

Quality Assurance Manual





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1. GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE

1.1 PROVIDER PROFILE

Blue Teapot Theatre Company (BTTC) is a multi-award winning Theatre Company, Performing Arts School and Community Theatre programme for people with intellectual disabilities. We are committed to high quality theatre, training and the celebration of creativity. ***Our mission is to effect positive change in public consciousness concerning people with intellectual disabilities through the medium of theatre, allowing our members inherent talent and creativity to speak for itself.*** Based in the heart of Galway City and close to vibrant arts and cultural amenities, BTTC provides an excellent platform whereby creativity and fun gives learners a foundation to fulfil their artistic potential. In 2014, BTTC was awarded the overall Connaught winner of a STAR AWARD from AONTAS, the all-Ireland organization that celebrates excellence in service provision to adult learners nationwide.

Blue Teapot Theatre Company (BTTC) is a CLG - Company Limited by Guarantee (licenced company) and a registered charity.

CRO Number 471758

CRN number 20071912

Charity Registration Number CHY18643.

The registered Office is Blue Teapot Theatre Company, Munster Avenue, Galway, H91 FVF8, Ireland.

The main objective for which the Company is established is:

Charitable Objects

To benefit and advance education and participation in the arts in the county of Galway as defined in the Arts Acts 1951, 1973, and 2003. We do this through the operation of a Theatre Company and performing arts education to promote inclusion, social development and the artistic expression of people with intellectual disabilities.

Charitable Purpose

- Other purpose that is of benefit to the community.
- Advancement of community welfare including the relief of those in need by reason of youth, age, ill-health, or disability.
- Advancement of the arts, culture, heritage or sciences.
- Integration of those who are disadvantaged, and the promotion of their full participation, in society.

Performing Arts School (PAS)

In 2010, Blue Teapot Theatre Company became an accredited provider of performing arts education and training offering programmes leading to QQI awards at Level 2 and 3 of the National Framework of Qualification (NFQ). Responding to the needs of learners with intellectual disabilities who want to gain formal vocational training in performing arts skills.

Performing Arts School is the name of the bespoke three year programme of vocational training within Blue Teapot Theatre Company. The other two programme strands are Blue Teapot (the professional acting ensemble) and Community Theatre.

1.2 MISSION AND VALUES

Blue Teapot Theatre Company Mission:

To empower freedom of artistic expression and unlock diverse creative potential through inclusive theatre practice.

Performing Arts School Mission:

To develop each learner through appropriate educational, personal, emotional and social development in an atmosphere characterized by inclusion, respect and creativity.

PAS Values:

- Inclusive
- Progressive
- Passionate
- Learner-focussed

1.3 AIMS

- Provide people with an intellectual disability access to accredited QQI Performing Arts training programmes.
- Develop skills and the talent of each individual in performing arts.
- Respond to the individual needs of our learner and provide appropriate educational, personal, emotional and social supports.
- Provide opportunities and an environment where our learners grow in self-confidence and self-belief and let them engage with the wider community and achieve their own future individual goals.
- Create an accessible, inclusive, safe and enjoyable teaching and learning environment where all feel valued and respected.
- Continually improve the quality of our training to ensure optimal learning outcomes.
- Ensure our learners have a positive learning experience while successfully achieving the learning outcomes.
- Develop the skills and the talent of each individual in performing arts.

1.4 GOVERNANCE

Blue Teapot Theatre Company is a company limited by guarantee without share capital, registered under Part 18 of the Companies Act 2014. The objects of the company are charitable in nature, the main object being to benefit and advance education and participation in the arts as defined in the Arts Acts 1951, 1973, and 2003. We do this through the operation of a theatre company and providing performing arts education to promote inclusion, social development and the artistic expression of people with intellectual disabilities. Compliance is achieved through the registration of Blue Teapot Theatre Company CLG with the Companies Registration Office and the Directors and Company Secretary ensure all returns are filed as appropriate with the Companies Registration Office (CRO). Company accounts are audited annually with MK Brazil, Waterford.

B TTC is governed by a voluntary non-executive Board of Directors (BOD) comprised of elected and co-opted members. The Board approves strategic plans, reports to members at the Annual General Meeting, approves the annual budget and is responsible for overall corporate governance. The Board of Directors is supported in its work in the areas of strategy, governance, compliance, quality assurance and controls by a sub-committee structure.

Performing Arts School Governance

The Board of Directors has delegated responsibility for oversight and review of the operation of PAS to the Programme Board which acts as a sub-committee of the Blue Teapot Theatre Company Board.

1.5 LEARNER PROFILE

Programmes are designed for those aged 18 years and over who have a mild to moderate intellectual disability.

The majority of our learners have Down Syndrome but we work with a range of intellectual disabilities i.e. autism. We respond to diverse learner needs including learners who are non-verbal.

Geographically, learners come from Galway City and county and the majority are referred by disability services including Brothers of Charity Services Ireland, Ability West and the National Learner Network. A small number comes from mainstream schools.

1.6 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

We are committed to ensuring that everyone is treated with respect and dignity, in accordance with current legislation, best practice and the philosophy of our organisation.

We believe in the intrinsic value of every person and we aim to further the dignity of all associated with PAS.

Our equality policy is highlighted in the '*Student & Parent/Carers Staff Handbook and Guidelines*' and the '*Tutor Handbook*' and are explained to learners and tutors at induction. Our tutors must have experience in teaching adults with intellectual disabilities and are recruited on the basis that they are able and willing to accommodate diversity, adapt their presentation style and teaching methods to suit varying needs of learners with an intellectual disability.

2. MANAGEMENT OF QUALITY

2.1 QUALITY POLICY

We are committed to a culture of quality in provision and learner support:

- Implementation of best practice in teaching, learning and support.
- By providing a creative and responsive curriculum in consultation with practitioners, theatre and arts organisations and the wider community.
- Creating a space which develops and fosters the talents of our learners, preparing them to make a positive contribution to society.

We do this by:

- Having an effective governance system in place that guides our work and provides effective oversight.
- Implementing a quality assurance system that works well for us.
- Constantly measuring and monitoring how well we are doing.
- Benchmarking with other providers where appropriate.
- Building and enhancing systems to make us more effective.

2.2 SCOPE OF THE QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM (QAS)

The QAS applies to all activities associated with training provision and to the work of PAS governance units, staff, tutors, learners, volunteers and other stakeholders involved in training for or on behalf of PAS.

The QAS addresses the following areas:

- Governance and Management Structure
- Management of Quality
- Programmes of Education and Training
- Teaching and Learning
- Staff Recruitment, Management and Development
- Public Information and Communication
- Information and Data Management
- Self-Evaluation, Monitoring and Review
- Assessment of Learners

2.3 EMBEDDING QUALITY CULTURE

This is a clear and transparent commitment to quality at all levels, operation and delivery, throughout Performing Arts School.

We allocate time, financial and human resources to quality planning and implementation.

We have processes in place which facilitate staff and tutors in identifying and implementing quality improvements.

2.4 DOCUMENTED APPROACH TO QUALITY ASSURANCE

Our Quality Assurance Manual (QAM) acts as a repository for our documented policies, procedures, handbooks, role descriptions, terms of reference, supporting and reference documents that makes up our QAS.

It is designed to provide staff, trainers, learners and stakeholders with information and guidance in operating the QAS in an accessible and user-friendly manner.

3. PROGRAMMES OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING

POLICY STATEMENT

We are committed to designing and delivering programmes that meet the specific needs of our learner profile and are accredited and quality assured. We design our programmes to enable learners to achieve recognition for their learning in a fun and enjoyable way. We ensure that programmes, which are designed, lead to awards on the National Framework of Qualifications and are done so in line with the QQI requirements.

New Programme Design Process



4. TEACHING AND LEARNING

POLICY STATEMENT

We focus on creating a positive, enjoyable, safe and inclusive teaching and learning environment where all feel valued and respected. Most of our training is based on learning through the practice of practical skills.

We focus on designing and providing teaching and learning environments that enables learners to achieve the best possible learning outcomes. We ensure that the environment is adequate and suitable for our training programmes and for our learner profile.

To cater for the diversity of learning disabilities of our learners, we keep the numbers per class small ensuring individual support and quality of teaching and learning. Our tutors are selected based on their background, experience and commitment to working with learners with an intellectual disability and include some of Ireland's leading theatre and arts practitioners.

Through an emphasis on the individuality and creativity of each learner, we seek to enhance self-confidence and self-esteem in the learner.

5. STAFF RECRUITMENT, MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

POLICY STATEMENT

It is our policy to ensure that staff and tutors have the appropriate qualifications, skills, competencies and attitude to provide high quality training to our learners. We provide staff and tutors with a supportive environment that facilitates them in doing so.

The Programme Board reviews staffing and makes recommendations to the Board of Directors which is responsible for staffing Blue Teapot employees.

PAS Manager is responsible for the management of PAS staff on a day-to-day basis and for reporting any issues to the Programme Board.

Recruitment process



6. PUBLIC INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION

6.1 POLICY STATEMENT

It is our policy to provide information about our training programmes, facilities, supports and other activities in an accessible and user-friendly format appropriate to our learners, their families/carers, other stakeholders and the general public, and ensure that this information is up to date, accurate and impartial. Equally, we are committed to inviting, listening to and acting on feedbacks and views of all those who are interested in what we do.

6.2 PUBLIC INFORMATION

6.2.1 Website

Our main point of contact with the public is our website www.bluteapot.ie. The website contains information about our QQI validated training programmes, other non-QQI programmes, the National Framework Qualifications (NFQ), activities and events, news, annual reports, achievements of our programmes, audited accounts and contact information.

6.2.2. Brochure

The brochure contains information on our training programmes including the title of the school and course, details of the accrediting body and type of award, tutors and general school information such as contact information.

6.2.3 Media

We post news and updates on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. The General Manager updates the social media platforms regularly with news related to programme activities and recruitment opportunities.

Public notices of annual recruitment is done by print and social media.

6.3 INFORMATION FOR APPLICANTS

- General information about our school and programmes is on the Blue Teapot Theatre Company website.
- Downloadable application form on our website, <https://bluteapot.ie/programmes/performing-arts-school/>

- We attend school leaver and further education fairs annually where we distribute our brochures.
- Staff provide information by phone and email on our application process – application form/interview/audition day/queries.

7. INFORMATION AND DATA MANAGEMENT

POLICY STATEMENT

Definition

Information management can be defined as "*recorded information, in any form or media, created or received and maintained by PAS in the conduct of affairs and kept as evidence of such activity*".

It is our policy to ensure that we collect, record, analyse and use relevant information for the effective management of our programmes and activities. Our data management systems are designed to ensure transparency and accountability. We recognise our responsibility for securing and maintaining the confidentiality of all data and we are committed to meet all requirements of data protection legislation (GDPR).

PAS works within the Brothers of Charity Service Ireland (BOCSI) Data Protection Policy and Procedures framework. The policy and procedures cover both personal and sensitive personal data held by Blue Teapot Theatre Co.

We adopt and are governed by BOCSI Records Management Policy.

8. SELF EVALUATION, MONITORING AND REVIEW

8.1 POLICY STATEMENT

It is our policy to evaluate all our programmes and services to learners on an ongoing basis. We view these evaluation processes as being positive, constructive and fundamental to our quality assurance system.

We aim to identify good practice and use the findings to ensure continuous development and enhancement of our programmes and supports.

We seek to engage with all who have an interest in what we do as part of our evaluation processes placing particular emphasis on the involvement of our tutors and our learners and their personal learning experience.

Our self-monitoring processes helps to enhance the quality of teaching and learning and reinforces the trust and respect of our stakeholders.

8.2 PROGRAMME REVIEW

- Internal Verification Report
- External Authentication Reports
- Programme Improvement Plan
- Programme Board
- Oversee the self-evaluation system to ensure that they incorporate the views of learners and other stakeholders.

9. ASSESSMENT OF LEARNERS

9.1 ASSESSMENT POLICY

It is our policy to assess learners in a fair, consistent and transparent manner for the purpose of the achievement of awards. We do our utmost to ensure that all our assessment practices are designed, implemented and managed in accordance with the standards, guidelines, and procedures as set out by QQI.

Responsibility

- Programme Board has overall responsibility for oversight of all assessment activities, including the appointment of an External Authenticator and for the approval of results and recommending them for certification.
- Performing Arts School Manager is responsible for ensuring that all assessment activities are carried out in accordance with agreed procedures and validated assessment plans.

Overview of the Assessment Process

- The programme design team made up of subject matter experts, devises assessment briefs, marking schemes and assessment criteria when they are designing the programme and reviews them as part of the programme review.
- Tutors assess, mark, and grade the assessment evidence.
- PAS Coordinator records the outcomes of assessments per module on the marking sheet and on the QBS system.

Authentication

- PAS Coordinator checks that all assessment procedures have been applied and monitors the outcome of the assessment process.
- Programme Board assigns an External Authenticator based on their qualifications and expertise.
- External Authenticator moderates assessment results.

Results Approval

- Approves and signs-off assessment results.
- Makes recommendations for corrective action (if any).
- PAS Coordinator make results available to learners.

Request for Certification

- PAS Coordinator submits assessment results to QQI via the QBS.

Appeals Process

- Learners have 14 days to submit an appeal.
- The PAS Coordinator processes appeals.