

## FATT PROJECTS

### COMMUNITY & ACCESSIBILITY STEERING GROUP: MOBILISE - JOB APPLICATION PACK

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#### **WHAT IS THE COMMUNITY AND ACCESSIBILITY STEERING GROUP:**

Fatt Projects are looking to recruit a team of six individuals from the LGBTQ+ community in Birmingham (or the wider West Midlands)\* who will be instrumental in planning and delivering our upcoming project MOBILISE.

MOBILISE aims to create a series of joyful accessible sober social dance parties for Birmingham's LGBTQ+ communities, and will end with the creation of a large-scale public protest performance that will lead the Birmingham Pride Parade in September 2022, performed and devised by a team of queer artists and participants from the local LGBTQ+ community (more information about the project can be found in the 'ABOUT MOBILISE' section below).

The Community and Accessibility Steering Group (CASG) will meet with the artistic director and producer at key points throughout the project to provide advice and guidance. Together our aim is to create a safe, accessible, and sober space for LGBTQ+ people to dance, socialise, and build their confidence.

The steering group's main responsibilities will be:

- To advise project staff on ways to ensure project events and parties are accessible to the widest range of people possible, ensuring that any LGBTQ+ person who wants to take part is able to, regardless of ability, health condition, gender identity, body size, race, and socio-economic background.
- To support the project staff with event planning.
- To provide feedback and suggestions from their own lived experience and knowledge on practical ways to ensure events are as inclusive as possible.
- To attend and/or take part in events and parties, and to provide relevant feedback directly and from other attendees.
- To work with the project creative team and local LGBTQ+ community to help identify important issues, interests, and messages that should be featured in the final performance.
- To assist with raising awareness about the project, including helping to create clear communication materials and sharing information with their local networks/social groups/ online forums (eg. facebook).
- To advocate for the needs of marginalised LGBTQ+ people in Birmingham, and to help create strategies for how we meet those needs.
- To provide feedback on their experience working on the project, and contribute to the overall project evaluation.

#### **PRACTICAL BITS (TERMS AND CONDITIONS):**

This is a paid role, the fee for the work is guaranteed at £1200 per person, based on 6 working days at £200 per day.

Steering group members will work the equivalent to one day per month over the 6-month project, between May-October 2022. Meetings will be arranged to a mutually agreed schedule; some steering group tasks may require working independently which can be done to suit you around your own schedule.

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All events will take place in Birmingham, with the final performance leading the 2022 Birmingham Pride Parade. Where possible we will aim to hold steering group meetings in person at a location in central Birmingham, however we will also make remote working options available (eg. meeting via zoom) to anyone needing to work remotely.

#### **ABOUT YOU:**

We want to ensure that our Community & Accessibility Steering Group is representative of Birmingham's diverse LGBTQ+ communities.

This project is about creating accessible dance spaces aimed at providing space for community members who have experienced marginalisation, do not feel comfortable or able to dance in public or existing LGBTQ+ venues. Together our aim is to create a safe space for our community to dance, socialise, and develop their confidence. As such, we want to make sure that the project is being guided by people who have that lived experience, who want to see a sober accessible social dance space developed in Birmingham, and who will think sensitively and practically about how that can be achieved.

**Steering group roles are open to anyone who believes in the project's aims, wants to support the project to be the best it can possibly be, and meets the following criteria:**

- You identify as LGBTQ+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual/Pansexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual etc.).
- You are 18 years of age or over.
- You live in Birmingham, UK (or the surrounding area)\*.
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- You enjoy dancing for fun or have a desire to dance more often.
- You currently experience (or have previously experienced) barriers, restrictions, or feelings that stop you feeling comfortable when dancing and/or able to dance in public. These might include:
  - *feeling self-conscious when dancing.*
  - *Issues with self-confidence.*
  - *experience of ableism/ fatphobia/ transphobia/ racism/ or other forms of discrimination in social dance settings (eg. nightclubs).*
  - *feeling too old to go to existing nightlife venues.*
  - *physical access barriers (eg. lack of wheelchair accessible spaces).*
  - *not wanting to visit venues where alcohol is served.*
  - *financial cost of travel/entrance fees restricting your ability to go out socially etc.*
  - *Concerns around attending public events due to the covid-19 pandemic.*
- You have a good understanding of the needs and experiences of the LGBTQ+ community (or a specific group(s) within the community).  
*This could be that you have undertaken voluntary work, you attend or organise a community group, worked in an LGBTQ+ venue or organisation, been a member of a workplace LGBTQ+ group, or have experience in the community in some other way.*

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- You work well as part of a team and enjoy collaboration.
- You can communicate your thoughts, experiences, and ideas clearly.

This role **does not** require any formal qualifications or employment experience. You do not need to be a professional artist, healthcare worker, or accessibility consultant (although you might be). Your passion, ideas, and lived experience are the most important parts of this role.

We recognise the experiences of individuals sitting across various intersections and are seeking to reach a steering group with the broadest representation possible. We are committed to ensuring that there is at least one guaranteed spot in the steering group for a disabled person; a trans person; and a person with lived experience of racism.

\*Please note that this project is taking place in Birmingham, whilst there will be the option to work remotely we want to ensure that the project is led and informed by people who will be able to directly benefit from it.

#### HOW TO APPLY

To apply to be a member of the Community and Accessibility Steering Group, please send the following via email to [hello@fattprojects.org](mailto:hello@fattprojects.org) by **10:00 on Thursday 21st April**.

#### Either

- a completed application form (click here to download).

#### Or

- or a video or voice note of no longer than five minutes which contains the following:
  - Your name, pronouns, age, and location.
  - why you want to be a part of the steering group.
  - what experience you have that you can bring to this project.
  - how you meet the criteria outlined in the 'about you' section.
  - and anything else you want us to know about you.

#### And

- A completed equal opportunities monitoring form.

Following receipt of applications we will shortlist and invite successful candidates to join us for an informal 30 minute chat to talk through your application, ideas, and experience on 25-27th April (at a mutually agreed time, including the option of early evenings) and from this we will select the final steering group. We will offer the option of meeting in person at a location in the city centre, or to meet via zoom if this better suits your needs.

#### ABOUT MOBILISE:

*'DANCING IS THE ONE THING THAT MAKES ME FEEL FREE, IT ALLOWS ME TO BE TRULY MYSELF AND FORGET ABOUT THE WORLD FOR A MOMENT'*

comment from a local LGBTQ+ community member during the consultation process.

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MOBILISE is a series of raucous, joyful and radical queer accessible sober social dance parties leading to a co-devised public space processional performance, as part of the Birmingham 2022 Festival. Working with a large team of queer artists and participants from the local LGBTQ+ community, MOBILISE culminates in a large-scale co-devised public protest performance that will lead the Birmingham Pride Parade in September 2022. The project producer will oversee the delivery of the project, working in partnership with the Artistic Director and managing a small team of freelance creatives.

MOBILISE is about creating transformative, meaningful, accessible, and sustainable opportunities for Birmingham's LGBTQ+ communities. For many LGBTQ+ people being visibly and/or publicly joyful is an act of resistance, a challenge to a world that still tells us we should not occupy space. MOBILISE will build and sustain a culture of queer joy in Birmingham.

Historically dancefloors have been essential spaces for LGBTQ+ people to discover themselves and their communities. In re-assessing this history and making new accessible dance spaces we will expand the transformative potential of dance to respond to the urgent needs of LGBTQ+ communities today.

MOBILISE has been conceived around three core values:

1. **PARTY** - a series of queer empowerment discos (raucous, joyful, accessible and sober social-dance parties) created specifically to empower people to dance, take up public space, feel confident, and celebrate themselves with particular focus on centring trans, disabled, fat, People of Colour (PoC), and other marginalised queer bodies.
2. **PARTICIPATE** - recruited through the party strand, an LGBTQ+ community dance ensemble will be formed from the local community. The ensemble will meet over a series of artist-led workshops and rehearsals working to co-create a dance performance which will feature in the PROTEST performance for Birmingham Pride 2022.
3. **PROTEST** - a large-scale processional performance will lead the 2022 Pride Parade. The performance will transform the city's pride parade into a piece of moving art, connecting to Pride's history as a protest movement and its legacy as a platform for queer celebration.

#### PROJECT CONTEXT:

In Summer of 2020 Fatt Projects began public consultation with LGBTQ+ community members in Birmingham. The outcomes of this consultation have been used to shape our plans for MOBILISE, and particularly to think about how to combat the multiple barriers identified by the community currently stopping them from participating in dance.

Comments from community members included:

*'there's nothing like the feeling of dancing with wild abandon and you can't do that if you don't feel comfortable'*

*'I am not a good dancer and am scared of dancing in public, so i don't dance except when I'm by myself, or on rare occasions at specific events (usually queer events in non queer spaces) with my friends.'*

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*Being Gender non-conforming contributes to this as I don't like being a spectacle'.*

#### KEY CONSULTATION FINDINGS:

89.3% of respondents said that having a safe space to go and dance was important to them, but only 40% of respondents said they felt there were public places they felt safe and/or comfortable to go dancing in Birmingham.

41.3% of respondents said they did not feel comfortable going to venues in the gay village.

68% of respondents said they would want to go to a sober accessible LGBTQ+ space for social dancing.

86.7% of respondents said that the covid-19 pandemic had impacted their ability to socialise and/or stay connected with friends and loved ones and 73.3% of respondents said that they had felt new or increased feelings of loneliness and/or isolation since covid-19.

The combination of these statistics demonstrated an increased need for accessible social spaces for our community, where we can dance, feel free, and connect to each other. In particular our research showed that when respondents whose bodies do not conform to 'normative' expectations of ability, size, gender etc. danced in public (particularly those who experience ableism, transphobia, racism, and fatphobia), they felt increased levels of self-awareness, and discomfort despite having a desire to dance. Evidence also showed that in order for people to feel comfortable enough to participate in a public performance at the pride parade, a culture of social dancing and confidence building would need to be created.

#### ABOUT FUNDERS & BIRMINGHAM 2022 FESTIVAL

This project is presented in partnership with Birmingham Pride as part of the Birmingham 2022 Festival, generously supported by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation, Esmée Fairbairn Foundation and Arts Council, England.

Birmingham 2022 Festival is a six-month culture programme starting in March 2022 which will use the moment of the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games to celebrate creativity in the West Midlands and the Commonwealth. With the aim of engaging 2.5m people both in person and online, the programme is designed to reflect the people of the region, exploring our heritage, diversity and youth. Audacious, playful & inclusive, the festival will work with over 500 West Midlands artists on a programme designed to entertain, engage and embrace audiences, whilst positively disrupting the cultural sector and inspiring lasting change. For more information, please visit: [www.birmingham2022.com/festival](http://www.birmingham2022.com/festival)

This is a project about joy, we recognise that the processes of making and centring joy are often deeply intertwined with grief and healing. We are committed to respond critically and sensitively to the complex histories of the commonwealth and the systemic and social oppression and homophobia across the Commonwealth and the colonial legacy at the root of it. As such this role will require a candidate whose work prioritises care, generosity, and critical thinking.

#### ABOUT FATT PROJECTS:

Fatt Projects is a Birmingham based queer performance company. We make shows, parties, performances, events, and creative bits focused on advancing queer joy. Our work celebrate queerness, community, care, empowerment, and change-making. Our work is just as likely to take place in public

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spaces and contexts where queer identities and politics are underrepresented as it is in a conventional theatre spaces.

Fatt Projects is a limited company formed in 2021 to support and grow the creative work of artist, activist and professional hot mess Adam Carver (aka Fatt Butcher), they are artistic director of the company.

Our work is built around 5 core values:

- **INVITATION** - actively making space for others to create and connect with queer joy.
- **DEMONSTRATION** - to embrace the mechanics of what we do, to create magic in reality rather than fantasy, in a way that empowers others to actively participate.
- **TRANSFORMATION** - to radically alter our perception of the possibilities of a space, to affect action.
- **OCCUPATION** - to take up space, to assert our ownership of space.
- **CELEBRATION** - to instil joy, to give voice, to make loud.

These values are built on a foundation of safety.

- **SAFETY** - ensuring the conditions to do the work are as safe as possible, and that care is at the centre of all our decision making.

We describe our work as full-fat - it's unapologetic, loud, and saturated. It embraces liveness, and the mechanics of making things. We're on a mission to celebrate 'low-culture' and camp and to use them as weapons to disrupt normativity. Our work is about harnessing the radical potential of queer joy, and using that to find ways to build queer community, connectivity and spirituality.

Our work is about creating spaces for people to come together and celebrate themselves, to heal through acts of collectivity. In the work we make, we see glimpses of what radical, queerer and more caring futures could look like and the steps we can take towards realising these futures. Each project informs the direction of our next steps. We like to think that we're changing the world one confetti cannon at a time.

Our work has been supported by Cambridge Junction, Birmingham Hippodrome, Without Walls, DanceXchange, Home Live Art, Appetite Stoke, Greenwich Docklands International Festival, Marlborough Productions, and Arts Council England.

## ACCESS & WORKING CULTURE

Fatt Projects is a small independent performance company. More information about our other projects is available on our website: <https://www.fattprojects.org/projects>

We want all employees to feel comfortable and able to be themselves at work. Our working culture is built on our core values of Invitation, Demonstration, Transformation, Occupation, Celebration and Safety. It is important to us to maintain a caring work environment that recognises that the work we undertake can require additional emotional labour, particularly for LGBTQ+ employees. We want our work culture to be fluid and responsive and for all team members to have agency to influence it.

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We want to ensure this project is as accessible and inclusive as possible, including the application process and working culture for project staff. We actively encourage and welcome access documents. Budget is available to support project staff and participants' access needs, and we will do whatever possible to ensure accessibility. We also recognise that we are a small organisation and currently do not have a fixed office space which does place some limitations on us, and therefore we recognise this position might not be suitable for everyone. We aim to be upfront and clear about what adjustments we can and cannot make.

Please contact Adam on [hello@fattprojects.org](mailto:hello@fattprojects.org) if you would like to have an informal and confidential conversation to discuss access requirements, to request information in alternative formats, or to discuss the role and our work more generally before applying.