



COUNTY WICKLOW ARTS CENTRE

Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Policy 2025 – 2028





1: Introduction

Mermaid County Wicklow Arts Centre is County Wicklow's creative engine room and we are dedicated to creating an inclusive and welcoming environment where equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) are at the heart of everything we do.

We believe that the arts should reflect the diverse society we live in and be accessible to all, regardless of race, gender, age, ability, socio-economic background, religion, sexual orientation, or any other characteristic.

We strive to celebrate and promote cultural diversity while addressing systemic barriers that prevent full participation in the arts. We aim to foster a creative environment where artists, staff, audiences, and stakeholders feel valued and represented. This commitment extends beyond our artistic programming to our internal policies, governance, employment practices, and outreach initiatives.

This policy outlines our approach to embedding EDI within our operations, programming, governance, exhibitions and community engagement efforts, ensuring that our commitments translate into meaningful action. We are dedicated to continuous learning and adaptation, ensuring that Mermaid County Wicklow Arts Centre remains a leader in quality and inclusion within the Irish arts sector.



2: Purpose

The objectives of this policy are to:

- **Affirm our commitment** to equality, diversity, and inclusion in every aspect of our organisation.
- **Ensure compliance** with Irish equality legislation and best practices as set out by the Arts Council and international human rights standards.
- **Create a culture of inclusivity** where everyone feels respected, valued, and empowered to participate in and contribute to the arts.
- **Challenge discrimination and systemic inequalities** by proactively addressing barriers to access and representation.
- **Develop a clear framework** for the implementation, monitoring, and continuous improvement of EDI initiatives within Mermaid County Wicklow Arts Centre.



3: Legal and Policy Framework

This policy aligns with the following legal and policy frameworks:

Irish Legislation

- The **Equal Status Acts 2000–2018**, which prohibit discrimination on the grounds of gender, marital status, family status, age, disability, race, religion, sexual orientation, and membership of the Traveller community.
- The **Employment Equality Acts 1998–2015**, which promote equal opportunities in employment and prohibit workplace discrimination.
- The **Disability Act 2005**, which requires public services to be accessible to individuals with disabilities.
- The **Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014**, which mandates public funded bodies to uphold equality and human rights principles.

Arts Council Guidelines

- **Equality, Human Rights & Diversity Policy and Strategy** – This framework guides the arts sector in fostering inclusive and equitable cultural participation.
- **Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Toolkit** – A resource that assists arts organisations in implementing best practices in EDI.

International Commitments

- **United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)** – Recognising children’s right to participate in cultural and artistic activities.
- **United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)** – Ensuring that access to cultural participation is a fundamental right for all.

Other Programmes

- **Safe to Create Programme** – A national initiative promoting safe, inclusive, and respectful working environments in the creative sector.



4: Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to all aspects of Mermaid County Wicklow Arts Centre’s operations, including but not limited to:

- **Internal Stakeholders:** Board members, management, staff, and interns. We are committed to ensuring a diverse and inclusive workforce that reflects the communities we serve.
- **External Collaborators:** Artists, performers, contractors, and partners. We will work with diverse creators, ensuring fair and equitable opportunities within our programming and collaborations.
- **Public Engagement:** Audience members, participants, visitors, and community stakeholders. We strive to create an arts space where everyone feels welcome, respected, and valued.

Through this policy, Mermaid County Wicklow Arts Centre ensures that every aspect of our work, from hiring practices to artistic commissions and public engagement, is grounded in principles of equality and inclusion.



5: Our Commitments

We are committed to encouraging a supporting and inclusive culture, and ensuring that the tenets of equality, diversity, and inclusion are embedded in all facets of Mermaid's work. We do this through a range of practical and tangible actions, resulting in a robust, far reaching EDI policy, which is a living document that supports the needs of the wider Mermaid family, encompassing funders, staff, Board, audiences, artists, and communities.

5.1 Inclusive Programming

- **Diverse Representation:** We commit to ensuring that our artistic programming represents a broad spectrum of voices, including those from underrepresented and marginalised communities. This extends across all artforms and aspects of our artistic programming.
- **Community Collaboration:** We actively engage with local communities to develop programming that reflects their lived experiences and cultural heritage. We facilitate artist residencies and participatory arts projects that encourage community involvement.
- **Accessibility in Content:** We strive to make our artistic content accessible by providing translations, sign language interpretation, captioning, and relaxed performances where possible.

5.2 Accessible Facilities and Services

- **Physical Accessibility:** We are working hard to ensure our venue is accessible for individuals with disabilities, including wheelchair access, accessible seating, and adapted facilities. We also strive to include an allocation of carer's tickets where possible.
- **Sensory-Friendly Initiatives:** We provide sensory-friendly performances where possible and sensory boxes at Box Office.
- **Information Accessibility:** We offer materials in alternative formats and large print, and easy-read versions where possible.



5.3 Equitable Opportunities

- **Fair Recruitment Practices:** We adopt unbiased recruitment and selection processes, ensuring fair representation at all levels of the organisation (both Board and staffing).
- **Career Development:** We offer mentorship programmes, training, and workshops to support underrepresented groups in the arts sector.
- **Inclusive Workplace Policies:** We implement flexible working arrangements and provide accommodations for employees with disabilities or caregiving responsibilities.

5.4 Safe and Respectful Environment

- **Zero Tolerance for Discrimination:** Any form of discrimination, harassment, or bullying are not tolerated and are addressed promptly.
- **Confidential Reporting Mechanisms:** We provide clear and accessible channels for reporting incidents related to discrimination, harassment or bullying.

5.5 Child and Youth Engagement

- **Arts Education and Outreach:** We collaborate with schools and youth organisations to integrate arts education and foster young artistic talent.
- **Child Protection Policies:** Safeguarding measures are in place, through our Child Protection Policy and Child Safeguarding Statement, to ensure that young people engaging with our activities are protected from harm.

6: Implementation & Monitoring

6.1 Policy Development and Review

- This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure it remains relevant and effective.
- Updates will be made in consultation with key stakeholders, including staff, artists, and community representatives as appropriate.

6.2 Training and Awareness

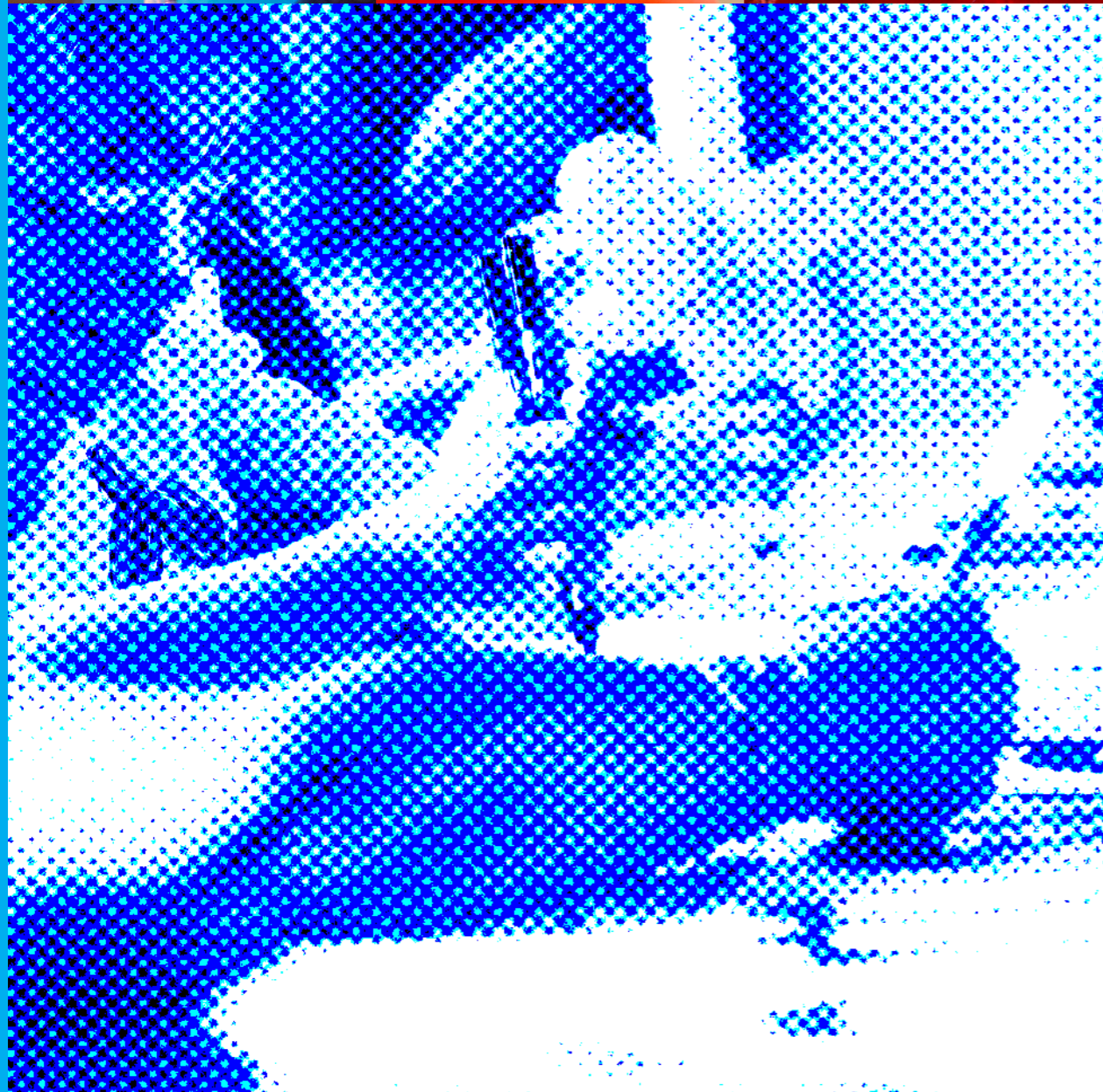
- EDI Training: Training sessions on diversity, equality, and inclusion are provided to all employees.
- Leadership Development: Senior management receive specialised training to embed EDI principles in decision-making processes.
- Cultural Competency Workshops: Workshops to enhance understanding of different cultural perspectives, whenever available.

6.3 Community Engagement and Partnerships

- We are establishing partnerships with local organisations working in the fields of equality and social inclusion.
- We envisage creating advisory panels comprising individuals from diverse backgrounds to guide our EDI strategy (subject to funding for an external consultation).

6.4 Data Collection and Reporting

- We collect and analyse data on diversity and inclusion within our workforce, programming, and audience engagement.
- We will collate annual EDI reports outlining progress, challenges, and future objectives.





7: Responsibilities

Board of Directors

- Ensure EDI is embedded in governance and decision-making.
- Oversee policy implementation and provide strategic direction.
- Hold senior leadership accountable for EDI commitments.

Artistic Director/CEO

- Lead the execution of the EDI strategy across all departments.
- Ensure compliance with legal and ethical EDI obligations.
- Promote an inclusive workplace culture.
- Guide and assess EDI initiatives.
- Act as a liaison between stakeholders to address concerns.
- Support data collection and policy review processes.

Heads of Departments

- Integrate EDI into organisational planning and programming.
- Monitor progress and address EDI challenges proactively.
- Support staff development through training and mentorship.

Staff

- Uphold EDI principles in daily operations.
- Participate in training and engagement activities.
- Foster an inclusive and respectful working environment.

Artists, Contractors, and Partners

- Commit to equitable and inclusive creative practices.
- Engage in accessible and diverse programming.
- Adhere to Mermaid County Wicklow Arts Centre's EDI standards.

Audiences and Community Members

- Engage with Mermaid County Wicklow Arts Centre in a respectful manner.
- Provide feedback to help shape inclusive programming.



8: Conclusion

Mermaid County Wicklow Arts Centre is committed to fostering an environment where diversity is celebrated, inclusion is embedded in all aspects of our work, and equality is actively pursued. This policy serves as a guiding framework to ensure that EDI principles are not only upheld but continuously developed and strengthened. We recognise that achieving true inclusivity requires ongoing commitment, education, and adaptation to the evolving needs of our community.

Through this policy, we affirm our dedication to:

- Providing a safe, welcoming, and accessible space for all individuals, regardless of background or identity.
- Championing diverse voices in our programming, workforce, and artistic collaborations.
- Addressing systemic barriers that hinder participation in the arts and advocating for equitable opportunities.
- Engaging meaningfully with our local community to co-create and deliver culturally relevant artistic experiences.
- Embedding a culture of continuous learning, reflection, and accountability in our EDI efforts.

We acknowledge that this is an ongoing journey, and we will actively seek feedback from our stakeholders to enhance our practices as part of our action plan. By working together, we can make Mermaid County Wicklow Arts Centre a leading example of excellence in equality, diversity, and inclusion within the Irish arts sector.

Written By: Aoife Demel, Artistic Director/CEO

Date: 29th October 2025

Approved by: Anne Ferris, Chairperson

Date: 1st December 2025

Policy Review Date: 1st December 2026

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