



WEXFORD FESTIVAL OPERA

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION POLICY

Brief Policy Summary:

Wexford Festival Opera (WFO) is the trading name of Wexford Festival Trust, through which the annual festival is presented. This policy sets out the ways in which WFO will embed Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) into all areas of our work, including the communities within which we operate.

This policy links to all policies, procedures and strategy documents adopted by WFO and contained on the company's website and within the company's Employee Handbook.

1. PURPOSE

Policy Statement

Informed by our values of integrity, respect, fairness and courage, we aim to actively promote equality, diversity and inclusion and we are committed to continuous improvement.

Our employees, board members, artists, production teams, volunteers and audiences come from diverse backgrounds with varying experiences and needs.

We are committed to ensuring that EDI is embedded in our day-to-day working practices and in the way we engage with those who work with us and for us, or visit us.

WFO is committed to promoting equity and fairness and combating unlawful discrimination. We believe that everyone has an equal right to engage with and participate in the Arts, regardless of Gender, Civil status, Family status, Sexual orientation, Religion, Age, Disability, Race (includes race, colour, nationality or ethnic or national origins), Membership of the travelling community or socio-economic status.

2. OBJECTIVES

In order to effectively implement our commitment to being an equal and diverse organisation, we have identified the following objectives:

- provide our leaders: the Executive Director, the Artistic Director and the Chair of the Board with the skills and knowledge to fully embed fairness, respect, equality, diversity and inclusion into our culture, strategy, and processes;
- provide diversity & inclusion training to all employees, volunteers and board members, which will include content on their responsibilities, relevant legislation, and this policy;
- ensure opportunities are accessible to all, introducing reasonable accommodations to facilitate this where required;
- gather data to identify and address any negative trends in respect of the Grounds of discrimination set out in clause 1 above;
- create an environment where permanent and contract employees are treated fairly and with dignity and respect;
- enforce a zero-tolerance approach in relation to discrimination, bullying, harassment, and inappropriate behaviour, thoroughly investigating any reported incidents and taking appropriate actions;
- ensure fair treatment for job applicants, which is free from bias;
- make the best possible use of our existing and potential workforce through effective talent management;
- provide a safe, supportive, and welcoming environment where everyone can contribute to their fullest potential;
- challenge all forms of discrimination and promote diversity;
- provide training to employees on our approach to diversity & inclusion, to our commitment to zero tolerance in relation to discrimination, bullying, harassment and inappropriate behaviour and to the contents of this policy;
- act as role models to partner organisations and other external stakeholders.

3. SCOPE

- 3.1 This policy applies to the whole organisation, including our employees, volunteers, board members, artists, production teams and to partners and any external stakeholders who are supported by or engage with us.
- 3.2 EDI imposes rights and responsibilities on every member of WFO who will be informed that an EDI policy is in operation and that they are bound to comply with its requirements. The policy will also be drawn to the attention of external stakeholders and job applicants.
- 3.3 The policy ensures that our statutory duties outlined in the Employment Equality Acts 1998–2015, the Equal Status Acts 2000-2018 and Section 42 of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Act 2014 (Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty) are met.
- 3.4 The nine Grounds on which discrimination is prohibited are:
- Gender
 - Civil status
 - Family status
 - Sexual orientation
 - Religion
 - Age
 - Disability
 - Race (includes race, colour, nationality or ethnic or national origins)
 - Membership of the travelling community

- 3.5 In accordance with the Arts Council's EDI Policy and Strategy we also note the ground of socio-economic status as a further basis for which equality of opportunity, access and outcomes must be guaranteed.

4. KEY EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION CONCEPTS

- 4.1 **Equality:** ensuring individuals or groups of individuals are not treated less favourably through discrimination (either direct or indirect) or bias. Equality of opportunity is about treating people fairly, creating conditions in our organisation that encourage and value diversity and promote dignity and ensuring all those involved with or wishing to be involved with the organisation, regardless of their diversity, are provided with opportunity based on their ability or potential to perform the required activity.
- 4.2 **Diversity: is about** understanding, appreciating and embracing differences and practicing mutual respect for qualities and experiences that are different from the majority.
- 4.3 **Inclusion:** is about creating a sense of belonging for everyone where they are respected and valued and feel a level of support and commitment from others, so that they can achieve their best and contribute to their full potential. Inclusion aims to provide the conditions for everyone to know they are welcomed by us regardless of their background.

5. MANAGEMENT AND DELIVERY OF THIS POLICY

- 5.1 Fairness, Respect, Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion are the responsibility of everyone within WFO.
- 5.2 We are committed to embedding EDI within our organisation, ensuring that everything we do and the way it is done, makes reference to and considers the impact upon our equality objectives. The leadership team of the Executive Director, Artistic Director and the Chair of the Board will demonstrate this commitment within our organisation and will act as positive role models to promote EDI across all our activities.
- 5.3 It is the responsibility of our Executive Director and Artistic Director to implement, monitor and evaluate the EDI policy in terms of employment practices (selection, recruitment, and retention) and service delivery. The Executive Director is also under a duty to ensure that the Board of Directors is regularly kept updated about the implementation of this policy.
- 5.4 Existing processes are contained within the Employee Handbook and will be used to review and investigate any complaints in relation to inappropriate or unacceptable behaviour, including any breach of this policy.

6. EQUALITY IN EMPLOYMENT

- 6.1 WFO is committed to equality in all areas of employment, including recruitment and selection, promotion and terms and conditions of employment.
- 6.2 Candidates will be selected on the basis of merit and ability, consistent with the requirements of the role, and having regard to the principles of this Policy. Where possible, selection recommendations will be made by gender balanced selection panels. All selection panel members will be trained in non-discriminatory practice.
- 6.3 Success as guided by this policy will result in:

- preventing discrimination in employment, selection and promotion;
- improving employee morale, satisfaction, engagement and productivity;
- attracting and retaining the best person for the job, regardless of their background or circumstances;

6.4 We regard discrimination, harassment, abuse, victimisation or bullying of staff, of customers or of others in the course of work as disciplinary offences that could be regarded as serious misconduct. Condoning such behaviour could also be treated as a disciplinary offence. As well as disciplining the perpetrator(s), we will give appropriate support to people who complain of harassment of themselves or others.

7. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

7.1 We will evaluate our services and the effectiveness of our EDI Policy by a variety of means, including capturing data and insights to inform our decision-making in respect of EDI.

7.2 We will report annually to the nine the outcomes of all monitoring and evaluation activities, including any trends in relation to the nine Grounds of discrimination listed in clause 3.4 and also collect data on socio – economic grounds to make our employment and services accessible for all.

8. REVIEW CYCLE

8.1 Responsibility for review of this policy sits with the Executive Director, who will prepare a formal review on compliance with this policy, which will be presented to the board of WFO annually.

8.2. Additionally, an interim review would be conducted in the following circumstances:

- a change is made to relevant legislation, including but not limited to the Employment Equality Acts 1998–2015 and the Equal Status Acts 2000-2018;
- the investigation into a negative trend indicates a review of this policy is appropriate.

9. COMPLAINTS

Complaints relating to EDI should be reported to the executive director who must report any such complaint to the board. If the complaint is about the executive director this should be made through the chair of the board. All incidents of direct discrimination or disciplinary offences within our organisation will be dealt with under the disciplinary procedure in our Employee Handbook, and incidents of indirect discrimination will be investigated to determine whether they should be dealt with under the disciplinary procedure. Any employee found to be in breach of this policy will be counselled on their actions and will be subject to disciplinary action in line with the standard terms of employment. Any member of any committee or working group found to be in breach of this policy will be counselled on their actions and where necessary be asked to leave WFO.