

Equal Opportunities Policy

General Statement

Borders Youth Theatre (BYT) is committed to combating discrimination through the promotion of equal opportunities in respect of:

- Provision of services
- Working practices of the organisation
- Employment and training

BYT will try to ensure that in respect of the above, no young person shall receive less favourable treatment than others because of her or his:

- Gender, including gender reassignment
- Religious belief or political opinion
- Race (including colour or ethnic origins)
- Nationality
- Disability
- Sexual orientation
- Educational background

BYT will try to ensure that in respect of the above, no contracted person, volunteer or other person involved in BYT activities shall receive less favourable treatment than others because of her or his:

- Gender, including gender reassignment
- Marital or civil partnership status
- Having or not having dependants
- Religious belief or political opinion
- Race (including colour or ethnic origins)
- Nationality
- Disability
- Sexual orientation
- Age
- Trade Union activity
- Educational background

PRACTICES AND COMMITMENTS

In order to ensure that BYT's services are accessible to all, BYT will follow these principles:

- Promoting a good and harmonious working environment in which all persons are treated with respect
- Preventing occurrences of unlawful direct and indirect discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Fulfilling all our legal obligations under the equality legislation and associated codes of practice
- Complying with our own equal opportunities policy and associated policies
- Publicity materials, publications, advertisements, events, workshops and performances shall avoid language which presents a stereotyped, offensive or detrimental view of any group or individual's background on any of the above grounds. However, performances and workshops will necessarily need to present such language and views when tackling hard hitting issues. It should be made clear by Leaders during workshops and performances the difference.
- BYT will make its services available to disabled people, including wheelchair users – by using premises that are wheelchair accessible for its activities whenever possible. BYT will discuss with parents, carers and young people how it can try to accommodate specific needs.
- BYT not allow its publicity, events, premises or facilities to be used for the expressions of views in conflict with this policy.
- Breaches of equal opportunities policy will be viewed as misconduct which could lead to disciplinary proceedings including removal from activities or termination of contracts
- BYT values diversity and recognises the wealth of benefits diversity can bring to the organisation.

IMPLEMENTATION

The Trustees have collective overall responsibility for the effective implementation of this policy.

All contracted employees and volunteers have individual responsibility for implementation of this policy.

In order to implement this policy we shall:

- Ensure the policy is communicated to all employees, volunteers, board members, job applicants and relevant others (such as freelance artists).
- Provide/source training and guidance as appropriate for all staff
- Incorporate equal opportunities notices into appropriate communication practices
- Obtain commitments from other persons or organisations such as subcontractors or agencies that they too will comply with the policy in their dealings with our organisation
- Ensure that adequate resources are made available to meet the policy's objectives

COMPLAINTS

Any party who believes that they have suffered any form of discrimination, harassment or victimisation are entitled to raise the matter through either the complaints or grievance procedures (whichever the most relevant) detailed in BYT's Policy and Procedures Manual. All complaints will be dealt with seriously, promptly and confidentially.

In addition to our internal procedures, employees have the right to pursue complaints of discrimination to an industrial tribunal of the Employment Tribunal under anti-discrimination legislations.

However, parties wishing to make a complaint to a tribunal will usually be expected to raise their complaint under our internal grievance procedure in the first instance.

MONITORING AND REVIEW

Regular monitoring of BYT services and participants takes place to ensure that the equal opportunities policy is implemented and effective. BYT is active in programming services and activities which target under represented groups in particular, whether they are participants, volunteers or staff.

- Reports are made to the Trustees detailing ethnic origin, disability, etc. of participants, where appropriate and targets are established to encourage the increased integration and encouragement of disenfranchised young people.
These are clearly identified in the Artistic Development Plan and Annual Service Plan.
- A induction programme for new participants, staff and volunteers incorporates the BYT's Equal Opportunities Policy and emphasises the role and expectations upon all new individuals to assist in ensuring its implementation.
- Our volunteer policy will also support and include Equal Opportunities principles and practices which all volunteers sign an agreement.
- A Handbook for all new participants further reinforces the Equal Opportunities message and this is re-issued on an annual basis.