



Breaking Barriers CIC Equality and Diversity Policy

This document was last reviewed in June 2026

Equality and Diversity Policy

Breaking Barriers CIC is a Rochdale-based, British Pakistani led, multi-disciplinary, production company that seeks to address issues of social justice and create change through art and culture.

We're based in Rochdale, a diverse Borough of Greater Manchester with over 50 languages spoken near our studio. We understand the nuances and approaches required to provide care, safety, and inclusion in all that we do.

Our mission is to amplify the unheard voices; to explore and tell the stories of local people and communities, to inspire positive action, change and ambition. We create opportunities for creatives and communities from diverse backgrounds and communities who are often underrepresented in arts and culture.

As our name suggests, we 'Break Barriers' for our local communities in accessing culture and nature, and find ways to integrate the two areas to ensure equitable participation - eventually working towards a future in which everyone has access to spectacular arts on their doorstep AND to the great outdoors in their local area.

Our Equality and Diversity Policy helps to ensure we foster inclusion and diversity at the core of our practice, providing equitable opportunities for everyone working with Breaking Barriers from our employees, partner organisations and volunteers, to the communities we co-create with and the audiences we reach.

We will not accept unfair discrimination or less favourable treatment on the grounds of race, sex, gender, sexual orientation, age, religion or belief, disability, marriage and civil partnership, gender re-assignment, pregnancy and maternity or trade union activity (see section Appendix A for characteristics protected under the Equality Act) as an employer or in the running of our organisation. It is underpinned by the Equality Act (2010) which provides a

legal framework to protect people from discrimination, harassment and victimisation in the workplace and wider society.

Is Equality Enough? : Our Commitment to Equity

At Breaking Barriers, we recognise that achieving equality means more than treating everyone the same. As such, while the term 'Equal Opportunity' is used in adherence to standard industry practice, we are constantly working to implement an equitable approach. This involves understanding and addressing inequalities faced by members of our community and offering specialised support where necessary.

Scope

The scope for the purposes of this policy and for ease of reference includes any potential or existing, staff, trustees, artists, external stakeholders, casual workers, agency workers, and volunteers at Breaking Barriers. This scope additionally extends to audiences (both digital and in person) and visitors impacted by the co-creation, delivery, and exhibition of Breaking Barriers work.

The principles of non-discrimination and equality of opportunity also apply to the way in which these parties should treat each other, visitors, contractors, service providers, suppliers and any other persons associated with Breaking Barriers.

All individuals covered by this policy are expected to contribute to an inclusive and respectful environment.

This policy is non-contractual and may be updated at any time.

Roles and responsibilities

Staff have a responsibility to:

- Read, understand and comply with this policy
- Not to discriminate against, victimise, harass or intimidate staff (or those involved with Breaking Barriers), or encourage others to do so
- Challenge and raise concerns surrounding unacceptable behaviour in a safe manner, to their line manager or a member of staff in HR
- Use inclusive and respectful language, treating everybody with dignity and respect

Line Managers have a responsibility to:

- Set a good example by treating all members of Breaking Barriers with dignity and respect and challenging unacceptable behaviour
- Ensure all staff are aware of this policy and know how to report discrimination, harassment or bullying
- Deal with complaints fairly, thoroughly, quickly and confidentially

- Consider and implement reasonable adjustment where appropriate to create a welcoming and inclusive environment
- Encourage feedback from participants, including (paid and unpaid) employees, external partners, and audiences, providing a space where individuals can contribute meaningfully and approaches can be adjusted accordingly

Aims of the Policy

The aim of this policy is to create an organisation where:

- Everyone understands the importance of equity, accessibility, and inclusion to our practice
- We can attract and retain staff, consultants, trustees, artists, contractors, participants, volunteers, casual workers, agency workers and visitors that reflect the diverse communities in which we operate and who are committed to our equality principles
- We can engage, develop, and grow diverse audiences across a regional and national context, embedding local voices, stories, and concerns as foundational to our projects
- We can build an organisational culture that is tolerant, open and inclusive and where people feel safe, where differences are accepted, engagement is apparent and the contributions of all are encouraged, valued and respected
- We comply with our legal obligations

Implementation

All parties share responsibility for the successful application of this policy, whilst specific responsibility falls to line managers.

In order to translate this policy into action we will:

- Regularly review and update Breaking Barriers' Equality Action Plans, sharing our progress with relevant stakeholders
- Seek feedback from participants, audiences, artists and collaborations that inform our organisations practices, objectives and high-quality outcomes
- Ensure this policy is made widely available and all parties understand their responsibilities
- Effectively collect, monitor and analyse evidence for our Equality Action Plan in compliance with GDPR regulations
- Strive to provide reasonable adjustment to working practices are considered wherever practical in order to remove barriers to participation and accommodate a diverse community
- Promote inclusive language and communications throughout internal and external communications
- Aim to embed equality principles into all relevant induction and training programmes across voluntary and paid employment

- Take appropriate action when incidents occur which breach this policy. Staff or other parties who make a complaint of discrimination have the right to do so without fear of victimisation, and Breaking Barriers will make every effort to ensure that any complaints are dealt with promptly and fairly. (For Grievance Procedure- See separate policy)

Accountability

Any breaches of this policy will be taken seriously, and Breaking Barriers will regularly review its operations against the 2010 Equality Action Plan and associated Code of Practice, adopting affiliated changes following prospective reviews (Following the UK Supreme Court Ruling in April 2025 and subsequent parliamentary reviews).

Breaking Barriers will additionally monitor data and feedback to identify opportunities for improvement.

Resources

Appendix A:

Under the 2010 Equality Act we are legally obliged to ensure individuals are not subjected to unlawful discrimination by Breaking Barriers on the basis of their protected characteristics as listed below:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender identity (a personal sense of one's own gender. This can correspond to or differ from the sex we are assigned at birth)
- Marriage or civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race - (includes race, colour, nationality (including citizenship), ethnic or national origins)
- Religion or belief including philosophical belief and a lack of belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

Appendix B:

Within the organisation, there are currently seven strands of work agreed as a key focus including:

1. Artistic Programme
2. Audiences (including digital and physical audiences)
3. Governance
4. Development
5. Creative Engagement
6. Workforce
7. Volunteers