



Barbican Code of Ethics

January 2024

Our Purpose: We are London's Creative Catalysts for arts, curiosity, and enterprise. We spark creative possibilities and transformation for artists, audiences, and communities – to inspire, connect and provoke debate. We are the place to be in this destination city, where everyone is welcome. Our impact is felt outside our walls and ripples beyond the experiences we offer – locally, nationally, and internationally.

Our Values: Inclusive, Connected, Daring, Sustainable, Joyful

Introduction

The Barbican holds a special position as the arts centre located within the City of London, as well as in the national and international landscape in which we operate. We are in an important position of trust – with our audiences, with artists and companies we work with, local communities, donors, partners, sponsors, and funders. And of course, with our Barbican Team who welcome audiences and artists into our spaces every day.

The Barbican – and particularly all of us who work within it and for it – must make sound ethical decisions in all areas of our work to maintain this trust. These decisions may be big decisions around strategy, programming or funding. But they also include the small decisions which we all make every day.

This Code has been developed through a process of discussion and consultation involving many people from different parts of the Barbican, at all levels. It is designed to support all of us – from frontline to boardroom – in recognising and resolving ethical issues and conflicts. It sets out ethical principles across four distinct territories, as well as the positive intent that we should all take to ensure an ethical approach to our work. The four ethical territories are:

1. **Audiences and visitors: public engagement and public benefit**
2. **Artists and programmes: working with artists as a force for good**
3. **Institutional integrity: how we fund our work and make decisions**
4. **Barbican team: how we work as individuals and value our team**

An ethics code in and of itself cannot contain all the answers for every scenario, and things may go wrong – but it does aim to make ethical reflection part of our everyday practice at work, whatever our role and wherever we work. Some decisions will be straightforward, for others it may be harder to distinguish what the correct approach is. There will sometimes be tension between the different ethical principles in the Code. So, we want to create a culture where a process of careful reflection, reasoning and discussion with others is embraced.

This Code is designed to support legal frameworks and associated policies (listed at the end) and set standards for ethical decision making and behaviour for all areas of the Barbican's work. Its aim is to ensure that we, the Barbican, are consistent and accountable in the choices we make, taking account of all perspectives before coming to a decision.

The Code applies to the Barbican's Board, Trust, all those who work at the Barbican including employees, freelancers, casual workers, consultants, artists, producers, contract partners, those providing procured goods, services and content, and those who support or advise the Barbican. All should proactively champion ethical behaviour and be introduced to the Code to integrate the principles into their daily work.



Summary: ethical territories and principles

Territory	Principles (what we stand for)
1 Audiences and visitors: public engagement and public benefit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Everyone is welcome ● Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community and to enjoy the arts ● Everyone is treated equitably with honesty and respect ● Support freedom of expression and debate, within the law ● Our venue spaces and subsidy are for public benefit
2 Artists and programme: working with artists and companies as a force for good	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Be a creative catalyst – we inspire, connect and provoke debate and work with artists who want to do this too ● Work with artists across the broadest possible range of lived experiences, and promote and advocate for those who have been underrepresented and/or those that are societally marginalised or minoritised ● Respect artists and their craft and provide them with the best platforms for their work ● Support freedom of expression, intellectual property ownership and debate, within the law ● Provide artists with a workplace that is safe and respectful
3 Institutional integrity: how we fund our work and make decisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Always uphold the highest levels of institutional integrity ● Fund our work sustainably and ethically ● Minimise our negative impact on the environment ● Always act in the interests of our audiences, artists and staff ● Be a respectful and transparent partner
4 Barbican team: How we work as individuals and value our team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Always uphold the highest levels of personal behaviour ● Value and support all members of the Barbican Team, however they are employed ● Support all members of the Barbican Team in in sustainable work practice ● Be particularly mindful of the vulnerabilities of those who may have been under-represented including apprentices, casual team members and freelancers



1 Audiences and visitors: public engagement and public benefit

Principles (what we stand for)

- Everyone is welcome
- Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community and to enjoy the arts
- Everyone is treated equitably with honesty and respect
- We support freedom of expression and debate, within the law
- Our venue spaces and subsidy are for public benefit

How we uphold the principles

- 1.1** Provide everybody visiting the Barbican with an experience that is both safe and welcoming, treating everybody equitably, with honesty, respect, and grace.
- 1.2** Not tolerate any form of discrimination, harassment, intimidation, aggression or bullying, reserving the right to both eject and ban people from our venues if they exhibit such behaviour.
- 1.3** Use our venues and resources for public benefit – for arts, curiosity, enterprise, entertainment, enrichment, inspiration, connection, debate, community experiences, and learning.
- 1.4** Seek to both grow and diversify our audiences so that more people benefit from our work, while continuing to value our existing audiences.
- 1.5** Ensure that everybody can participate in the breadth of our offer, reducing and removing barriers to access, including financial barriers.
- 1.6** Support freedom of expression, respecting the right of all to express their views, within the law and in a way that is consistent with the purpose of the Barbican as an inclusive public space.
- 1.7** Actively engage with our audiences, using insights from data, listening and acting upon their feedback, which is retained and shared so we learn and grow as an organisation.
- 1.8** Provide audiences with accurate and accessible information about our programme, so they can decide whether and how they want to engage with it.
- 1.9** Be compassionate towards those who seek assistance in our buildings and signpost appropriate support services.



2 Artists and programme: working with artists and companies as a force for good

Principles (what we stand for)

- Be a creative catalyst – we inspire, connect and provoke debate and work with artists who want to do this too
- Work with artists across the broadest possible range of lived experiences, and promote and advocate for those who have been underrepresented and/or those that are societally marginalised or minoritised
- Respect artists and their craft and provide them with the best platforms for their work
- Support freedom of expression, intellectual property ownership and debate, within the law
- Provide artists with a workplace that is safe and respectful

How we uphold the principles

- 2.1** Be transparent on the strategy behind our creative programme.
- 2.2** Ensure integrity and independence in programming and decision making. Resist attempts to influence interpretation or content by particular interest groups, including lenders, producers, and funders.
- 2.3** Work with artists to develop their craft, find the right audience and amplify their impact. Provide them with a safe and supportive environment to create, exhibit, and perform their work. Only programme work which we feel we can deliver without compromising standards of care.
- 2.4** Treat all artists in our programme fairly and in a non-discriminatory manner, regardless of what stage they are at in their career or their public profile and regardless of their characteristics or identity.
- 2.5** Provide artists with a platform from which they can speak freely, not silencing or restricting an artist we have chosen to work with. Artists' actions will be lawful and consistent with the purpose of the Barbican in a public space.
- 2.6** Not shy away from work that may be perceived as difficult or controversial. Make space for difficult conversations and decisions.
- 2.7** Avoid behaviour or choices that could be construed as tokenistic or asserting personal preference or control over an artist's work.
- 2.8** Not work with, or disassociate from, any artist or group whose actions do not align with our code of ethics or who may inhibit us in delivering on our purpose.
- 2.9** Ensure that artists receive an appropriate fee for their work.
- 2.10** Ensure that information and research presented or generated by the Barbican is accurate.
- 2.11** Take steps to minimise or balance bias in research undertaken.
- 2.12** Not tolerate any form of discrimination, harassment, intimidation, aggression, hate speech or bullying, reserving the right to reject or stop projects that involve this, and ban anyone from our venues if they exhibit such behaviour.



③ Institutional integrity: how we fund our work and make decisions

Principles (what we stand for)

- Always uphold the highest levels of institutional integrity
- Fund our work sustainably and ethically
- Minimise our negative impact on the environment
- Always act in the interests of our audiences, artists and staff
- Be a respectful and transparent partner

How we uphold the principles

- 3.1** Minimise conflict with our ethical position in relation to the donors, clients and partners that we work with.
- 3.2** Actively seek sustainable sources of income to fund our arts and learning activities in line with our purpose.
- 3.3** Carefully consider potential sources of income and avoid accepting funds from sources that could compromise the delivery of our purpose or undermine public trust.
- 3.4** Conduct due diligence on artists, performers, directors, curators, producers, writers and lenders, prior to programming or commissioning artistic work or events, or securing a loan.
- 3.5** Avoid negative impacts on the environment from our activities and audiences by using energy and materials responsibly and minimising waste.
- 3.6** Ground all of our actions and statements in our purpose and programme. We do not campaign about world affairs or political issues



4 Barbican team: How we work as individuals and value our team

Principles (what we stand for)

- Always uphold the highest levels of personal behaviour
- Value and support all members of the Barbican Team, however they are employed
- Support all members of the Barbican Team in sustainable work practice
- Be particularly mindful of the vulnerabilities of those who may have been under-represented including apprentices, casual team members and freelancers

How we uphold the principles

- 4.1** Work and behave in line with our values.
- 4.2** Challenge where power is held and how people are treated.
- 4.3** Recruit, develop and promote fairly and transparently, and actively move towards a workforce that is more representative of the community we serve here in London.
- 4.4** Be a good employer – one that is fair, provides opportunity and career development.
- 4.5** Acknowledge our history but strive to create an environment where everyone can do their best work, in a workplace that is accessible to all and has zero tolerance for discrimination, bullying or harassment. Be committed to wellbeing and mental health. Ensure collective consistency in this practice



The Code in practice

The Code is available for everybody to consult when taking decisions that have an ethical dimension.

Ethics should be considered from the earliest stages of planning any project so that issues can be highlighted, assessed and resolved in a careful, thoughtful and deliberate way – and to avoid the Code being applied inconsistently. In doing so, all principles across all four territories of the code must be carefully weighed, avoiding ‘cherry-picking’.

Where appropriate, advice and perspectives should be sought from a range of sources before reaching a conclusion. These could include other teams within the Barbican, staff networks, Directors, members of the Board and/or Trust, those with lived experience of the issues involved, and external experts or organisations.

Decisions should be based whenever possible on objective and verifiable information. If facts are unavailable or disputed, a risk-based approach should be adopted carefully weighing up different perspectives.

If in doubt, refer the issue to your Head of Department or Director for further consideration and advice. For complex ethical cases, your Director will convene the Ethics Working Group.

Ethics Working Group

The Ethics Working Group comprises the following:

- Director of People, Culture and Inclusion (Chair)
- Director for Arts and Participation
- Director for Audiences
- Director of Development
- Others they may invite as appropriate

The Group will make recommendations to the Director Group and CEO for approval. For particularly complex matters, the CEO will seek guidance from the Barbican Board and/or Trust as necessary.

Outcomes of EWG discussions will be reported to the Finance and Risk Sub-Committee and the Board.



Other policies and procedures

The principles of the Code will be built into relevant policies and procedures, setting out more detailed guidance about particular topics. Those policies and procedures include (but are not necessarily limited to):

- Gift Acceptance Statement
- Zero Tolerance Statement
- Due Diligence Procedures
- Touring Exhibition Policy
- EDI Strategy
- Anti-Racism Action Plan
- Fundraising Policy

Breaches of the Code

Alleged breaches of the Code will be investigated under an appropriate HR process (for staff) or by a Director (for other matters), to provide a considered decision. In the most serious cases the Barbican Board or Barbican Trust may determine the matter.

Confirmed breaches will result in actions under the appropriate policy (for staff the City of London Code of Conduct; and for others relevant contracts and agreements) and may lead to the Barbican no longer working with those responsible. Clear reasons will be communicated, and space made for discussion following a confirmed breach. When breaches are a result of systemic rather than individual failure, the issue will be investigated by the Director Group, Board or Trust, and recommendations made.

The Code defines standards that are often higher than those required by law, however, the Code cannot override the legal obligations and rights of those who work in or for the Barbican including those arising from any contractual relationship. However, this Code is in the best interests of all those engaged with the Barbican and is therefore accepted as a statement of the principles we adhere to.



The City of London
Corporation is the founder
and principal funder
of the Barbican Centre