

Bat Conservation Trust



EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

Aims

- 4.1 BCT is an equal opportunities employer. BCT is committed to promoting equality of opportunity for all staff and job applicants and is opposed to all forms of discrimination. BCT aims to create a working environment in which all individuals are able to make the best use of their skills, free from discrimination or harassment, and in which all decisions are based on merit.
- 4.2 BCT does not discriminate against staff on the basis of their sex (including pregnancy and maternity), marital or civil partner status, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, religion or belief, age, or disability (collectively “the Protected Characteristics”).
- 4.3 The principles of non-discrimination and equality of opportunity also apply to the way in which staff treat visitors, clients, customers, suppliers and former staff members.
- 4.4 All staff have a duty to act in accordance with this policy and treat colleagues with dignity at all times and not to discriminate against or harass other members of staff, regardless of their status. Your attention is drawn to our separate Harassment policy.
- 4.5 BCT is aware of the fact that adopting an active approach is necessary to ensuring that a culture of equal opportunities is instilled within the organisation as a whole. We have adopted this policy as a means of helping to achieve these aims.
- 4.6 This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and may be amended at any time.

Who is covered by the policy?

- 4.7 This policy covers all individuals working at all levels and grades, including senior managers, officers, directors, employees, consultants, contractors, trainees, homeworkers, part-time and fixed-term employees, volunteers, interns, casual workers and agency staff (collectively referred to as staff in this policy).

What is discrimination?

- 4.8 Discrimination by or against a member of staff is generally prohibited unless there is a specific legal exemption. Discrimination may be direct or indirect and it may occur intentionally or unintentionally.

- 4.9 Direct discrimination occurs where someone is treated less favourably because of one or more of the Protected Characteristics. Direct discrimination may occur even when unintentional. It may also, in some cases, occur by association – i.e. where a person is put at a disadvantage due to a characteristic of another person.
- 4.10 Indirect discrimination occurs where someone is disadvantaged by an unjustified provision, criterion or practice that also puts other people with the same Protected Characteristic at a particular disadvantage, for example, a requirement for GCSE English as a selection criterion. This would have a disparately adverse impact on people educated overseas and may not be justified if all that is needed is to demonstrate a reasonable level of literacy.
- 4.11 Harassment related to any of the Protected Characteristics is also prohibited. Harassment is dealt with further in our Harassment Policy.
- 4.12 Victimisation is also prohibited. This is less favourable treatment of someone who has complained or given information about discrimination or harassment, or supported someone else's complaint.

BCT's equal opportunities objectives

Membership

- 4.13 BCT recognises the importance of a diverse membership that is reflective of modern Britain.
- BCT will promote membership amongst all sectors of the community.
 - BCT will encourage and support the bat groups in their efforts to include a wide range of individuals, reflective of the geographical constituency of the groups.

Employment

- 4.14 BCT is striving to be an equal opportunities employer and to that end it aims to meet the following standards:
- Wherever practicable, job vacancies will be advertised.
 - All recruitment, interviewing and appointment processes will adhere to the principles of equality of opportunity. We aim to ensure that no job applicant suffers discrimination because of any of the Protected Characteristics.
 - BCT will endeavour to prevent unfair discriminatory treatment of individuals employed by or working with BCT.
 - Staff training needs will be identified through regular staff appraisals. All staff will be given appropriate access to learning and development opportunities to enable them to progress within the organisation if possible and all promotion decisions will be made on the basis of merit.
 - We will ensure that redundancy criteria and procedures are fair and objective and are not directly or indirectly discriminatory.
 - We will also ensure that disciplinary procedures and penalties are applied without discrimination, whether they result in disciplinary warnings, dismissal or other disciplinary action.
 - In the interests of operating an effective Equal Opportunities policy and to identify groups that may be underrepresented or disadvantaged in our organisation, BCT will monitor certain information about job applicants. All information will be confidential and kept separate from the selection decision. Provision of this information is voluntary and it will not adversely affect an individual's chances of recruitment or any other decision related to

their employment. The information is removed from applications before shortlisting, and kept in an anonymised format solely for the purposes stated in this policy. Analysing this data helps us take appropriate steps to avoid discrimination and improve equality and diversity.

- BCT will also monitor certain information about its employees. All information will be confidential.

Volunteering

- 4.15 BCT aims to encourage volunteering among a wide and diverse group of volunteers, including from groups who are under-represented within the bat world.
- 4.16 BCT recognises that when planning an event, training or bat-related activity, it should, where practical, take action to ensure equal access in line with this policy.
- 4.17 BCT will aim to involve underrepresented groups in bat-related activities.
- 4.18 BCT will seek to design some events for particular under-represented audiences, with the view to encouraging them to become more involved and in the long term partake in the wider programme of activities that BCT operates.

Training for and development of Equal Opportunities

- 4.19 BCT aims to spread a culture of equal opportunities throughout the organisation.
- 4.20 BCT will inform staff, bat groups and new volunteers of the Equal Opportunities policy and will promote understanding throughout the organisation as to why such a policy is needed and what it strives to achieve.
- 4.21 If you are involved in management or recruitment, or if you have any questions about the content or application of this policy, you should contact the Deputy Chief Executive to request training or further information.

Education

- 4.22 BCT's policy is that its educational role should reach a wide and diverse audience. BCT aims to ensure that educational resources it produces, where practicable, are created or translated into a form which promotes equal access in line with this policy, for example audio versions, large print, relevant languages..
- When planning training and educational courses BCT will aim, where practical, to take action to ensure equal access in line with this policy, for example advertising via the relevant media.

Responsibilities

- 4.23 The overall responsibility for this policy lies with the Chief Executive. All staff, however, are required to comply with it and to act in accordance with its objectives so as to remove any barriers to equal opportunity.

- 4.24 All managers must set an appropriate standard of behaviour, lead by example and ensure that those they manage adhere to the policy and promote our aims and objectives with regard to equal opportunities.

Disability Discrimination

- 4.25 If you are disabled or become disabled, we encourage you to tell us about your condition so that we can support you as appropriate.
- 4.26 If you experience difficulties at work because of your disability, you should contact your line manager to discuss any reasonable adjustments that would help overcome or minimise the difficulty. BCT may wish to consult you and your medical adviser(s) about possible adjustments. We will consider the matter carefully and try to accommodate your needs within reason. If we consider a particular adjustment would not be reasonable we will explain our reasons and try to find an alternative solution where possible.
- 4.27 We will monitor the physical features of our premises to consider whether they place disabled workers, job applicants or service users at a substantial disadvantage compared to other staff. Where reasonable, we will take steps to improve access for disabled staff and service users.

Monitoring the Equal Opportunities Policy

- 4.28 We will continue to review the effectiveness of this policy to ensure that it is achieving its objectives.
- 4.29 BCT may investigate and implement a way of sensitively monitoring certain information about volunteers attending events. All information will be confidential and will be asked for voluntarily and anonymously.

Grievances and Discipline

- 4.30 Discriminatory action by staff or discriminatory treatment of staff will not be tolerated by BCT.
- 4.31 Any act of discrimination by employees or volunteers or any failure to comply with the terms of the Equal Opportunities policy will be investigated and may result in disciplinary action under the agreed BCT procedures. Such behavior may constitute gross misconduct and, as such, may result in summary dismissal. We take a strict approach to serious breaches of this policy.
- 4.32 BCT will ensure that any staff member or volunteer who feels they are being treated unfairly or contrary to the principles of this policy is dealt with appropriately in accordance with its grievance procedures.
- 4.33 If you believe that you may have been discriminated against you are encouraged to raise the matter through our grievance procedure. Allegations regarding potential breaches of this policy will be treated in confidence and investigated in accordance with the relevant procedure. Staff who make such allegations in good faith will not be victimised or treated less favourably as a result. False allegations which are found to have been made in bad faith will, however, be dealt with under our disciplinary procedure.