

BTTC Fair Pay, Fair Practice Policy

Introduction

Blue Teapot Theatre Company is a bold, diverse, Irish theatre company working with artists with intellectual disabilities. We work to radically transform theatre practices by telling stories through the lens of disability, paving the way for inclusive practices to become the norm. By pushing the boundaries of what is possible, we celebrate creativity and challenge the narrative about intellectual disability. Our focus and commitment are centred on three priorities:

Production – creating brave, challenging, intrepid theatre.

Progression – nurturing creativity and talent.

Provision – owning the space, developing infrastructure and quality outputs.

We have three main programmes, a professional Theatre Ensemble, a performing arts School and a Community Theatre programme.

Context

Blue Teapot employs 9 staff, in a variety of part-time and full-time, continual or fixed-term contracts. These roles are supported by classroom assistants employed through the Community Employment Scheme. We also contract freelance tutors, classroom assistants, facilitators and volunteers to support the work we do. During production development and presentation, we contract freelance artists and art workers in a variety of theatre production roles. During production development and presentation, we also contract our cast from our Ensemble Actors who are engaged in the performance.

We have a strongly held ethos that people with intellectual disabilities, with the right supports, can make art on a par with other mainstream artists. We do this by committing to work with the best professional collaborators and by performing in mainstream arts venues. Although we're not considered a production house with volume turnover, we adhere to equivalent Irish Equity rates of pay for all involved in our theatre work and our Ensemble Actors are members of Irish Equity.

Blue Teapot continues to advocate for better pay and policies for artists with intellectual disability, we do this by engaging with support organisations such as the Arts Council and National Disability Authority, contributing to research such as Amplify: A call for Transformative Action and supporting policies and programmes such as Safe to Create.

We recognise the often-precarious nature of employment in the arts such as financial instability, extra unpaid hours, low pay rates, lack of opportunity, limited funding and high cost of work. We are taking steps to address these drivers through the policies we implement and our work practices.

Definitions

Fair Pay

Fair pay is about a fair exchange of value. Remuneration is fair when it equates to what is asked in terms of time, input and expertise. It will account for the standing of an artist or freelance arts worker and reflect the value created by their engagement. It applies to all potential forms of earnings including pay, salary, wages, fees, allowances, benefits and non-cash incentives as well as income derived from rights or royalties.

Fair Practice

Fair practice is about the terms, conditions, attitudes and behaviour that ensure an ethical and respectful environment in which employees, artists and freelance arts workers can work effectively and where there is equality of opportunity. Work practices are fair when employees, artists and freelance arts workers are treated justly, are recognised as professionals and their wellbeing is a priority

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline Blue Teapots commitment to improve working practices and remuneration for employees, arts workers and freelance artists that work with us. The policy outlines the actionable steps we take to ensure fair contracting, timely payment, and equitable treatment.

Scope

This policy is for:

- All employees of Blue Teapot Theatre Company
- Classroom Assistants employed through the CE scheme.
- Ensemble Actors when cast in one of Blue Teapot productions.
- Volunteers
- All freelance artists, arts company's and creatives that are contracted by us.

Principles

This policy adheres to the five key principles, Respect, Transparency, Opportunity, Sustainability, Fulfillment.

Respect - We commit to:

1. Never asking artists and freelance arts works to work for free.

2. Bench marking our pay rates to the creative sector as well as the public and private sector and reviewing this annual bench marking with our Board of Directors.
3. Meeting our artists, arts workers and employees to discuss roles and responsibilities and contracts.
4. Strive to consider the impact on artists and arts workers within all decision making.
5. Request feedback from Artist and Arts workers following the completion of a contract to see what we can do better.
6. Treating our volunteers with the same respect as our employed staff.

Transparency - We commit to:

1. Bench marking our pay rates to the creative sector as well as the public and private sector and reviewing this annual bench marking with our Board of Directors.
2. Meeting with our artists, arts workers and employees to discuss roles and responsibilities and contracts.
3. Stating the number of hours a job is expected to be required when advertising and contracting.
4. Issue clear and transparent contracts, separating fees, production costs and expenses, setting out what is required from the artist or freelance arts worker and including the payment schedule, time taken to pay invoices and how to get paid.
5. Paying freelance artists and arts workers extra if they are required to work substantial additional hours.
6. Ensuring that our artists and students with intellectual disabilities are provided with employment information and contracts in way they understand and are supported (or witnessed) by their "trusted Individual".
7. Resolve issues around ownership and copyright of any produced work as part of the project through negotiation at the pre-contract stage.

Opportunity - We commit to:

1. Publicity advertising employment opportunities and follow the BTTC Recruitment Policy to ensure a fair and transparent recruitment process.
2. Reviewing Revenue's Decision Tree with regards to contracting, artist, facilitators and tutors.
3. Providing training and career development opportunities for our staff, volunteers and artists.
4. Adhering to BTTC Diversity and Inclusion policy and reviewing this policy on a regular basis.

5. Consult with each employee/artist about how we might accommodate access requirements.

Sustainability - We commit to:

1. Prioritising artistic development within our budgets to ensure we continue to be in a position to provide employment opportunities for artists and arts workers.
2. Supporting our ensemble actors and students to advocate for better opportunities for artists with intellectual disabilities.
3. Continue to provide valuable work experience opportunities for arts students to gain experience of working with artists with intellectual disabilities.
4. Ensuring that payments for travel, accommodation and subsistence keep pace with inflation.
5. Pay artists and freelance arts workers promptly within fourteen days of receiving an invoice,

Fulfilment - We commit to:

1. Ensuring that all workers that engage with Blue Teapot are signed up to our Code of Behaviour and the Safe to Create Code of Behaviour.
2. Having policies in place for safe working conditions and ensuring that these policies are adhered to and reviewed regularly.
3. Invite feedback from and listen to artists and freelance arts workers formally and informally

Related policies

Safe to Create – Code of Behaviour

BTTC Diversity and Inclusion policy

BTTC Strategic Arts Plan

BTTC Employee Handbook

BTTC Volunteer Policy

BTTC Recruitment policy

Implementation, responsibilities and Monitoring

This policy has been reviewed by the Blue Teapot Management and signed off by the Board of Directors.

It is the responsibility of the Management team to ensure that the policy is implemented and adhered to within Blue Teapot and that the principles and commitments are reviewed on a regular basis.

This policy will be reviewed every two years to ensure it remains in line with best practices and national/international standards for artist pay and conditions.