

# Equality, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion policy

## Introduction

BBOWT has a vision for “more nature everywhere, for everyone”. We want our people to be as diverse as nature. We are committed to creating an organisation that recognises and truly values individual differences and identities. Where we encourage equality, equity, diversity and inclusion (EEDI) among our workforce, and eliminate unlawful discrimination.

The aim is for our workforce to be truly representative of the communities we serve, for each employee to feel respected and able to give their best, and for us to co-work with our partners to ensure we are overcoming barriers, and meeting everyone’s needs.

BBOWT, in providing goods and/or services and/or facilities, is also committed against unlawful discrimination of customers or the public.



## Our policy's purpose

This policy's purpose is to:

1. Provide equality, fairness and respect for all in our employment, whether fixed term, part-time or full-time.
2. Not unlawfully discriminate because of the Equality Act 2010 protected characteristics of:
  - age
  - disability
  - gender reassignment
  - marriage and civil partnership
  - pregnancy and maternity
  - race (including colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origin)
  - religion or belief
  - sex
  - sexual orientation
3. Oppose and avoid all forms of unlawful discrimination. This includes in:
  - pay and benefits
  - terms and conditions of employment
  - dealing with grievances and discipline
  - dismissal
  - redundancy
  - leave for parents
  - requests for flexible working
  - selection for employment, promotion, training or other developmental opportunities

## Our commitments

The organisation commits to:

1. Encourage equality, equity, diversity and inclusion in the workplace as they are good practice and make business sense. Whilst led by Trustees, Director Team, Operational Leadership Team, the People Team, and the Conscious Inclusion Forum, all employees will be expected to embed EEDI into their everyday working lives.
2. Create a working environment free of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, promoting dignity and respect for all, and where individual differences and the contributions of all staff are recognised and valued.

This commitment includes training managers and all other employees about their rights and responsibilities under the equality, equity, diversity and inclusion policy. Responsibilities include staff conducting themselves to help the organisation provide equal opportunities in employment, and prevent bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination.

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.

We commit to creating a suite of training materials for employees and trustees to embed EEDI across the organisation, ensuring each person knows their responsibilities.

3. Take seriously complaints of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination by fellow employees, volunteers, customers, suppliers, visitors, the public and any others in the course of the organisation's work activities.

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.

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.

4. Make opportunities for training, development and progress available to all staff, who will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential, so their talents and resources can be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the organisation.

5. Make decisions concerning staff being based on merit (apart from in any necessary and limited exemptions and exceptions allowed under the Equality Act).

6. Review recruitment processes, employment practices and procedures when necessary to ensure fairness, and also update them and the policy to take account of changes in the law. Reasonable adjustments will be considered for employees and job applicants as appropriate, to ensure they have the best chance of success.

7. Monitor the make-up of the workforce regarding information such as age, sex, ethnic background, sexual orientation, religion or belief, and disability in encouraging equality, equity, diversity and inclusion, and in meeting the aims and commitments set out in the equality, equity, diversity and inclusion policy.

Monitoring will also include assessing how the equality, equity, diversity, and inclusion policy, and BBOWT's EEDI action plan, are working in practice. These will be reviewed annually by Trustees, Director Team / OLG, and the Conscious Inclusion Forum, who will take action to address any issues.

8. Co-working with underserved communities across our three counties, to determine their needs and to adopt best practice. We will better understand and aim to overcome barriers to accessing and engaging with nature, to ensure that everyone can benefit from the joy of wildlife in their daily lives. This particularly includes working with people from visible ethnic minority backgrounds, people with disabilities (including those who are neurodivergent), the LGBTQ+ community, those from lower socio-economic backgrounds, and younger people (16-25 years), as these communities are currently underserved within BBOWT.

9. A diverse & inclusive leadership. Our Trustees and senior management team will be led by diverse, inclusive and effective leaders, who embrace the challenge of increasing our diversity, and recognise the contribution diversity makes to the organisation and to wildlife.

10. Communicate inclusively. The ways that we connect with our employees and local communities will be intentionally inclusive and nurture a sense of belonging with our organisation and nature.

### Agreement to follow this policy

The equality, equity, diversity and inclusion policy is fully supported by BBOWT's Trustees and senior management team.

### Our disciplinary and grievance procedures

Details of the organisation's grievance and disciplinary policies and procedures can be found on HiBob. This includes with whom an employee should raise a grievance – usually their line manager.

Use of the organisation's grievance or disciplinary procedures does not affect an employee's right to make a claim to an employment tribunal within three months of the alleged discrimination.