



In May 2021, **Words Ireland** commissioned a survey of Ireland's writers, illustrators and literature sector workers which was led by **Heather Maitland**. Over 500 people responded. In October, a presentation of the headline findings took place online, including information on pay, conditions and diversity in Irish literature. This was followed in November by a 3-part webinar series on Diversity and Inclusion in the literature sector. The webinar series examined the barriers to inclusion in the sector and identified possible solutions. It delivered presentations on projects to increase diversity and inclusion in the Irish literature sector and more widely in the arts, and presented and discussed a draft of Words Ireland's Charter for Inclusion.

The finalised Charter for Inclusion has been adopted by the seven literature organisations which make up Words Ireland: Children's Books Ireland, Irish Writers Centre, Literature Ireland, Munster Literature Centre, Poetry Ireland, Publishing Ireland and The Stinging Fly. It is a statement of intent that set out the organisations' commitment to making the literature sector more inclusive and to sharing learning on an ongoing basis. The Charter is intended to accompany each organisation's own policies, statements and plans relating to diversity and inclusion, whether those are currently published or in development. Words Ireland is grateful to Noeleen Hartigan for all the work she put into developing the Charter with Words Ireland, and to the Arts Council for funding the survey, webinars and Noeleen and Heather's work through the Capacity Building Support Scheme.

A Charter for Inclusion

This Charter has been adopted by the seven literature organisations in **Words Ireland**. We are **Children's Books Ireland, Irish Writers Centre, Literature Ireland, Munster Literature Centre, Poetry Ireland, Publishing Ireland** and **The Stinging Fly**. We encourage others to use the Charter to progress their own commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion principles.

The values we espouse have the power to change not just the world we live in, but to shape the world we create together for the future.

We want to encourage a literature sector in Ireland that is truly inclusive, fair, vibrant and progressive.

As set out in Article 15 of the UN Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and as stated in the Arts Council's Paying the Artist policy, we recognise the right of everyone to participate in the cultural life of their community, the right of artists to freedom of expression and to be adequately remunerated for their work.

We hold ourselves accountable to ensuring through our individual and collective actions that no one is denied their right to participate in literary culture on the basis of their gender identity, sexual orientation, civil or family status, religion, age, disability, race, nationality, membership of the Travelling Community or socio-economic status.

To achieve this we understand that we must be proactive in creating new ways of working. For organisations this will mean adopting a 'whole of organisation' approach including our governance structures & human resources policies, our support for artists at all stages of their career, our audience engagement, our communications and our commitment to ongoing learning.

We will not tolerate any inappropriate behaviour in the workplace, at events and during other programme activities.

We will create/adopt appropriate procedures within our organisation to ensure such behaviour will be investigated and/or reported.

We recognise that even as we make our organisations more open, people may continue to experience discrimination. We acknowledge that we have much to learn. We will convene a year after the charter's adoption to reflect on our learning.