



The Brontë Society

Brontë Parsonage
MUSEUM

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY and INCLUSION POLICY

Governing body: The Brontë Society Board of Trustees

Date on which this policy was approved by governing body: 15 February 2024

Policy review procedure: We will review the policy every three years to ensure it is in line with national guidelines and standards.

Date at which this policy is due for review: January 2027

Introduction

The Brontë Society has a commitment to **equality, diversity and inclusion** and to promoting a positive culture which celebrates difference, ensures fairness and challenges prejudice.

We are working hard to become a more diverse and inclusive organisation and are committed to ensuring we create a positive working environment and wider community where trustees, staff, volunteers, members, visitors and audiences treat each other with dignity and respect at all times, and where bullying, harassment and discrimination are known to be unacceptable.

We will ensure that the Brontë Parsonage Museum, and other places where we may work, are safe and welcoming spaces to work and visit, and are free from unlawful or unfair discrimination on any grounds including, but not limited to, age; being pregnant or on maternity leave; disability, gender reassignment; marital status including civil partnership; race, including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin; religion or belief; sex; sexual orientation; socio-economic status; trade union membership or any other difference. This commitment applies to everyone in our workplace, whether people work with us part-time, full-time or on a temporary, permanent, freelance or voluntary basis.

As an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation, we are conscious of the need to be more representative of UK society as a whole, as well as of our local communities, and we are working towards this.

Our aim is that every employee and volunteer feels valued, respected, able to give of their best and achieve their full potential.

Our commitment to non-discrimination and equality of opportunity applies equally to the treatment of visitors, audiences and participants.

Definitions

Equality: The Brontë Society values all individuals and will offer a level playing field in order for them to reach their full potential as employees or volunteers, or be able to access our museum and its programme. We recognise that sometimes being fair means treating people differently: this is equity.

Diversity: The Brontë Society acknowledges that individuals and groups do have differences. We see those differences and value them, understanding that our organisation can become richer and more relevant by including and listening to diverse voices and learning from everyone's lived experiences.

Inclusion: The Brontë Society is for everyone, regardless of background and / or lived experience. We want everyone to feel safe, respected and treated equally.

Belonging: The Brontë Society will strive to ensure that everyone involved with the organisation also feels welcome, accepted and that their contribution is valued.

This policy applies to:

- All those who work at the Brontë Society, including permanent, temporary, casual and freelance staff (team members) as well as prospective employees ie job applicants
- The Brontë Society's volunteers, including the trustees, advisers to the Board and the Directors of Brontë Genius, our trading arm.
- The creatives we work with
- Members of the Brontë Society
- The Brontë Parsonage Museum's visitors, audiences and programme participants
- Our contractors and suppliers.

How the policy will be applied:

1 Recruitment and HR

This policy applies to the advertising of jobs and trustee vacancies, recruitment and selection; to training and development; opportunities for promotion; conditions of service; benefits and facilities; pay; health and safety; conduct at work; grievance and disciplinary procedures; and to termination of employment, including redundancy.

The Brontë Society aims to ensure that no job applicant or trustee candidate receives less favourable treatment on any grounds and commits to:

- Actively encouraging applications from under-represented groups to ensure that we attract a diverse range of applicants and to convey that we are an inclusive and welcoming organisation.
- Removing candidate names, addresses, and where appropriate, education details, from application forms to ensure anonymity during the shortlisting process
- Ensuring that the job selection criteria are reviewed to ensure that they are justifiable as being essential for the effective performance of the job
- Showing the salary on all job adverts.
- Providing shortlisted candidates with the interview questions in advance
- Where appropriate, offering an alternative to a face-to-face interview, eg meeting over zoom

- Where applications are of equal merit, choosing to appoint an applicant who is from an under-represented background to ensure that our workforce / Board represents the organisation within which we live and work.

The Brontë Society aims to ensure that no member of the workforce receives less favourable treatment on any grounds and commits to:

- Supporting requests for flexible working, where appropriate to the role.
- Seeking to accommodate the requirements of individual team members' religions, cultures and domestic responsibilities.
- Ensuring all team members are given appropriate access to training to enable them to carry out their roles and give them opportunities to progress.
- Helping and encouraging all team members to develop their full potential and ensuring that the talents and resources of everyone are fully utilised to maximise the efficiency and resilience of the organisation.
- Paying everyone fairly and on the basis of objective and non-discriminatory criteria, including industry benchmarks.
- Establishing and maintaining an organisational-wide 'EDIB (Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging) group' and a safe space where ideas and initiatives relating to EDI are shared, discussed and actioned by the organisation.

2. Our Programme

The Brontë Society is one of Arts Council England's National Portfolio Organisations and is striving to embed ACE's Investment Principle of Inclusivity and Relevance in all that we do.

We are committed to:

- Ensuring that our public programmes reflect the society and communities in which we live and work. Specific objectives and targets will be set and measured on an annual basis.
- Ensuring that we programme creatives from a wide range of backgrounds, to ensure the programme is balanced and inclusive.
- Creating and commissioning imaginative and diverse events across a variety of art forms. We will feature writers, performers and artists who are disabled, who identify as being

LGBTQ+, who are from minority ethnic groups or other groups under-represented in our work.

3. Members, visitors, audiences and programme participants

The Brontë Society is for everyone and we want all our members, visitors, audiences and participants to feel welcome, valued and to see themselves represented. The Brontë Society commits to:

- Broadening the base of all those who engage with our work, including members, visitors, participants and audiences, whether in person or online, through targeted marketing, advocacy and networking
- Identifying opportunities to welcome individuals, groups and communities not currently engaged with the work of the Museum and removing the barriers to access.
- Regularly reviewing potential barriers to engagement and seeking to alleviate them through our Access Policy and action plan.

4. Contractors and suppliers

The Brontë Society will not discriminate on any grounds when selecting the contractors and suppliers we work with, although we may actively decide not to work with or engage any contractor or supplier whose business practices are considered by us to be anti-ethical to our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion. The Brontë Society will consider social value, skills development opportunities and modern slavery statements as well as price when selecting contractors and suppliers.

Responsibilities

The ultimate responsibility for ensuring the Brontë Society's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy remains relevant and is regularly reviewed rests with the Board of Trustees.

The Director has overall responsibility for the effective operation of the organisation's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy and for ensuring that all members of the workforce engage with and enact it. The Director has delegated responsibility for ensuring compliance with the relevant statutory frameworks and the embedding of Arts Council England's Inclusivity and Relevance Investment Principle. The Director also has delegated day-to-day responsibility from the Board ensuring this policy is regularly updated and reviewed by the Board.

Those working at leadership level have a specific responsibility to set an appropriate standard of behaviour, to lead by example and to ensure that those they manage adhere to the policy

and promote the aims and objectives of the organisation with regard to equality, diversity and inclusion.

All members of the workforce are responsible for the success of this policy and must ensure that they familiarise themselves with it and act in accordance with its aims and objectives. If an employee is involved in management or recruitment, or if they have any questions about the content or application of this policy, they should contact their line manager or the Director to request guidance and information.

All members of the workforce have a duty to treat colleagues with dignity and respect at all times, and not to discriminate against or harass other members of staff, whether junior or senior to them.

All job descriptions, including those for volunteers, contain a clause requiring staff members to demonstrate an understanding of and support for the principles of diversity. All Personal Development Plans will include an EDI objective

Our commitment

This policy is fully supported by the Board and Senior Leadership Team and has been approved by the board of trustees.

It will be shared with all employees and volunteers, including those who work with us on a freelance basis, eg artists, creatives, workshop leaders etc.

Breaches of our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy will be regarded as misconduct and could lead to disciplinary proceedings or, in the case of programme participants, contractors and suppliers, termination of services and agreements. Conditions relating to this will be inserted into written agreements and considered as part of procurement.

This policy will be monitored and reviewed every three years.

Breaches of the policy

If an employee, volunteer, programme participant, audience member, contractor or supplier believes that they may have been disadvantaged on any of the unlawful grounds listed in the Introduction to this policy, they are encouraged to raise the matter through the Brontë Society's Grievance Procedure. If an employee or volunteer believes that they may have been harassed on any of the unlawful grounds listed in the Introduction, they are encouraged to refer to The Brontë Society's Harassment and Bullying Policy and the Grievance Procedure.

Allegations regarding potential breaches of this policy will be treated in confidence and investigated in accordance with the relevant procedure. Anyone who makes such allegations in good faith will not be victimised or treated less favourably as a result.

False allegations of a breach within this policy, which are found to have been made in bad faith, will, however, be dealt with under the Brontë Society's Disciplinary Procedure.

If, after investigation, an employee is proven to have harassed, victimised or discriminated against any other worker, programme participant, audience member, volunteer, contractor or supplier, or subjected them to a detriment on the grounds of age, disability, gender, marital status, being pregnant or on maternity leave, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation or any other form of unfair discrimination, or otherwise act in breach of this policy, they will be subject to disciplinary action. In serious cases, such behaviour may constitute gross misconduct and, as such, may result in summary dismissal.

As this policy applies equally to the Brontë Society's workers' relations with visitors, participants, customers and suppliers, if, after investigation, an employee is proven to have discriminated against or harassed such individuals they will also be subject to disciplinary action.