

Crafts Council Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy

October 2014

We believe that everyone should have the opportunity to make, see, collect and learn about craft. Diversity of all kinds is an asset that enriches creative practice and stimulates innovation in contemporary craft. The Crafts Council's Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy sets out how we meet the legal standards of the Equality Duty 2011 and Equality Act 2010. Beyond legal duties, our Policy also indicates our ambition to achieve the highest standards of practice to stimulate, promote and celebrate diversity diversity in contemporary craft practice and its audiences in all aspects of our programme.

The Crafts Council's work, and the contemporary craft sector, are enriched by the distinctive contributions which can be made by people of different backgrounds and experience. Through our Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy we aim to bring difference and diversity into the organisation and to respect and encourage it in the sector which we serve.

The Crafts Council is opposed to all forms of unfair discrimination. It is committed to conducting its business in a way which is fair and appropriate to all sections of the community. This may mean taking positive steps to encourage equal opportunities in employment and equal access to its service.

The Crafts Council will demonstrate its commitment by promoting, maintaining and rigorously implementing this Policy, which will underpin decisions and actions taken by the Crafts Council and its employees.

This policy will help to ensure that the Crafts Council has access to the widest labour market and secures the best employees for its needs; and that no applicant or employee receives less favourable treatment; and, wherever possible, they are given the help they need to attain their full potential to the benefit of the organisation and themselves.

Our legal duties

The Crafts Council operates in full compliance with equality legislation, under the Equality Act 2010, including showing due regard to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act;
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not; and
- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

We meet these requirements in relation to all protected characteristics defined by the Act:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment

- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion and belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

We add socio-economic status to this list as an additional characteristic where we seek to eliminate discrimination and advance equality of opportunity.

Equality and Diversity Aims

In addition to meeting our legal requirements, we aim to:

- Promote diversity of creative content in our exhibitions programmes, showcases and publications by working with diverse makers, curators and organisations, nationally and internationally.
- Build a more diverse, inclusive, and representative craft workforce by offering accessible learning and talent development programmes, and opening up access routes through apprenticeships.
- Develop inclusive, diverse audiences and markets for craft by working in partnership with diverse organisations nationwide to reach new audiences, and by designing marketing materials that appeal to people from diverse backgrounds.
- Lead the sector in best practice in creative, workforce and audience diversity and equality and embed it in every aspect of our programmes, in active partnership with diverse cultural and non-cultural organisations.

Our Equality and Diversity Action plan (separate document) sets out how we will achieve these aims. The remainder of this document sets out the equality and diversity principles to which we work.

Discrimination

The Crafts Council recognises that discrimination may be direct or indirect and aims to ensure that its policy and procedures cover both.

‘Direct discrimination’ consists of treating a person less favourably than others are, or would be, treated in the same circumstances.

‘Indirect discrimination’ consists of applying, in any circumstances, a requirement or condition which, intentionally or not, has a disproportionately adverse effect on a particular group.

Employment

The Crafts Council seeks to ensure that no job applicant or employee receives less favourable treatment than another on grounds of, for example, gender, disability, colour, race, nationality, ethnic group, regional or national origin, age, marital status, trade union activity, political or religious belief, class or sexual orientation, maternity or pregnancy.

The Crafts Council is committed to providing appropriate and relevant training in equality and diversity for all staff.

Selection and recruitment

Selection criteria (job description and employee specifications) will be kept under constant review to ensure that they are justifiable on non-discriminatory grounds as being essential for the effective performance of the job.

Wherever possible, more than one person must be involved in the shortlisting, interview, and selection process, and all should have received training in equal opportunities.

Reasons for selection and rejection of applicants for vacancies will be recorded.

Service delivery

The Crafts Council recognises the need to deliver services in ways which are appropriate to everyone and whenever possible removing barriers which will limit access.

The Crafts Council is committed to following the requirements of legislation against discrimination and related victimisation.

Personnel records

In order to ensure the effective operation of the Equality and Diversity policy (and for no other purpose) a record will be kept of all employees' and job applicants' gender, racial origins and disability.

Where necessary, employees will be able to check/correct their own record of these details. Otherwise, access to this information will be strictly restricted.

Such records will be analysed regularly, and appropriate follow-up action taken.

Positive action - training, promotion and conditions of service

When appropriate underrepresented groups will be encouraged to apply for training and employment opportunities with the Crafts Council. Wherever possible, special training will be provided for such groups to prepare them to compete on genuinely equal terms for jobs and promotion. However, actual recruitment and selection decisions for all jobs will be made strictly on merit against the selection criteria.

Wherever necessary, use will be made of lawful exemptions to recruit suitably qualified people to cater for the special needs of particular groups.

Wherever possible, efforts will be made to identify and remove unnecessary/unjustifiable barriers and provide appropriate facilities and conditions of service to meet the special needs of disadvantaged and/or underrepresented groups.

Implementation and review

The Crafts Council will review and monitor the implementation of the policy and take action as necessary. Actions to deliver this policy are set out in our Equality and Diversity Action Plan.

It is the individual responsibility of every member of staff to ensure this policy is applied in practice, both in employment and in serving the crafts sector and the public.

The responsibility to abide by the Crafts Council's Equality and Diversity Policy will be included in every job description, making it a contractual obligation. A special responsibility falls on those who have staff management, recruitment and personnel management responsibilities.

The Crafts Council's Directorate collectively, have responsibility for the implementation of this policy, with one of the Directors nominated to take the lead role. The Crafts Council Equality and Diversity Action Plan is reviewed at least annually and defines the actions we will take as an employer to ensure that Equality and Diversity are understood and embraced fully.

Behaviour or actions against the spirit and/or the letter of the laws on which this policy is based will be considered serious disciplinary matters, and may, in some cases, lead to dismissal. The Crafts Council Policy on Bullying and Harassment has further details on how these type of actions will be dealt with, should they occur.

The Crafts Council reserves the right to amend this policy as necessary to meet any change in requirements. This policy, as updated from time to time, does not form part of the employee's contract of employment.