



BORDERLANDS EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION POLICY

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BORDERLANDS EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION POLICY

1. STATEMENT OF INTENT

Borderlands is an anti-racist and anti-discriminatory organisation. Our values which underpin our work include: *warmth, sharing, respect and dignity*. We believe that everyone should be able to achieve their full potential. We believe that we must all take account of the power and privilege that exists in our society, and which creates visible and invisible barriers to opportunities and which manifests as systems and structures which hold people back. We are guided by the principle that we want everyone to live in a just society, where the causes of inequity have been addressed at a structural level and systemic barriers are removed. However, we are aware that the society we live

in creates many barriers for people. The Third Sector is not immune to racism and statutory services/public organisations locally and nationally are guilty of institutional racism and systemic discrimination of other groups with protected characteristics. We will work with others to seek to address these issues, and we will also use our power to address inequity where society creates an unjust system which we cannot change. We believe that including, empowering and advocating for those who would otherwise be excluded, disadvantaged or discriminated, through the use of targeted support based on their needs, will result in improvements for all groups. We believe that an organisation made up of diverse people will result in a stronger more resilient organisation. In line with the objectives of our organisation, we believe that by being led and driven by the voices and needs of people with lived experience (“experts by experience”) we will be a better organisation for all. Having explored the intersection between the issues of Race, immigration status and other equity issues, we recognise that those who experience intersecting protected characteristics are often the most disadvantaged. As an organisation working with asylum seekers and refugees, it is imperative that we build our understanding of the discrimination faced by our members and others in society. We are committed to building our understanding of racism and how to be anti-racist and also of all other equity issues; but also continuing to address the intersectionality between the multiple and complex issues those who use our services face.

2. PURPOSE OF THIS POLICY

We aim for our approach to discrimination and rights to be manifested in actions we take which demonstrate:

- that we are an anti-racist and an anti-discriminatory organisation;
- that all humans have rights and should be treated with equity and justice;
- our commitment to the promotion of equity, diversity and inclusion;
- our commitment, in line with the Equality Act 2010, to the elimination of all forms of discrimination on grounds of any of the following ‘protected characteristics’:
 - o age
 - o disability
 - o gender reassignment
 - o marriage and civil partnership
 - o sex
 - o pregnancy and maternity
 - o race or ethnicity
 - o sexual orientation
 - o religion and belief;

- our commitment to the elimination of other forms of discrimination experienced by our members but which are not covered by the Equality Act 2010 including (but not limited to) discrimination of the grounds of:
 - o immigration status
 - o socio-economic disadvantage
 - o trade union activity
 - o language
- our commitment to being led by people with lived experience of being a refugee or migrant with precarious immigration status.

This policy sets out how we will achieve this.

3. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Everyone involved with BORDERLANDS is expected to take a role in achieving our aims: to be anti-racist and anti-discriminatory; to be led by people with lived experience; and to contribute to developing a just society, through educating themselves and others, challenging and “calling-out” inequity, discrimination and harassment, and championing best practice. All staff, volunteers and trustees are expected to be committed to acting as ambassadors for BORDERLANDS in this respect.

The Role of Employees and Volunteers:

All BORDERLANDS employees and volunteers have a responsibility to ensure the policy is put into practice and to:

- Understand the value and benefit of equity, diversity and inclusion
- Undertake introduction to BORDERLANDS’s EDI approach as part of their induction
- Attend relevant BORDERLANDS training courses on EDI
- Familiarise themselves with the Policy
- Draw to the attention of the CEO or trustees any instance of perceived discrimination, bullying, harassment or victimisation, or any perceived problem in relation to BORDERLANDS’s working practices in relation to diversity
- Promote the inclusion of members from the widest range of backgrounds in all its activities
- Promote good relations between groups with different backgrounds or protected characteristics
- Work in a way which demonstrates commitment to diversity
- Challenge and call out inequity, a lack of diversity or inclusion within BORDERLANDS, or any other “micro-aggressions”

– Be willing to challenge and be challenged when they display non-inclusive behaviours.

Role of managers:

Managers have a particular responsibility to:

- Ensure that staff and volunteers are aware of the policy and trained in equity, diversity and inclusion
- Ensure the policy is implemented in the management of staff and volunteers
- Keep themselves up to date with current thinking on equity, diversity and inclusion through training, reading and other professional development
- Encourage staff, volunteers and members to learn more about equity, diversity and inclusion
- Promote a positive, professional work environment in relation to the policy by challenging behaviour, actions or decisions which breach the policy
- Proactively developing partnerships with organisations representing groups of people with protected characteristics and taking positive action in developing their services to ensure no groups are under-represented
- Creating a safe working environment where equity, diversity and inclusion are regularly discussed and staff, volunteers and members feel safe to address key issues
- Act as a role model for others and develop personal skills in order to handle issues relating to dignity at work
- Effectively manage instances of lack of inclusion that they observe or are reported to them.

The role of BORDERLANDS's CEO

Day to day responsibility for implementation and monitoring of this policy will rest with BORDERLANDS's CEO.

4. RELEVANT LEGISLATION AND POLICIES

This Policy complements, and should be considered along with other BORDERLANDS Policies:

- Recruitment Policy (staff)
- Volunteer Policy
- Trustee Recruitment Policy
- Boundaries Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Grievance Policy
- Disciplinary Policy

This Policy is informed by the following legislation:

- Equalities Act 2010

- Human Rights Act 1998

5. SCOPE

This policy applies to all aspects of BORDERLANDS's work, services and policies, and to all of its staff, volunteers, members and trustees, and to all providers contracted by BORDERLANDS.

6. DEFINITIONS AND LANGUAGE

We understand language can have a de-humanising effect on people. We realise that the language we use as an organisation and as individuals within an organisation may have this effect.

We recognise that language around equalities issues constantly evolves to reflect new thinking, and as a general principle we will try and use the terms that the groups of people with the protective characteristic themselves advocate and feel best describes their experience.

Definitions and language we currently use in line with these basic principles is set out in Appendix 1. As we continue to develop shared language principles as part of the work, this policy will be updated.

7. ACTIONS WE WILL TAKE AS AN ORGANISATION

Borderlands will:

- Establish a broad base for consultation amongst staff, members, volunteers and trustees, to identify priorities and needs in developing its anti-racist and anti-discriminatory policies, strategies and practice.
- Regularly monitor and review the composition of its trustees, staff, volunteers, membership and service users with an aim to encourage broad base representation and will take positive action to address the under-representation of any groups.
- Promote awareness of equity, diversity and inclusion issues amongst its staff, volunteers and members, and encourage them to operate within an anti-racist and anti-discriminatory framework and to challenge stereotyping and oppression. Always challenge racism and other oppression where we find it, and particularly where it impacts on our staff, volunteers or members
 - Create a safe environment where discussing equity, diversity and inclusion, and constantly evaluating our practice from emerging learning is the norm
 - Seek out opportunities to create partnerships with equality groups (e.g. groups set up to support minority groups and/or people with protected characteristics) to improve our services for members from those groups or develop targeted initiatives

- Work hard to foster good relations between groups from different backgrounds and protected characteristics, which is a requirement for statutory organisations in the Equality Act.
- Encourage opportunities for interaction between refugees and asylum seekers and others and take active steps to counteract myths and misinformation.
- Aim to protect our members and others within the organisation from hate crime, stereotyping and intimidation and support people to challenge this if experienced. We will consider the way that we portray the organisation in all public documents, language and images used, to ensure we represent and celebrate diversity
 - Promote inclusion in all aspects of its work to ensure that all members, staff, volunteers and trustees from all backgrounds and abilities feel they have a role and a voice in the organisation.
 - Will design our services and activities with inclusion at the heart so that we plan and budget to make sure barriers to participation are reduced (e.g. through access to interpreters, BSL, information in accessible formats)
 - As part of our process of policy update and review, ensure all BORDERLANDS policies are considered in light of this policy to ensure that they support and enable our approach to EDI.

8. Working methods within BORDERLANDS

- Ensuring clarity about BORDERLANDS’s aims and objectives, what services can be offered by whom, and what the boundaries are
- Ensuring management structures are responsive and accessible
- Offering a variety of ways of being genuinely involved in BORDERLANDS’s work, e.g. surveys, working groups, consultation meetings, residents’ meetings, training and skills sharing
- Enabling staff to respond positively to change and new developments through support and training
- Working closely with other agencies in order to keep in touch with and to contribute to new developments in working practice and policy
 - Ensuring staff and volunteers and trustees have access to appropriate training to enable them to put the policy into practice for example
 - Raising awareness of discrimination and discriminatory practices
 - Challenging discriminatory comments or behaviour
 - Taking swift action to address any discrimination problems as they occur.
 - Ensuring that BORDERLANDS does not collude with discriminatory practices of other agencies, groups or individuals

A journey:

We recognise that creating a just society will not happen overnight and that this is a journey and a process and as such we believe it is important to create regular opportunities for staff, volunteers, members and trustees to reflect on progress and next steps.

To achieve this, we will:

1. Ensure that staff, volunteers and trustees receive regular training on EDI and have an opportunity to reflect on learning and progress, which must include understanding racism and structural disadvantage.
2. Regularly address the issue of EDI with members through our Member Consultation Survey and focus groups and other group sessions.
3. Seek feedback from others outside of the organisation on the perception of BORDERLANDS e.g. through Partner Survey.
4. Build and develop relationships, connections and partnerships with organisations promoting inclusivity and equity.
5. Ensure EDI is implemented in future strategy
6. Ensure that there are performance measures in place so that we can monitor and scrutinise our progress. We recognise that there will be benefits to working with others on this journey and as such we will be open to learning from our partner organisations locally and nationally and sharing our learning with others.

9. EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION AT WORK AND PROCEDURES FOR STAFF, VOLUNTEERS AND TRUSTEES

The objectives of this part of the policy are to:

- Ensure that BORDERLANDS has access to the widest labour market and secures the best employees, volunteers and trustees for its needs, and that its workforce reflects the appropriate demography and includes people with lived experience.
- Ensure that no applicant or employee receives less favourable treatment, and that, wherever possible, they are given the help they need to attain their full potential to the benefit of BORDERLANDS and themselves.
- Ensure that reasonable adjustments are made, and barriers reduced, to ensure all staff and volunteers can effectively carry out their role in BORDERLANDS
- Ensure that positive action is taken wherever possible to diversify the workforce and to encourage the employment of people with lived experience of asylum/migration
- Ensure that all staff and volunteers have equitable access to training and other professional development opportunities, and take positive action to develop those with protected characteristics who may have faced barriers in the past.

– Achieve an ability-based workforce that is in line with the community served by BORDERLANDS.

Recruitment and Selection

BORDERLANDS's commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion is embedded in the policies and procedures for recruiting staff, volunteers and trustees. We believe that positive action should begin before the recruitment process and so our policies on volunteers and trustees are designed to ensure that we are taking proactive steps to create improved employment prospects for experts by experience and others with protected characteristics. Our Trustee Recruitment policy includes steps we take to aim to continue to operate and strive further towards a diverse Board of Trustees and a Board of Trustees in which diversity is represented on all sub-committees and in positions of authority.

We also aim for diversity across our volunteers, staff and trustees. Where necessary, positive action, as permitted by the Equality Act, will be taken to help under-represented groups to compete for jobs and volunteering opportunities on a genuine basis of equity.

Induction and Training

Our approach to EDI and the contents of this policy should be included in the induction of all staff, volunteers and trustees. That we are an organisation which treats everyone fairly and does not discriminate should also be part of new member introductions to BORDERLANDS. Staff, volunteers and trustees should also receive regular update training on EDI as part of our programme of professional development. Positive action - training, promotion and conditions of service In line with our aims as an organisation, we encourage experts by experience to apply for all relevant roles within BORDERLANDS. We may make use of lawful exemptions to recruit suitably qualified people to cater for the particular needs of specific groups. Where possible, support and/or training will be provided to prepare people to compete on genuinely equal terms for jobs and promotion. Actual recruitment to all jobs will be strictly on merit. Wherever possible, efforts will be made to identify and remove unnecessary/unjustifiable barriers and provide appropriate facilities and conditions of service to meet the particular needs of disadvantaged and/or under-represented groups.

Personnel records

In order to ensure the effective operation of this policy and BORDERLANDS's recruitment policies (and for no other purpose) a confidential record will be kept of all employees', trustees' and job applicants' protected characteristics in line with GDPR principles. Where necessary, employees and trustees 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. Disposal of personnel records in accordance with our Recruitment Policy and Procedure and Data Protection Act Policy will be in a secure and confidential manner.

Professional development for staff

We annually provide all staff training and also hold a small budget for individuals to attend training. We support and encourage staff to access free training and/or provide internal training which will enable their professional development. We will take positive action to ensure those with protected characteristics are able to address any barriers they have faced due to past systemic discrimination including where appropriate through the provision of specific support/external supervision or mentoring as appropriate. We are aware that staff having access to an individual training budget may further our aim to support professional development for staff and this is something that will be explored in the upcoming years.

Wellbeing

All operational staff have access to TFSW (Trauma Foundation South West) support, and all staff receive regular supervision from their line manager.

10. Bullying, Harassment and Victimisation

BORDERLANDS has a 'duty of care' for employees and volunteers, and so will promote a safe, healthy and fair environment. Everyone has the right to work in an environment free from bullying, prejudice, harassment and victimisation. Our Boundaries Policy sets out what we consider to be unacceptable behaviour. Any employee or volunteer who feels that they have been bullied, harassed or treated unequally can raise this in line with the grievance procedure and the issue will be taken seriously and investigated. Staff, volunteers and trustees can also contact Bristol Hate Crime and Discrimination Services who can provide support, advice or mediation. Contact: <https://www.bhcds.org.uk> or tel 0800 171 2272 Staff found to have bullied, harassed or victimised an employee or volunteer will be dealt with through the Disciplinary process.

11. Decision making

Diversity of thought is an important principle that helps us learn from each other and ensure that we are not working in silos or impacted by confirmation bias. We aim to be inclusive in our decision making at an operational level, and strategic/governance level. This involves creating opportunities, where

possible for all staff, volunteers and trustees to be heard as part of the decision making process. We will take active steps to ensure diverse communities can engage with these processes including actively encouraging staff who are experts by experience/have protected characteristics to take on key assignments, encouraging trustees who are experts by experience/have protected characteristics to join and take an active role in committees. All operational and strategic decisions involve EDI impact analysis.

Challenges / complaints under this policy

All staff and volunteers should be treated with dignity and respect at work and trustees, and visitors should also feel they are included and treated respectfully. 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. All individuals should feel able to challenge issues around equity, diversity and inclusion through this policy, informally or using the appropriate grievance or complaints procedure.

12. EQUITY DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION IN RELATION TO SERVICE PROVISION BORDERLANDS

BORDERLANDS is committed to ensuring equity of opportunity in all the services which it provides to individuals, to community groups or to other organisations. We believe EDI for members should begin at the point of service design and we will design services which are non-discriminatory and needs led. BORDERLANDS aims to ensure access to appropriate services by all members of refugee communities in the UK, regardless of any of the protected characteristics listed in the definitions or of employment status, health status, political persuasion, or immigration status. In order to achieve this aim, BORDERLANDS uses guidelines based on the following principles:

- Equal access and communication
- Providing a welcoming environment
- Providing a physically accessible environment
- Use of appropriate language
- Avoiding jargon
- Distributing information about services as widely as possible within refugee communities
- Holding meetings at times and in places which enable people to attend
- Identifying other factors which might limit access to particular groups, e.g. women
- Developing links with other agencies/service providers in order to offer access to a greater diversity of services
- Use of flexible working practices, e.g. rotas, flexible working hours

- Translating materials / information into different languages and addressing other needs around written information e.g. where literacy may be a problem by being innovative about how information is shared e.g. spoken word
- Ensuring interpreters/language line service are available for those who need them
- Ensuring that there are a variety of ways people can contact us e.g. whatsapp, telephone, in person
- we will work to ensure that the door is open and welcoming to all who need us
- Tackling digital exclusion through the provision of data and devices in the short term and encouraging the finding of long term solutions
- Encouraging feedback from members and/or people with lived experience about their experiences through surveys/focus groups.

We are aware that at times, capacity and/or money can act as a barrier to us making services as accessible as we would like them to be e.g. interpreters, activities being provided at multiple times. We will seek feedback on these issues and seek to build them into future funding bids.

We are aware that many of the people who use our services will have experienced trauma, whether prior to their arrival in the UK, as a result of experiences since arriving in the UK or both. In order to ensure accessibility to and for those who have experienced trauma we will be trauma informed and ensure that we take into consideration the needs of those who experience trauma in planning our services and spaces.

13. Empowering service design

We believe that providing empowering services is one way of manifesting our anti-racist approach; challenging racism, white privilege and other power disparities based on ethnicity’.

We seek to make our services empowering and to tackle any perception of us acting as “white saviours”. We plan to directly address a more empowering approach to services in our Strategic Plan and expect this to include:

- A greater focus on skills development and mutual benefit in our volunteer programmes for people with lived experience and without
- A review and refresh of our approach to eligibility and membership
- A focus on solidarity and doing things “with” people not “for” people
- A review of what services we offer which are specifically aimed at supporting progression to education/training/work i.e. ESOL, and employability support. Planning new services must always involve consideration and analysis of impact on EDI.

How we respond to abuse and harassment of a service user:

- Providing direct support and initiating action where appropriate
- Sign-posting to and publicising information about other agencies/services offering advice and support
- Respecting confidentiality

14. EXTERNAL WORK AND COMMUNICATION

We commit to being positively anti-racist and anti-discriminatory in our external communication. We will develop shared language and tools for stakeholders to do this. We will use our external communication to promote equity, diversity and inclusion.

Challenging Institutional Racism in the Asylum System:

BORDERLANDS recognises that the asylum system and the Hostile Environment created by the government to discourage people from travelling to/staying in this country, is fundamentally racist. We will take active and purposeful steps to:

- educate our staff, volunteers, members and trustees about the origins of racist immigration policy so that people feel empowered to call out racism when they see it
- raise awareness of the racist nature of immigration laws in this country through our external communications
 - work with and support the campaigns of other organisations seeking to end this injustice
- keep the language we use and the approaches we take under review to ensure that we are doing everything we can to challenge the de-humanising systems our members face
 - raise awareness of local and national policy makers
 - campaign (in partnership with other agencies)
 - advocate for structural change

13 Appendix 1: Definitions and Language Direct discrimination:

Direct discrimination is where someone is treated less favourably than another because they have a protected characteristic. Indirect discrimination: Indirect discrimination is when a requirement or a condition is applied which has a detrimental effect on a particular group or individual. This applies even if there was not a deliberate intention to discriminate.

Associative discrimination: Associative discrimination is direct discrimination against someone because they associate with another person who has a protected characteristic.

Perceptive discrimination: Perceptive discrimination is direct discrimination against someone because others think they have a protected characteristic even if they do not possess that characteristic.

Harassment: Harassment is unwanted conduct related to a protected characteristic which violates a person's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them. This applies even if the conduct is not directed at the individual or if they do not have the protected characteristic.

Third party harassment: Third party harassment is potential liability for the harassment of staff by others.

Victimisation: Victimisation is when someone is treated badly because they have made or supported a complaint under the Equalities Act or it is thought that they have done so.

Positive discrimination: Positive discrimination is treating people with particular protected characteristics more favourably than others. Whilst we recognise that some forms of positive discrimination are unlawful, we will use positive discrimination where allowed and beneficial (e.g. giving more favourable treatment to disabled people through additional services and support).

Positive action: Positive action is encouraging people from under-represented groups to apply for roles or to access services through specific actions, training etc. We will take positive action to address an under-representation or inequity in outcomes for staff, volunteers, trustees or people who use our services.

Reasonable adjustments: Reasonable adjustments involves making changes to information or the physical environment to make it more accessible to disabled people. We will make reasonable adjustments to meet the individual needs and remove barriers for any disabled staff, volunteers, trustees or people who use our services. However, we also recognise that under the Equality Act this is an 'anticipatory duty', so we will plan to make all of our events and services as accessible as possible.

Protected Characteristics: Protected characteristics are defined by the Equalities Act 2010 as: – age – Disability – gender reassignment – marriage and civil partnership – sex – pregnancy and maternity – Race or ethnicity – sexual orientation – religion and belief

Micro-aggressions: Micro-aggressions are the everyday slights, indignities, ‘put downs’ and insults that people with protected characteristics or those who are marginalized experiences in their day-to-day interactions with people.

White privilege: White privilege is the societal privilege that benefits white people over everyone else.

White saviour: The phrase “white saviour” refers to a white person who act to help people of other ethnic groups, in a context which can be perceived as self-serving or disempowering.

Disabled people: We use “Disabled people” rather than ‘people with a disability’ in line with the social model of Disability which recognises that people are disabled by barriers in society, not by their impairment or difference.

Allies for Social Justice: Allies for social justice are people who are not from a particular group of people with protective characteristics themselves, but work alongside them in their campaigns for social justice e.g. men supporting women’s equity, non-disabled people fighting for disability rights .

Social Constructs: A social construct is something that exists not in objective reality, but as a result of human interaction. We consider a number of terms used regularly in society and which are relevant to this policy to be social constructs and will use a capital letter to denote them as such. This includes: Disabled, Black, Race.

LGBTQ+: We use LGBTQ+ as a term to describe people who do not identify as heterosexual, cisgender. We use the “+” to ensure that no-one feels excluded if they choose to use a different term to describe their sexual orientation or gender identity.

People who experience racism/Global majority: We are uncomfortable with the way in which BAME (Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic) is used in society as a way of lumping communities together, or not bothering to find out an individual’s ethnicity. The term does not acknowledge the specific impact of racism as it includes white people from minority ethnic groups. We also recognise that there is an increasing number of people who are rejecting this term. The challenge we face, is that there is a debate in the UK amongst the groups concerned as to which should be the recognised term. We know that some use “People of Colour” (a term commonly used in the USA) or “Black

People” as a positive reclaiming statement , whilst others do not feel these terms are inclusive enough. “Non-white”, used by some, is also considered offensive as it is “othering”.

More recently in the UK, the terms ‘Global Majority’, ‘Black and Minoritised communities’ or ‘Black and racialised communities’ are used by the groups concerned.

Our approach is therefore as follows:

- If we are talking about a member, we don’t usually use their ethnicity to describe them and would usually use their country of origin, but in any event we will ask them how they want to be described.
- If we are trying to describe people as a group and need to define them by reference to their ethnic group, we will use terms that the groups themselves have chosen or if needing to describe different ethnic groups collectively we will use: ‘Global Majority’, ‘Black and Minoritised communities’ or ‘Black and racialised communities’.