

## **Book Works Equality Policy**

Book Works is committed to making a positive impact to address inequality, discrimination and through our work, employment and audience engagement, pursue a programme that foregrounds social justice in the arts.

We celebrate and value equality and diversity in all aspects of our work, and are committed to providing an inclusive and supportive environment for all our artists, staff, trustees, and various user groups, through a shared, reflective and open process.

Our programme reflects our desire to work with artists and writers that are often unrecognised by mainstream institutions, or those from liberation groups or whose minority identity has historically marginalised and discriminated against them.

Our programme, workforce and our audience should be truly representative of all sections of society, and, that all those we work with and each employee to feel respected, able to give their best, and discuss in an open and non-prejudicial manner, how this is best achieved. We are committed to delivering these aims through an equitable process of reasonable adjustment, transparency, access, and fair representation.

Celebrating and valuing diversity helps create a vibrant, changing and creative culture, but is most valuable when that culture is fully inclusive and representative of all sections of society. As part of that culture, and as an arts organisation, Book Works has a policy of equal opportunity which we consider as an ongoing and progressive commitment

Our programme opportunities and recruitment practices aim to attract applicants with the knowledge, skills and experience required for the commission or job role, and we understand that in order to fully advance equality of opportunity that a diverse project and staff team better supports the needs and limits to opportunity of a fully diverse range of stakeholders.

We therefore take positive action to improve our diversity in our programming and amongst our staff, freelancers and volunteers. When appropriate we will take steps to anonymise applications before shortlisting and we will ask interviewees whether any adjustments are needed to participate in the selection process.

The organisation – in providing goods and/or services and/or facilities – is also committed against unlawful discrimination of customers or the public. Our commitment to providing equal opportunities in employment and to not unlawfully discriminate because of the Equalities Act 2010's protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race (including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins), religion or beliefs, sex and sexual orientation or socio-economic background, does not prevent us taking positive steps to delivery our aims including an equitable process of reasonable adjustment, access, and fair representation.

In order to eliminate any discriminatory practices and create a working environment free of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination Book Works recognises the need to:

- Pursue our approach throughout the artistic programme, audience development and resources it provides: Studio practice, education, events, marketing and distribution activities.

- Affirm that there are groups of individuals who are consistently under-represented in employment and opportunity in the arts as well as disadvantaged in society, who need to be fairly treated, have equality of opportunity.
- Ensure that our programme redresses this issue through an equitable approach that takes an ongoing interest in offering more opportunities to under-represented groups of individuals.
- Promote and maintain an inclusive and supportive environment, which affirms the rights of individuals to be treated with respect and fairly and affords opportunities to fulfil their potential.
- Review commissioning opportunities, and employment practices and procedures, regularly, to ensure fairness, legality and accountability – that they are achieving our aims.
- Actively engage in regular annual training for trustees and staff to ensure a welcoming environment for marginalised artists, and to ensure our equal opportunities policy is put into practice. Book Works will endeavour to learn codes of good practice from other organisations. Book Works will monitor its activities, with the help of the Commission for Equality and Human Rights (CEHR) recommendations, to ensure that its policy is upheld.
- Take seriously complaints of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination by fellow employees, customers, suppliers, visitors, the public and any others in the course of the organisation's work activities.

We aim to address these needs and fulfil our commitments by:

- Exploring training opportunities and extending this to all staff and trustees
- Opening ourselves up to critical reflection and feedback from all those that we work with, whether through, commission, employment or through audience participation.
- Ensuring that our policy is available to all those we work with and commission and published on our website.
- That this policy is revised on an annual schedule, taking into account artists, staff, audience and stakeholder feedback, as well as any legal changes.
- Ensuring that its aims are adhered to in any recruitment, selection and contractual agreements and reflected in all promotional and marketing materials.
- Seeking help, advice and support from our commissioned artists, staff, funders, and from other organisations established to oversee codes of good behaviour, and those committed to tackling discrimination and progressing social justice.

All staff should understand they, as well as their employer, can be held liable for acts of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, in the course of their employment, against fellow employees, customers, suppliers and the public.

Further, sexual harassment may amount to both an employment rights matter and a criminal matter, such as in sexual assault allegations. In addition, harassment under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 – which is not limited to circumstances where harassment relates to a protected characteristic – is a criminal offence.

Such acts will be dealt with as misconduct under the organisation's grievance and/or disciplinary procedures, and appropriate action will be taken. Particularly serious complaints could amount to gross misconduct and lead to dismissal without notice.

### **Equality Policy Statement (short)**

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As part of its core commitment to celebrating and valuing equality and diversity and to providing an inclusive and supportive environment, and to address injustice Book Works commits itself to:

- Embrace equality and diversity and promoting opportunities for good relations in all areas of its activities.
- Prevent any kind of discrimination, including any form of harassment in relation to age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race (including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins), religion or beliefs, sex and sexual orientation or socio-economic background
- Prevent bullying, harassment, unlawful discrimination and victimisation, and to ensure that all trustees, staff, artists and user groups, and public are treated fairly and with respect

We are committed to deliver these aims through an equitable process of reasonable adjustment, transparency, access, training and fair representation.

Lead Trustee for Equalities is Nick Brown. Gavin Everall, Rob Hadrill and Jan Burgess are responsible, on behalf of the trustees, for ensuring that this policy document is updated, and that all employees are made aware of any updates.

**September 2024**