



Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Policy & Action Plan

1. Introduction

Ballet Ireland (BI) is committed to encouraging equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) among our employees, volunteers, Board members, artists and production teams, and to eliminating unlawful discrimination. The organisation – in providing goods, services and/or facilities – is also committed to opposing unlawful discrimination against members of the public.

Our aim is for our organisation to be truly representative of all sections of society and our audiences, and for everyone who works with us to feel respected and able to give their best.

This document brings together our EDI Policy (Part A) and the Action Plan through which we put it into practice (Part B). Together they are intended to embed EDI within our organisation and to ensure that everything we do makes reference to, and considers the impact upon, our EDI objectives. Placing EDI centre stage in our organisation will enrich the cultural landscape and ensure that the transformative power of dance plays its part in contributing to EDI for all in society.

PART A – POLICY

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- all employees, whether temporary, part-time or full-time;
- volunteers and members of the Board of Directors;
- artists, guest choreographers, creatives and production personnel engaged by BI;
- job applicants; and
- audiences, participants, visitors and members of the public who use our services.

3. Legal framework and protected grounds

BI will not unlawfully discriminate on any of the nine grounds protected under the Employment Equality Acts 1998–2015 and the Equal Status Acts 2000–2018:

- gender (including gender identity)
- civil status (including marriage and civil partnership)
- family status
- sexual orientation
- religion (including religious belief, background or none)
- age
- disability
- race (including colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origin)
- membership of the Traveller community

Less favourable treatment of a woman in connection with pregnancy or maternity leave is treated as discrimination on the gender ground.

In line with the Arts Council’s Equality, Human Rights and Diversity Policy and Strategy, BI also recognises socio-economic status as a tenth ground. References in this document to “the ten grounds” mean the nine statutory grounds above together with socio-economic status.

4. Purpose of this policy

The purpose of this policy is to:

1. Provide equality, fairness and respect for all in our employment, whether temporary, part-time or full-time, and for everyone who engages with BI.

2. Not unlawfully discriminate on any of the grounds set out in Section 3.
3. Oppose and avoid all forms of unlawful discrimination. This includes in:
 - o pay and benefits
 - o terms and conditions of employment
 - o dealing with grievances and discipline
 - o dismissal
 - o redundancy
 - o leave for parents
 - o requests for flexible working
 - o selection for employment, promotion, training or other developmental opportunities

5. Our commitments

Ballet Ireland commits to:

1. Encourage equality, diversity and inclusion in the workplace, as they are good practice and make business sense.
2. Create a working environment free of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, promoting dignity and respect for all, and where individual differences and the contributions of all staff are recognised and valued.

This commitment includes training managers and all other employees about their rights and responsibilities under this policy. Responsibilities include staff conducting themselves to help the organisation provide equal opportunities in employment, and to prevent bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination.

All staff should understand that they, as well as their employer, can be held liable for acts of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, in the course of their employment, against fellow employees, guest choreographers and creatives, and the public.

3. Take seriously complaints of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination by fellow employees, customers, suppliers, visitors, the public and any others in the course of the organisation's work activities.

Such acts will be dealt with as misconduct under the organisation's grievance and/or disciplinary procedures, and appropriate action will be taken. Particularly serious complaints could amount to gross misconduct and lead to dismissal without notice.

Further, sexual harassment may amount to both an employment rights matter and a criminal matter, such as in sexual assault allegations. In addition, harassment under the Harassment, Harmful Communications and Related Offences Act 2020 – which is not

limited to circumstances where harassment relates to a protected ground – is a criminal offence.

4. Provide reasonable accommodation to enable people with disabilities to access and participate in employment and in our activities, as required under the Employment Equality Acts and Equal Status Acts.
5. Make opportunities for training, development and progress available to all staff, who will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential, so their talents and resources can be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the organisation.
6. Make decisions concerning staff based on merit (apart from any necessary and limited exemptions and exceptions allowed under the Employment Equality Acts).
7. Review employment practices and procedures when necessary to ensure fairness, and update them and this policy to take account of changes in the law.
8. Monitor the make-up of the workforce across the ten grounds in encouraging equality, diversity and inclusion, and in meeting the aims and commitments set out in this document. Such information will be collected on a voluntary and confidential basis, reported only in anonymised form, and processed in line with GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018.

Monitoring will also include assessing how this policy and the Action Plan in Part B are working in practice, reviewing them annually, and considering and taking action to address any issues.

6. Disciplinary and grievance procedures

Details of the organisation's grievance and disciplinary policies and procedures can be found in the Employee Handbook. This includes with whom an employee should raise a grievance.

Use of the organisation's grievance or disciplinary procedures does not affect an employee's right to refer a complaint to the Workplace Relations Commission (WRC) within six months of the alleged discrimination (extendable to twelve months for reasonable cause). Members of the public who believe they have been discriminated against in accessing our services may raise this with BI directly and also have the right to refer a complaint to the WRC under the Equal Status Acts.

PART B – ACTION PLAN

Ballet Ireland is committed to following the Action Plan set out below in order to deliver the commitments in Part A across three areas: our audiences; our employees, volunteers and Board members; and our artistic and production teams.

7. Audiences

Goals

- To be welcoming and accessible to all audiences, including persons with disabilities both visible and invisible.
- To make live performance of ballet and dance available to as broad and diverse an audience as possible by continuing to share the magic of BI with our existing audiences while also seeking new and more diverse audiences, particularly audiences that are reflective of Ireland's diversity.
- To broaden and deepen community engagement by developing strategic partnerships and providing a platform for dynamic, sustained engagement and participation in the arts by diverse communities, and making cultural experiences more accessible to them, in order for them to engage and participate meaningfully in the arts.
- To use digital technology and broadcasting media to ensure more people engage with ballet as an art form through our website, YouTube channel, other social media platforms, and national and international broadcasting channels.
- To capture data that will measure audience engagement with ballet and their awareness of it, and assess what other opportunities might exist to take ballet to a broader audience.

Actions

- Ensure equality of access for those who use our services by:
 - carrying out an accessibility audit of the theatres we tour to;
 - exploring the possibility of having audio-described and/or sensory-friendly performances;
 - making our website fully accessible;
 - communicating with our audiences using inclusive language across all media (our website, social media and printed materials);
 - addressing how ballet is perceived and removing barriers to accessing ballet as an art form for economic or other reasons;
 - creating shared experiences by continuing to make free events available in different spaces and places around Ireland;

- presenting contemporary ballet repertoire that appeals to a range of diverse audiences;
 - presenting a variety of events which allow access at different price points; and
 - taking ballet beyond the confines of a conventional space or idea of a theatre, and enticing new audiences to explore ballet by continuing to develop initiatives such as pop-up events, community ballet and tickets in the community.
- Through further collaboration with bodies such as the Arts Council, ensure that the diverse communities of Ireland have the opportunity to immerse themselves in the artistic activities of BI each year by continuing to engage with schools, academic institutions, care homes, youth groups, family support groups and other community groups, welcoming them all to experience ballet.
- Continue to make our productions available to viewers through online broadcasts and across social media platforms on a free-to-view basis.
- Listen and learn from our audiences, in particular those with diverse requirements, to ensure that any innovations we put in place are appropriate and useful. Explore how best to capture feedback from our audiences about current barriers to engagement with BI, and to understand and put steps in place that will make BI more accessible and attractive for them.

8. Employees, Volunteers and Board Members

Goals

- To embed EDI in the workplace, recognising, respecting and valuing differences among our employees, volunteers and Board members in order to promote an inclusive culture for all.
- To create a working environment free of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, while promoting tolerance, fairness, dignity and respect for all, and ensuring that individual differences and the contributions of all employees, volunteers, Board members, artists, visitors, the public and any others we meet in the course of our work are recognised and valued.
- To recruit and engage employees, volunteers and Board members without discrimination on any of the ten grounds set out in Section 3 (the nine statutory grounds plus socio-economic status, as set out in the Arts Council's EDI Policy and Strategy).
- To develop a process to capture data to monitor the impact and success of this policy.

Actions

- Treat each other with respect, actively listening to and hearing one another.
- Be welcoming and accessible to all employees, Board members and volunteers.
- Challenge inappropriate and offensive behaviours, using informal and open dialogue with colleagues and, if needed, through HR policies and processes.
- Use gender-neutral language across our organisation in all formal and informal correspondence and documents.
- Continue to provide training to employees, volunteers and Board members about equality awareness and about their rights and responsibilities under this policy, including:
 - the responsibility to prevent bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination;
 - providing EDI training (including Safe to Create training) to all new employees, volunteers and Board members; and
 - reviewing EDI-related policies annually, explaining changes resulting from a policy review and providing training on the content of any new policies.
- Ensure that gender equality and diversity are of central importance to our organisation and within all our existing HR policies, including:
 - recruitment, induction and performance management, and stating our support of diverse voices in our communications regarding employment opportunities;
 - assessing more closely the diversity of our employees, volunteers and Board members in recruitment and Board selection processes;
 - carrying out a review of the methods used for communicating all vacancies;
 - promoting job opportunities through open and transparent recruitment processes;
 - providing equality and fairness for all job applicants; and
 - ensuring fair treatment of applicants which is free from bias.
- Capture data through a voluntary, anonymous survey of employees, volunteers and Board members to assess how our EDI-related policies and Action Plan are working, particularly in respect of the take-up of any specific benefits against the ten grounds, so as to identify and address any unfavourable trends.

9. Artistic and Production Teams

Goals

- To recruit and employ artists and production personnel without discrimination on any of the ten grounds set out in Section 3 (the nine statutory grounds plus socio-

economic status, as set out in the Arts Council's EDI Policy and Strategy), properly remunerating them for their work and honouring the principle of fair and proportionate rates of pay.

- To ensure BI is welcoming, accessible, safe and supportive to all our artists and production teams in all their diversity.
- To promote opportunities to the widest possible group of artists and production personnel, and to encourage all artists and production teams to develop their skills and resources so that they can reach their full potential.
- To capture data and insights in relation to our artists and production personnel in order to inform our decision-making.

Actions

- Recruit people who are representative of the diverse and contemporary society in which we live.
- Continue to be committed to gender balance in our selection process in respect of our artistic and production teams, and embrace the full diversity of their talent.
- Ensure all our artistic and production personnel feel equally valued, included and supported.
- Commit to paying all employees a living wage as a minimum and continue to subscribe fully to the Arts Council's Paying the Artist policy.
- Continue to make our performance spaces welcoming and accessible. Ensure we are a safe space for all artists and production teams, with no tolerance for disrespectful speech or behaviour, harassment or bullying, and treat everyone fairly and with respect.
- Continue to balance the gender of choreographers engaged by us by committing to the presentation of work by female choreographers and supporting work by female choreographers through the commissioning of new work.
- Support young and talented artists and production personnel in Ireland, providing them with a springboard for their careers through professional training, mentorship, apprenticeship and employment.
- Collect and analyse data, on a voluntary and anonymous basis, to better understand the ten grounds as they pertain to artists and to gain a better perspective on the diversity of the artists who work with us.
- Explore how best to introduce a meaningful feedback mechanism among all our artists and production teams, and evaluate our actions and outcomes and how they impact them.

PART C – MONITORING, REVIEW AND APPROVAL

10. Monitoring and review

Progress on the actions set out in this Action Plan shall be monitored on an ongoing basis by the General Manager, who will present a report annually to the Board at the beginning of each year. EDI shall be an agenda item at each of the regular Governance meetings and at periodic Board meetings. The Board shall assess how BI's EDI Policy & Action Plan is working in practice and take action to ensure that the goals set out are achieved.

This Policy & Action Plan is a living document through which we aim to create a more diverse and engaged organisation of employees, volunteers, Board members, artists and audiences. We know we might not always succeed in the goals we have set, but we aim to listen, learn and improve. We will strive to identify where improvements and changes are needed and continue to improve this document, which will be reviewed at least annually and whenever there are relevant changes in the law.

11. Agreement to follow this policy

This Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy & Action Plan is fully supported by senior management and has been agreed with the Board of Directors of Ballet Ireland.

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