

Megaphone Writers C.i.c.

All policies document

- Our policies apply to everyone involved in Megaphone Writers C.i.c. activities, whether as a freelancer, a director or a beneficiary.
- We are a very small organisation run by volunteers and with no structural funding. Our policies reflect this.
- We are keen to know if we can improve these policies – please contact Leila Rasheed and Stephanie King on hello@megaphonewrite.com

Contents

1. Our statement of community interest
2. Our complaints policy
3. Our accessibility policy
4. Our equality, diversity and inclusion policy
5. Our privacy policy
6. Our safeguarding policy
7. Our policy on use of generative AI
8. Our operating reserves policy (financial policy)

1. Our statement of community interest

We are a community interest company (c.i.c.). This means we use any profit we make for the benefit of our community, defined in the next paragraph. You can find further information on us at <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/companies-house>

Our community:

The company's activities will provide benefit to actual and aspiring writers, creators and other stakeholders in Children's and Young Adult (hereafter abbreviated to YA) Literature who are from racialised and/or ethnic minority groups, and to child readers of any ethnic heritage. The benefit will relate in particular, but not be limited to: actual and aspiring writers of Children's and YA literature from Black, Asian and other Ethnic Minority heritages in Britain.

Additional statement on copyright:

Megaphone Writers C.i.c. does not act as an agent or middle-man and guarantees it will not have any sort of role or claim of any kind in any contract writers who have engaged with the scheme enter into. Nor will Megaphone Writers c.i.c have any claim to copyright on writing submitted to or produced during any of our activities.

2. Our complaints policy

We are committed to learning and improving in the interests of our community of beneficiaries. If you have a complaint, please contact Leila Rasheed or Stephanie King on hello@megaphonewrite.com

3. Our Accessibility policy

Megaphone Writers C.i.c is committed to providing an inclusive and accessible experience to everyone, including individuals with disabilities. We want people with disabilities to have full and equal opportunity to access and benefit from the writer development activities we offer, in person and online.

Support and Feedback

If you need assistance using our website or would like to provide feedback, we invite you to contact us: hello@megaphonewrite.com

Optimal Experience

www.megaphonewrite.com is a Wordpress Pro website. It uses a theme reviewed as **accessibility-ready** by the WordPress theme review team. It is best used with the latest version of any of the primary web browsers: Chrome, Firefox, and Safari. Our site is designed to be compatible with common assistive technologies. It may not display optimally in Internet Explorer or older browsers.

Resources

[NVDA screen reader \(free\)](#)

[Accessible.org](#)

[W3C Web Accessibility Initiative](#)

[The Americans with Disabilities Act](#)

[Web Content Accessibility Guidelines](#)

The framework for this accessibility statement was created by Kris Rivenburgh and customized by Megaphone Writers C.i.c.

4. Our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy

Megaphone's aim is to support people of colour as they write children's literature. We are committed to welcoming the great diversity of people that this description includes and providing them with equitable support that enables them to be included in our activities. We are committed to being an organisation that respects and celebrates difference and intersectionality. This includes, but is not limited to: people with mixed and complex heritages, LGBTQ+ people, people of all faiths and none, people with disabilities and neuro-diversities.

By 'people of colour' we mean anyone from non-white racial and ethnic backgrounds such as (but not limited to) Black, Asian, East and South East Asian, British Chinese. We include in our definition people of mixed and complex heritages. We choose this phrase to emphasise shared experiences with systemic racism, in particular those who have historically been excluded, minoritised or tokenised by British children's literature. We acknowledge that there are many other ways to be excluded, minoritised or tokenised in the UK and actively welcome intersectional identities.

At our events and activities, we aim for an inclusive, respectful and considerate environment. No harassment or bullying - including racist, sexist, homophobic, transphobic and disability abuse - will be tolerated at our events. Aggressive, offensive, intimidatory, disrespectful behaviour or comments will not be tolerated. This applies to all aspects of communication at or in connection with an event, including postings on social media.

If you have any concerns about behaviour during our activities that doesn't meet the standards above, or suggestions about how we can improve, please let us know at hello@megaphonewrite.com

5. Our Privacy policy

When you apply to take part in Megaphone writer development schemes such as mentoring we will collect your name and the contact details you supply us with, in order to inform you about the progress of your application. By applying for Megaphone mentoring you are agreeing that the judging panel will have access to your application documents. We store this data electronically and retain it only as long as is necessary for these purposes. Your contact details are not shared with any third party and we never pass it on without consent. An example of when we might seek your consent to pass on your contact details might be if an editor on the judging panel showed an interest in your writing sample and wanted to discuss it with you directly.

As part of an application we may ask you to complete a satisfaction or diversity survey. This is always optional. The data we collect here is anonymous, and is not linked to your application in any way. Our purpose in carrying out surveys is to find out 1) whether we are reaching a sufficiently wide range of people, 2) what we do well and how we can improve.

We occasionally send out a newsletter. If at any point you wish to stop hearing from us simply email us hello@megaphonewrite.com and say 'please remove me from your mailing list', or simply use the unsubscribe button on the newsletter.

6. Our safeguarding policy

To date, we work with people aged 18+ who are not considered at risk. Our work typically takes place online. The following principles apply to everyone working with our organisation.

- Treat all participants with equal respect and dignity;
- Always work in an open and transparent environment with participants;
- Maintain a safe and appropriate relationship with participants;
- Maintain up-to-date insurance policies and checks;
- Be aware of the developmental needs and capacity of participants;
- Recognise that **it is not** the responsibility of staff, contractors or volunteers to determine if abuse has taken place, but **it is** their responsibility to act upon and report any concerns to the designated safeguarding officer: Leila Rasheed, at hello@megaphonewrite.com

We expect everyone who represents us to have read, understood and adhere to this policy and its related procedures.

7. Our policy on generative Artificial Intelligence (AI)

While generative artificial intelligence for writing (for example, Chat GPT) is increasingly used to speed up routine admin tasks, **our policy is against the use of generative AI in writing created as part of the process of Megaphone creative development activities.**

Your use of AI

We expect all initial applications to Megaphone mentoring, and all writing produced for review by a mentor on the scheme, to be free from text, characters or plots generated by AI. When you submit

writing to any one of our programmes, for example as part of an application for mentoring, you implicitly guarantee that you have not used generative AI in the production of such writing.

Our use of AI

We do not use AI to review applications, every application is reviewed by an expert human being. We will never use AI to replace human creative insight and expertise.

Our reasons:

Creativity

1) The purpose of our writer development scheme is to enable writers' creative growth. While some routine admin tasks involve writing, writing itself is not a routine admin task. Writing – whether of fiction or fact - is a creative process. Drafting and self-editing helps you work out what you think and feel about a topic. The process of writing deepens and grows your ideas and empathy. If you outsource the creative process to an AI, you deprive yourself of creative growth.

2) Mentoring is about human connection. Use of AI does not sit easily with this. We did not begin this scheme to develop and support AIs. We began it to develop and support human beings. Mentors don't want to mentor an AI. They want to mentor you, a human being.

Quality

3) AI programmes produce the most *probable* result. This means that writing produced by AI is likely to be conventional and derivative, rather than exciting and original. AIs draw not on the full, real world and lived human experience, but on what they find on the internet, which is dominated by English-language, Western-centric narrative. AI is thus unlikely to reflect your true whole self and authentic voice.

Legality

5) We hope our mentees will find conventional publication with a reputable publisher, so their books have the best chance of reaching child readers. It is not clear that work created with generative AI will be desirable to a reputable publisher. Authors who use AI may be in breach of standard publishing contract terms that require them to wholly own any rights they assign or license. Some major publishing companies are now including a clause in their contracts asking authors to warrant they have not used AI to generate content. [The Authors Guild](#) advises that if you use text generated by AI in your manuscript, you should disclose it to your publisher. Under most publishing contracts, authors represent and warrant that the work submitted will be original to them. The inclusion of AI-generated text in the final manuscript would be expected to violate this warranty, as the text is not considered "original" to the author. Similarly, an entirely AI-generated plotline or wholesale adoption of AI-generated characters may violate this term of the contract.

Please note that nothing in this policy is intended as legal advice, it is just an expression of our understanding of the situation at the time of writing (2025).

Equity

6) We support equitable treatment of creators. Large language models (LLMs) have been trained on work that has been exploited without the creators' payment or permission. We do not think there is an ethical way to use LLMs.

Accessibility

7) We know that some people who experience disability-based barriers (including neuro-diversity) to writing find generative AI useful. We are committed to making our activity accessible. Please contact us to discuss your situation before turning to generative AI. Any use of generative AI which you make in any part of your Megaphone activity must be clearly and transparently declared to the directors.

Environment

7) The environmental cost of using generative AI is high, and we are committed to having a low impact on the environment wherever possible.

8. Our Operating Reserves Policy (Financial policy)

1. Purpose

The purpose of this Operating Reserve Policy for **Megaphone Writers** c.i.c is to build and maintain an adequate level of net assets to support the organisation's day-to-day operations in the event of unforeseen shortfalls. The reserve may also be used for one-time, non-recurring expenses that will build long-term capacity, such as staff development, research and development, or investment in infrastructure.

Operating reserves are not intended to replace a permanent loss of funds or eliminate an ongoing budget gap. The organisation intends for the operating reserves to be used and replenished within a reasonable period of time.

This Operating Reserve Policy will be implemented in conjunction with the other financial policies of the organisation and is intended to support the goals and strategies contained in those related policies and in strategic and operational plans.

2. Definition and Goals

The Operating Reserve Fund is defined as the designated fund set aside by action of the governing board. The minimum amount to be designated as operating reserves will be established in an amount sufficient to maintain ongoing operations and programs for a set period of time, measured in months. The operating reserve will be reviewed and adjusted in response to internal and external changes.

The target minimum Operating Reserve Fund is equal to **12** months of average recurring operating costs.

In addition to calculating the actual operating reserve at the fiscal year-end, the operating reserve fund target minimum will be calculated each year after approval of the annual budget. These reserves will be reported to Board of Directors and included in the regular financial reports.

3. Accounting for Reserves

The Operating Reserve Fund will be recorded in the accounting system and financial statements as Board Designated Operating Reserve. The Operating Reserve Fund will be funded and available in cash or cash equivalents.

4. Funding of Reserves

The Operating Reserve Fund will be funded annually with surplus unrestricted operating funds to ensure the total Fund amount represents at a minimum four months of normal operating expenses. The governing board may, from time to time, direct that a specific source of revenue be set aside for operating reserves. Examples may include one-time gifts or bequests, special grants, or special appeals.

The Managing Director will identify the need for access to reserve funds and confirm that the use is consistent with the purpose of the reserves as described in this Operating Reserve Policy.

Determination of need requires analysis of the sufficiency of the current level of reserve funds, the availability of any other sources of funds before using reserves, and evaluation of the time period for which the funds will be required and replenished.

5. Authority to Use Operating Reserves

Authority for the use of operating reserves is delegated to Managing Director. The use of operating reserves will be reported to the Board of Directors at their next scheduled meeting, accompanied by a description of the analysis and determination of the use of funds, and plans for replenishment to restore the Operating Reserve Fund to the target minimum amount.

The Managing Director must receive prior approval from the governing board if the operating reserves will take longer than 4 months to replenish.

6. Review of Policy

This Policy will be reviewed by the Board of Directors every year at minimum, or sooner if warranted by internal or external events or changes. Changes to the Policy will be recommended by the Managing Director to the Board of Directors for approval.