

BRITISH TEXTILE BIENNIAL

Equality, Inclusivity and Diversity Policy

Introduction

British Textile Biennial's work is underpinned by the belief that the diversity and intersectionality of people from varied backgrounds, cultures, lifestyles and thinking is critical for the sustainable future of humankind. We encourage and value diversity and we recognise that talent and potential are distributed across the population but are often unequally recognised due to structural inequalities.

Not only are there moral and social reasons for promoting equality and inclusivity, but it is also in the best interest of this organisation to recruit, contract, commission, involve and develop the best people for our jobs and projects from as wide and diverse a pool of talent as possible, to ensure our work is relevant to more people and reflects our mission to work towards positive social change.

British Textile Biennial (BTB) not only supports the principle of equality in employment and governance, but also seeks to champion diversity and inclusivity across our commissioning process, partnerships and audiences as part of our organisational ethos.

Principles

BTB recognises that many people in our society experience discrimination. All forms of discrimination are unacceptable, regardless of whether there was any intention to discriminate or not.

Our Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity (EDI) Policy commits us to:

- understanding and valuing diversity and intersectionality to enable fair and full participation in our work and activities
- ensuring there is no unjustified discrimination in our recruitment, selection, performance management and other processes
- ensuring action that promotes equality; this includes progressing diversity action plans and addressing structural inequalities through our programme
- treating individuals with whom we work with fairness, dignity and respect
- actively working towards removing barriers and redressing imbalances caused by inequality and unjustified discrimination.

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BTB will reflect upon and use Arts Council England's diversity guidance to continue our monitoring and focus the delivery of our work by diverse artists to more diverse audiences.

This policy will be implemented alongside our Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity Action Plan and all staff and volunteers will receive an induction to this policy and action plan along with relevant EDI training from external trainers on an ongoing basis. BTB's commitment to this policy will be shared with any partners and freelancers and our expectations of the commitment from them will be explained.

Scope – who does the policy apply to?

This policy covers discrimination on the basis of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and/or belief, sex or sexual orientation as set out in the Equality Act (2010). We also wish to include discrimination on the grounds of socio-economic background, nationality, cultural background, social class, neurodiversity and employment status. Our approach goes beyond compliance, and we are committed to equality, diversity and inclusion because it is the right thing to do.

This policy applies to all people working with BTB in whatever capacity (employee, artist, volunteer (including trustees), student, freelancer, agency worker or contractor). Throughout this document, for ease and simplicity, these people will be referred to as BTB Representatives.

BTB Representatives are required to act to ensure that this policy is effective in ensuring equal opportunities and in preventing discrimination. This policy applies to all areas of the organisation, and BTB Representatives should be encouraged to consider how EDI can add value to their work and areas of responsibilities.

Staffing, recruitment and governance

BTB aims to create an organisational culture that respects and values each other's differences, that promotes dignity, equality and diversity, and that encourages individuals to develop and maximise their true potential. All BTB Representatives must adhere to the Equality Act 2010.

We aim to remove barriers, not discriminate and mitigate against bias that prevent individuals or groups from realising their potential and contributing fully to our organisation's performance and to develop an organisational culture that positively values and promotes diversity.

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BTB will challenge discrimination in its own policies. It aims to provide equality and fairness for all job applicants, employees, contracted artists and freelancers, collaborators, volunteers and Board of Trustees members, irrespective of gender, marital status, race, ethnic origin, nationality, religion, belief or non-belief, disability, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, age or socio-economic background.

We recognise that discrimination is unacceptable, and equality of opportunity is vital to the success of our organisation. Breaches of the policy will lead to investigation and may lead to disciplinary proceedings and, if appropriate, disciplinary action.

The aim of the policy is to ensure no job applicant, employee or worker is discriminated against either directly or indirectly and job descriptions, artist briefs, volunteer role descriptions, contractor briefs, will be written to ensure that they are in line with our equal opportunities policy.

We constantly adapt and shape our approach to the advertising of vacancies, for staff, volunteers, trustees, artists and freelancers and do not confine our recruitment to areas or media sources which provide for only, or mainly, applicants of a particular group. We use Jerwood Arts Foundations 'Socio-Economic Diversity and Inclusion in the Arts: A Toolkit for Employers' as a guide for reaching applicants and addressing the barriers some individuals find when applying for roles.

Our recruitment commitments

All applicants who apply for roles with us will receive fair treatment and will be considered solely on their ability to do the role.

We will nurture an inclusive working environment in which no employee, worker or volunteer feels under threat or intimidated.

All people involved in the recruitment process for any role will periodically update their non-discriminatory recruitment awareness training to ensure that they are making decisions related to the job requirements and do not unlawfully discriminate.

Short listing, interviewing and selection decisions will be carried out by more than one person in order to mitigate against bias.

We will not disqualify any applicant because they are unable to complete an application form unassisted unless personal completion of the form is a valid test of the standard of English required for the effective performance of the role.

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We will apply the tie-breaker rule to address under-representation within the organisation. i.e. if two or more candidates are of equal merit, we will take into consideration whether one is from a group that is disproportionately under-represented or otherwise disadvantaged within the workforce.

Complaints procedures

Complaints related to EDI should be reported to the Director, who must report any such complaint to the Board of Trustees. If the complaint is about the Director, this should be made through the Chair of the Board of Trustees.

All incidents of direct discrimination are disciplinary offences and will be dealt with under the Disciplinary Procedure. Incidents of indirect discrimination will be investigated to determine whether they should be dealt with under the Disciplinary Procedure.

Any member of staff found to be in breach of this policy will be counselled on their actions and will be subject to disciplinary action in line with the Standard Terms of Employment. Any freelancer, volunteer or Trustee found to be in breach of this policy will be counselled on their actions and may, where necessary, be asked to leave BTB and their contract for services will be terminated with immediate effect.

Artistic and audience development

BTB Representatives are required to act to ensure that this policy is effective in ensuring equal opportunities and in preventing discrimination. BTB reflects upon and uses Arts Council England's guidance on equality and diversity to continue its monitoring and for delivering work by artists from diverse backgrounds to more diverse audiences. BTB does not see growing our diversity and inclusivity as a series of targets – instead, we address diversity and inclusivity as a core part of our cultural ethos to improve the way we work, support and include new audiences and the artists we work with.

BTB is committed to increasing access to its programmes. We regularly make open, public calls for participation in our programmes and for artistic development. All of our exhibitions and events are free to attend, or we ensure that any ticketed events are affordable to those on no or low wages. Our publications are affordably priced or electronic versions are made available free of charge on our website.

We work across a breadth of formats and contexts, often working outdoors and outside of traditional arts spaces to make sure that opportunities for engagement with BTB's

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work reaches a wider pool of people. As part of ethos, our work connects with individuals and communities from all sections of society through carefully curated programmes.

We endeavour to meet any access requirements where possible.

Anti-Racism

"It is not enough to say we are not racist we have to become intentionally anti-racist (an action)."

BTB is committed to anti-racism, in our working practices, our programme, our policies and our organisational ethos.

Through our work, we are committed to exposing structural inequalities, systemic oppression and opposing racial prejudice in all its forms.

BTB believes in the potential of artists and cultural organisations to be active agents of change, and in actively working towards this, we aim to ensure that intersectional voices and perspectives inform all aspects of our work.

We acknowledge that challenging systemic racism is an ongoing process which involves listening, learning and dismantling. We will continue to challenge ourselves to understand and correct any inequities we may discover within our organisation and the work that we produce.

Disability

BTB is committed to ensuring equal treatment of disabled people, and aims to ensure that disabled people are not treated less favourably in its procedures, practices and programme delivery.

BTB uses the following definitions:

"Disability is caused by 'barriers' or elements of social organisation which take no or little account of people who have impairments or long-term health conditions. Thus, it is not someone's impairment or medical condition which causes disadvantage, but rather attitudinal and environmental barriers."

"Impairment is the functional limitation of the body, sensory impairment, learning difficulty and/or people experiencing mental distress."

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Whilst many people have positive attitudes towards disabled people, some express pity, fear, lack of respect and sometimes even contempt. BTB is aware that these attitudes are hurtful, can lead to discrimination and can also place unnecessary restrictions on disabled people; the organisation is committed, therefore, to increasing awareness amongst BTB Representatives, through this policy and related awareness training, to avoid such unintentional hurt.

For many disabled people environmental barriers play an even more important role in restricting opportunities than attitudes. Although these barriers may be unintentional, that does not make their impact upon disabled people any less significant. BTB's office, services, venues and employment practices aim to take into account the particular circumstances of disabled people; BTB will work towards meeting access requirements as widely as possible, for instance by improving physical access to offices and venues, and by the provision of informative literature in a variety of formats.

BTB is committed to making reasonable adjustments to facilitate the employment or contracting of someone who has a disability, if they are within financial means. This may include:

- making adjustments to premises
- re-allocating some of a disabled employee's duties
- providing training or mentoring
- supplying or modifying equipment to suit the needs of the disabled employee
- allowing flexible working or designated time off work for medical treatment or rehabilitation or
- any other adjustments that are considered reasonable and necessary, providing that they are within BTB's financial means.

If an employee has a disability and feels that they may need any such adjustments, they should contact the Head of Finance & Operations.

Advice and support

BTB Representatives may contact their line manager or lead contact if they require any advice about any aspects of this policy or equality in general. Advice is also available from:

Citizens Advice Bureau (www.citizensadvice.org.uk)

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Community Legal Services Direct (www.clsdirect.uk)

The Equality Advisory Support Service (www.equalityadvisoryservice.com)

Equalities and Human Rights Commission (www.equalityhumanrights.com)

Monitoring and compliance

The Director of BTB and the Board of Trustees are responsible for ensuring organisational compliance with this policy and for its implementation, monitoring and review. The policy and action plan will be reviewed annually by the Board of Trustees and the performance of the action plan will be reviewed every 6 months by the Director.

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