns have come from Equity's branches and our committees and demonstrate that members from all over the UK and across the skillsets represented by the union are unhappy with many aspects of the casting process.

In response to these concerns and following a specific recommendation put to the 2015 ARC by the West & South West London General Branch, Equity established a Casting Working Party. The branch's proposal called for the union to "examine the relationships with casting directors and broader issues surrounding casting, and its practices in stage, screen, audio and new media, with a view to bringing the various strands together to arrive at simple, good practice guidelines for all sectors". In addition, it stressed that "any guidelines arising out of the debate should include consideration of diversity in casting and access to casting sessions".

In setting up the Casting Working Party, the Equity Council believed that it was important to work with the Casting Directors' Guild (CDG), the Personal Managers' Association (PMA), the Co-Operative Personal Management Association (CPMA) and Spotlight who, alongside Equity, are at the sharp end of the casting process.

One of the most important outcomes of the Casting Working Party has been the positive and open relationship that has

developed between Equity and these other organisations and the commitment that all parties have shown in tackling equality and diversity in the creative industries as a priority. To this end we are delighted that statements on equality and diversity from the PMA, CDG, CPMA and Spotlight have been included in this document.

For Equity's part, we have launched the Play Fair campaign to challenge the industry on the persistent under-representation of diversity, and discriminatory practice in the casting process: www.equity.org.uk/play-fair

Equity's industrial committees (the Stage, Screen & New Media and Variety, Circus & Entertainers committees), the CDG, PMA, CPMA and Spotlight will continue to work together to improve the casting process. In the first instance looking specifically at both musical theatre and commercials, in addition to examining issues already in our agreements such as nudity and the equality clauses.

Equity is grateful to the CDG and the CPMA for their assistance in providing guidance on self-taping, a casting method that presents both challenges and opportunities for performers. With the right support and availability of appropriate facilities, self-taping has the capacity to provide increased access to the casting process for performers based in the UK's nations and regions, and for those with family and caring responsibilities.

Equity has made a self-taping video guide for members: www.equity.org.uk/self-taping



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