



The Irish Writers Centre

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Policy

Contents:

- 1. Who we are**
- 2. Statement of Intent**
- 3. Our Pledges**
- 4. Who is Responsible?**
- 5. How will we know our actions are working?**

1. Who We Are

For over thirty years, the Irish Writers Centre (IWC) has acknowledged and uplifted those with the courage and compulsion to write by providing opportunities for them to develop their skills, advance their ambitions and join a vibrant community of people who share their passion and purpose. We do so because we believe in the power of writing to create understanding, to bring enjoyment to our world and to collectively imagine what it might become.

2. Statement of Intent

As the only national organisation for writers across all genres on the island, we recognise the importance of and need to cultivate a diverse and inclusive writing community that is fully representative of contemporary Ireland. As such, we are committed to the principles and practices of equality, diversity and inclusion and will continue to ensure that these principles are fully embedded at every level of our organisation.

We recognise the structural barriers that face many individuals entering the literature world in Ireland, and specifically acknowledge an absence of Black, people of Colour, Traveller, Roma and working-class representation within it. In line with this, we are committed to taking positive policy and programming measures to promote equality of opportunity, access and outcomes for all those living in Ireland regardless of their gender, sexual orientation, civil or family status, religion, age, disability, race or membership of the Traveller community, as well as socio-economic background in line with the Arts Council's Equality, Human Rights and Diversity Policy.

As well as the creation and delivery of bespoke EDI supports and programmes, we are continually reflecting critically on our programmes, our physical and online spaces, and our actions in order to improve access and ensure our services meet as wide and diverse a group of people as possible.

Our increased focus on remote delivery since the pandemic has enabled access to those wishing to attend an activity who were previously excluded due to geography, travel costs, childcare or caring responsibilities and disabilities.

3. Our Pledges

The IWC 2022-2026 strategy acts as a roadmap which informs all our actions. In it, we state our ethos as follows:

“The Irish Writers Centre is committed to the principles and practices of equality, diversity and inclusion. We are also committed to advancing the thinking and practices that support a sustainable environment”.

The twin statements which form the IWC's ethos permeate all programming. In respect of EDI values, the IWC commits to removing barriers to participation in literature, placing diversity, equality of opportunity and social inclusion at the heart of our programming.

We pledge to:

- **Create stimulus opportunities that encourage and enable people from underrepresented groups to explore writing.**

How? Continue with current supports and programmes and/or develop new, more relevant schemes which reflect the needs of underrepresented writers, as expressed by them. We let underrepresented writers know that they are welcome in every call for new IWC opportunities.

- **Ensure that IWC writers of the future will be more representative of the community that surrounds us in all its diversity across the island of Ireland.**

How? Through active outreach with partners and data collection to measure footfall and to evaluate the rate of our success.

- **Continue to be welcoming and inclusive and make changes until EDI practices become literally part of our DNA as an organisation. We will develop a board, team and facilitators who are representative of the community around us and places and spaces that best enable our work across the island of Ireland.**

How? This aspiration will become apparent in visible and invisible ways and will need time to create a distance from which to measure. Evidence of progress may include the number of EDI staff/board members, the level of engagement with target writer groups and the language which we use to describe ourselves in the future.

4. Who is Responsible?

The Irish Writers Centre Board is actively committed to the principles of equality, diversity and inclusion and seeks to ensure the IWC be as accessible and as open an organisation as possible.

The Director/CEO and Deputy Director work to ensure EDI values are embedded in programmes, supports and initiatives throughout their realisation.

The IWC team holds weekly meetings and quarterly planning meetings to future-proof programming and assess the level of delivery of strategic targets, in line with actions agreed as part of the strategic plan. EDI values are part of the day-to-day conversations we have, to ensure that our work is accessible to all.

Equality, diversity and inclusion are core responsibilities for the IWC Team, who undergo regularly training on the subject.

5. How will we know our actions are working?

We have strengthened our accountability framework to provide a robust scrutiny of this EDI Policy at regular intervals by the IWC team and Governance Sub-committee.

This policy is approved by the Board and published on our website and reviewed annually.

When we are seeing a visible and active engagement from writers in underrepresented groups within the IWC

Annual Review

This policy is currently under review (as of February 2024).