



Bethnal Green Nature Reserve Trust

Equal Opportunities Policy

Last Updated 1 May 2024

About this Policy

This policy sets out the Trust's approach toward eliminating direct and indirect discrimination to, and victimisation of any members of our community including our staff, volunteers, tutors, cultural workers, audiences, board members and members of the public we engage with. Every person who engages with our organisation is entitled to do so within an environment that promotes dignity, equality, and respect for all.

1. Introduction

It is our legal duty to comply with equality legislation, but we believe fairness is a general principle and a wider duty than legality alone. We seek to establish the ideal of accountability, inclusiveness and overall good practice as the driver underpinning all of our activities.

The Trust will not tolerate any acts of unlawful or unfair discrimination (including harassment) committed against our people. In particular, we will not tolerate discrimination based on any of the following legally protected characteristics: (i) sex, (ii) gender reassignment, (iii) social or economic class, (iv) marriage, civil partnership, or parental status, (v) pregnancy and maternity, (vi) race (including ethnic origin, colour, nationality, and national origin), (vii) disability, (viii) sexual orientation, (ix) religion and / or belief, or (x) age.

2. Glossary of Terms

Age: A person belonging to a particular age (for example 32-year-olds) or range of ages (for example 18- to 30-year-olds).

Disability: A person has a disability if they, she or he has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

Gender reassignment: The process of transitioning from one sex to another.

Marriage and civil partnership: Marriage is a union between non-binary, man, or woman, or between a same-sex couple. Same-sex couples can also have their relationships legally recognised as 'civil partnerships'. Civil partners must not be treated less favourably than married couples.

Pregnancy and maternity: Pregnancy is the condition of being pregnant or expecting a baby. Maternity refers to the period after the birth and is linked to maternity leave in the employment context. In the non-work context, protection against maternity discrimination is for 26 weeks after giving birth, and this includes treating a woman unfavourably because she is breastfeeding.

Race: Refers to the protected characteristic of race. It refers to a group of people defined by their race, colour, and nationality (including citizenship) ethnic or national origins.

Religion and belief: Religion refers to any religion, including a lack of religion. Belief refers to any religious or philosophical belief and includes a lack of belief. Generally, a belief should affect your life choices or the way you live for it to be included in the definition.

Sex: Non-binary, woman, man.

Sexual orientation: Whether a person's sexual attraction is towards their own sex, the opposite sex or to all sexes.

3. Focus Areas

The Trust aims to be an equal opportunities organisation in its management structure, in employment and in the recruitment of volunteers, in its selection and implementation of activities, its purchase of and provision of services. In particular, it is our aim that:

- A. The composition of the Trust's Management Board will reflect the make-up of the Trust's stakeholders. If there are periods where this does not occur naturally, board members will consider means of addressing the gap.
- B. The Trustees will be responsible for adopting this Policy, and for overseeing its implementation.
- C. Trustees will be responsible for monitoring the implementation of this Policy and recommending modifications to the Trust's work, based on annually provided evidence.
- D. Trustees will ensure that their meetings are fully accessible in terms of timing, venue, verbal, and written style of communication (e.g., Braille, Plain English, accessible non-jargon debate and – where necessary – interpretation).

4. Governance

Its work will seek to represent the diversity of the area and actively involve local people in developments. We will consult, monitor, and review in order to establish progress, ensure fairness and, when necessary, adjust policy.

Responsibility for promoting awareness of this policy and monitoring that it is being followed rests with the Bethnal Green Nature Reserve Board, Site Manager and Forest School Lead.

5. Employment

We will recruit on the basis of skills and experience required. We will comply with race, employment, disability, age discrimination and equality legislation. We will put in place grievance

procedures to deal with complaints of discrimination, harassment, bullying etc. We will see that checks are carried out with the Criminal Records Bureau on volunteers working with children and young people in the Trust's activities.

Selection for employment, promotion, training, or any other benefit will be carried out on the basis of aptitude and ability. No form of intimidation, bullying or harassment will be tolerated.

Discrimination based on work-patterns (e.g., part-time working, fixed term contract, flexible working etc.) that cannot be reasonably justified will not be tolerated.

All employees will be encouraged to develop their skills and fulfil their potential, taking advantage of training, development, and progression opportunities when resources allow.

6. Access

The Trust intends that its activities are fully accessible to all sections of its constituency in terms of physical, economic, cultural, and intellectual access. Its work will seek to represent the diversity of the area and actively involve people in developments. We will consult, monitor, and review in order to establish progress, ensure fairness and, when necessary, adjust policy.

7. Policy and Programming

All ecologists, gardeners, artists, tutors, and facilitators should recognise that they and their work are being considered without prejudice as regards age, race, gender, sexual orientation, religion or belief, marital status, or disability. However, the Trust will be alert to the need to represent work across society, and we will monitor our work in order to identify and address areas of non-response.

We will check to see that procurement policies and practices - whereby the Trust contracts external providers for goods, work, and services - do not discriminate unlawfully, and that they promote equality of opportunity and good race relations.

8. Communication

The Trust acknowledges that clear and consistent communication around its activities, particularly the process by which decisions are formed, is key to promoting equality.

We will use our website, social media, noticeboards, meetings, published text, and email notifications to inform members about our work on a regular basis and invite feedback. We will seek to consult widely around proposed physical changes and any major capital works.

9. Monitoring and Evaluation

We will monitor involvement in terms of both participation and in trustee composition, in order to ensure representativeness, transparency and balance.

10. Breaches of the Equality and Diversity Policy by Employees

Breaches of this policy by employees may be dealt with under the Trusts disciplinary procedures. Employees, volunteers, and trustees are also personally liable under equality legislation for any act of unlawful discrimination.

11. Assistance and Contact

If you believe that you may have suffered discrimination because of any of the protected characteristics set out above, you should consider the appropriateness and feasibility of attempted

informal resolution by discussion in the first instance with your line manager or the Trust chairperson.

You may decide to raise the matter through the Trust's Internal Grievance Policy. Allegations regarding potential breaches of this policy will be treated in confidence and investigated in accordance with the appropriate procedure. The Trust will ensure that it will not victimise individuals who make such allegations in good faith nor treat them less favourably as a result

If you have any questions or concerns about this policy, please contact the Trust Chair Sajida Malik (trustees@bethnalgreennaturereserve.org).

This policy will be reviewed on an ongoing basis, at least once a year. The Trust will amend this policy, following review, where appropriate.