BRITISH DANCE COUNCIL

Since 1929

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy

Our Commitment

The British Dance Council (BDC) is committed to making dance an inclusive, welcoming and positive environment in which everyone can participate, develop and enjoy the benefits of dance.

The BDC is formed from member organisations from across the dance sector. We recognise the important role we play in promoting high standards, positive social role modelling and respectful behaviour throughout the dance community.

Our events involve children, young people and adults, including adult members, teachers, officials, volunteers and representatives of our corporate member organisations. We therefore believe it is particularly important that everyone involved with the BDC demonstrates the highest standards of conduct and helps create an environment where people feel valued, respected and included.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

We value the diversity of the dance community and welcome participation from people of different backgrounds, experiences and abilities.

The BDC will not tolerate unlawful discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation. We are committed to equality of opportunity and to treating people fairly, with dignity and respect.

We will operate in accordance with the Equality Act 2010 and relevant UK legislation and guidance. This includes the protected characteristics recognised by the Act: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, and marriage and civil partnership where applicable.

We will seek to remove unnecessary barriers to participation and, where required, make reasonable adjustments to support people. The BDC recognises that inclusion may sometimes require positive or proactive steps to ensure everyone is treated with equal concern and provided with an equality of opportunity.

Positive Role Modelling

Everyone involved in BDC activities has a part to play in creating an inclusive culture.

We expect BDC directors, officials, volunteers, teachers, members, participants and representatives to:

- treat others with courtesy, dignity and respect;
- act as positive role models, particularly when children and young people are present;
- promote inclusion, fairness and participation;
- maintain appropriate and professional standards of behaviour;
- challenge inappropriate or discriminatory behaviour appropriately; and
- support an environment in which everyone can enjoy dance and achieve their potential.

Members and Complaints

The BDC is made up of independent membership organisations. Each member organisation remains responsible for its own teaching, management, staff, members and internal procedures.

Where a complaint concerns the teaching practice, teaching standards or conduct of a teacher or their organisation the matter should normally be raised with the relevant awarding organisation. The BDC will not normally investigate matters that fall within the responsibility of another organisation's own procedures.

Where a concern arises at a BDC event, it should initially be brought to the attention of the event organiser, who will consider the matter and liaise, where necessary, with the relevant awarding organisation or other appropriate party.

Where a complaint concerns the BDC itself, its directors, officials, representatives, policies or the delivery of a BDC activity, it should be addressed through the BDC complaint procedure.

This approach is intended to ensure that concerns are dealt with by the organisation best placed to investigate them, while enabling appropriate communication and cooperation between the BDC and its corporate members.

Our Aim

The BDC wants dance to be a place where people can participate, perform, learn and contribute in an atmosphere of respect, inclusion, fairness and enjoyment.

We will continue to promote high standards and positive role modelling and will review this policy regularly to ensure that it remains effective and consistent with relevant legislation and guidance.

Appendix 1 – Key Definitions

Equality

Equality means making sure everyone has an equal opportunity and is treated with dignity and respect.

Equality does not always mean treating everyone in exactly the same way. Some people may need additional support or reasonable adjustments to have an equal opportunity.

Diversity

Diversity means recognising and valuing the differences between people.

These differences may include age, disability, race, culture, religion or belief, sex, gender, sexual orientation, background, experience and many other aspects of a person's identity.

Inclusion

Inclusion means creating an environment where everyone feels welcome, respected, valued and able to take part.

Being inclusive means thinking about whether people can genuinely participate, rather than simply giving everyone access.

Equal Concern

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Equal concern means giving everyone equal consideration and taking their individual needs and circumstances seriously.

It does not mean treating everyone identically. This means noticing everyone equally as individuals and may sometimes require different support or adjustments.

Discrimination

Discrimination means treating someone unfairly or disadvantaging them because of who they are or a characteristic they have.

Discrimination can be intentional or unintentional and can happen through actions, decisions, policies or systems.

Discrimination can be direct, indirect or through association.

Prejudice

Prejudice is a judgement or opinion about a person or group that is made without sufficient knowledge or understanding.

Prejudice can affect how people think about and treat others.

Stereotypes

Stereotypes are generalised beliefs or assumptions about a particular group of people.

For example, assuming that someone will behave, think or perform in a certain way simply because they belong to a particular group.

Anti-Discriminatory Practice

Anti-discriminatory practice means actively working to prevent, identify and challenge discrimination and unfair treatment.

This includes:

- challenging inappropriate language or behaviour;
- recognising our own assumptions and biases;
- listening to people's experiences;
- identifying barriers;
- making appropriate adjustments; and
- promoting fairness and inclusion.

It is about doing more than simply avoiding discrimination.

Equal Opportunity

Equal opportunity means making sure everyone has a fair chance to access services.

Where barriers exist, action should be taken to reduce or remove them.

Reasonable Adjustment

A reasonable adjustment is a change to the way something is normally done that helps reduce or remove a disadvantage experienced by a person.

In Practice

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Equality, diversity and inclusion should be considered in everyday professional practice.

A useful question to ask is:

"Is this fair, inclusive and accessible for everyone involved?"

Appendix 2 – Identifying and Reducing Barriers

People can face barriers that make it harder for them to access services, participate, progress or have their voice heard.

Barriers are not always obvious. They can be physical, practical, financial, cultural, digital or caused by attitudes and assumptions.

Common Barriers

Barriers may include:

- Physical barriers – such as inaccessible buildings or facilities.
- Communication barriers – such as information that is difficult to understand or only available in one format.
- Attitudinal barriers – such as prejudice, stereotypes or assumptions.
- Organisational barriers – such as inflexible policies or procedures.
- Digital barriers – such as online systems that are difficult to access or use.
- Financial barriers – where costs prevent someone from taking part.
- Cultural or social barriers – where people feel excluded, misunderstood or unable to participate.

Sometimes several barriers can affect a person at the same time.

How Can Professionals Identify Barriers?

Professionals should actively look for barriers rather than waiting for someone to raise a concern.

We can do this by:

- Listening – asking people about their experiences and needs.
- Observing – looking at who is accessing and participating in our services or opportunities.
- Checking data – looking for patterns or differences in outcomes.
- Seeking feedback – using conversations, surveys and complaints to identify concerns.
- Reflecting – considering whether our own assumptions or ways of working could create barriers.

- Reviewing policies – checking whether procedures work fairly for everyone.

How Should We Assess a Barrier?

When a barrier is identified, consider:

- Who is affected?
- What is the barrier?
- How does it affect the person or group?
- Is the barrier necessary?
- Could we do things differently?
- What support or adjustment could help?

The focus should be on both intention and impact. Something may not have been intended to disadvantage someone, but it may still have that effect.

How Can We Reduce Barriers?

Professionals can help by:

- providing information in accessible ways;
- being flexible where appropriate;
- making reasonable adjustments;
- challenging stereotypes and assumptions;
- reviewing policies and procedures;
- improving physical and digital accessibility;
- listening to the people affected;
- providing appropriate training and support; and
- involving people in decisions that affect them.

Sometimes a small change can make a significant difference.

A Simple Approach

Professionals can use the following five-step approach:

1. **IDENTIFY**
   What might be preventing someone from having a fair opportunity?
2. **LISTEN**
   What does the person or group tell us about their experience?
3. **ASSESS**
   How significant is the barrier and who is affected?
4. **ACT**
   What can we change, adjust or improve?
5. **REVIEW**
   Has the change made a difference?

Breaking Down Barriers

We should avoid assuming that "treating everyone the same" always means treating people fairly.

A better question is:

"What does this person need to have a fair opportunity to participate?"

Professionals should feel confident to question practices that may unintentionally exclude people and to suggest better ways of working.

Our Professional Responsibility

Everyone has a role in breaking down barriers.

We should:

- treat people with dignity and respect;
- listen to different experiences;
- challenge discrimination and inappropriate behaviour;
- recognise our own assumptions;
- identify and report barriers;
- make appropriate adjustments; and
- continually look for ways to make our practice more inclusive.

Equality, diversity and inclusion are everyone's responsibility.