

Garter Lane Arts Centres Equality & Diversity Policy

We at Garter Lane Arts Centre echo the Arts Councils 2019 protocol on Equality, Human Rights & Diversity Policy & Strategy. Like the Arts Council we are committing to taking actions over the course of the coming years to actively deepen our understanding of inequalities in the arts and develop substantive ways to address them. We recognise that our policy must be proactive from the outset. In our own organisation and practice and we will work towards ensuring that our board, staff, advisers, and panellists, best reflect and represent the diversity of contemporary Ireland. We endeavour to support great art work, centred on respecting diversity of artistic practice, of public engagement, and of social and cultural traditions. This core value attests to the organisation's commitment to and appreciation of the value of diversity.

Garter Lane Arts Centre (GL) acknowledges and firmly believes that every person has the right to create, engage with, enjoy, and participate in the arts.

As a publicly funded organisation Garter Lane is taking measures to promote equality of opportunity, access and outcomes for all those living in its environs regardless of their gender, sexual orientation, civil or family status, religion, age, disability, race or membership of the Traveller community. We also recognise background as a further basis for which equality of opportunity, access and outcomes must be guaranteed.

- We assert our belief that a diverse organisation is a more dynamic and effective organisation and undertakes as a publicly funded organisation to become more representative of the population in our city and country
- Is invested in the creative case for diversity, recognising that increased diversity and equality in the arts supports richer creativity in Ireland and impacts positively on arts development, as well as wider social, cultural, and economic development
- Sets out its understanding of the need for the arts sector to be reflective of Ireland in all its diversity, ensuring equality of opportunity; equality of access, participation and outcomes and equality of representation
- Undertakes to review and adjust its awards and funding programmes, towards ensuring their recipients and beneficiaries better reflect the population profile of contemporary Ireland, inclusive of the most disadvantaged groups

Equality and Diversity Aims at Garter Lane Arts Centre

1) Programme

- To create a rich programme that is exciting because it reflects a range of artists, interests, cultures and creative practice from our community and the wider world we inhabit.

2) Audiences

- To create an audience that reflects the exciting and invigorating diversity of Waterford.

- To increase engagement with the work that we do from targeted groups from within our community.

3) **Governance**

- To ensure Garter Lane actively and meaningfully engages with Equality and Diversity practice through Board monitoring of the Business Plan, setting and achieving targets.
- To exceed the legal obligations for Equality and Diversity and fully comply with Irish and European law.

4) **Leadership and workforce**

- To reflect the diversity of our community in our workforce and Board and create a safe, welcoming and accessible organisation

5) **Partnerships and Collaborations**

- To work in partnership to help Garter Lane exceed its Equality and Diversity targets, learn from others and make effective use of limited resources.

The objectives of Garter Lane in striving to be an Equal Opportunities organisation are:

- Ensuring that no member of staff, Board member, volunteer, visitor, audience member / user group is subject to unfair or unlawful discrimination.
- Ensuring that staff and Board members understand the forms and effects of discrimination.
- Seeking to ensure the composition of the staff and Board reflects the demographics of Waterford City.
- Ensuring that the premises are fully accessible for disabled people, in the ability to move around the building, use equipment (as appropriate and in line with health and safety provisions) and access services provided by the organisation as realistically as possible. Our Studio building for example, is a protected structure and we are constrained with stone steps access and the inability to provide a lift. However, our Gallery and Theatre buildings are fully compliant with disability access for patrons.
- Strengthening links with groups experiencing discrimination.
- Increasing awareness within the organisation of the needs of groups which experience discrimination in order to provide relevant services.

The Executive Director of Garter Lane will be responsible for developing, implementing and monitoring the policy in conjunction with the Board. The Management Team and all permanent members of staff (part-time and full-time) will assist the Executive Director in implementing and monitoring the Equality and Diversity Policy. All contract and project personnel will be required to promote equality of opportunity as part of their terms of engagement.

Areas to be covered include:

- Board composition
- Employment practices and terms of employment
- Artistic Policy
- Marketing policy
- Education and outreach policy and programmes
- Training
- Monitoring
- Budget
- Action Plan

Board Composition

- The Board of Directors will seek to develop representation at Board level to reflect a balance of racial origin, gender, disability, age, sexual orientation, religion or belief.
- The Board recognises that this is a process that cannot be achieved overnight and will therefore review Board membership and representation on a bi-annual basis.
- Two members of the Board are nominated by the local Council. The Board will request that the local authorities assist in achieving a balanced representation through their choice of nominees. In other instances, should a Board member retire or resign suitable applicants from various ethnic backgrounds and disabled applicants will be particularly encouraged to consider Board membership.

Employment Practices and Terms of Employment

All job vacancies will be advertised. Advertisements will include, "Garter Lane strives to be an Equal Opportunity organisation".

Full or part time permanent positions

- The selection of candidates to be interviewed will be based on the strength of the applicants' abilities to undertake the position. No candidate will be refused an interview on the basis of race, religion, disability, gender, sexuality, age or cultural beliefs.
- The interview process will be the same for each candidate and will be determined and agreed by the Interview Panel prior to the commencement of interviews. Garter Lane will seek to provide training in interview techniques for all senior staff regularly involved in interviews. Particular regard will be given to racism awareness training.
- All interviewed candidates not selected for the position will be informed in writing.

All employees will be given a copy of their job descriptions and contracts for signature. All employees will have access to a copy of the Garter Lanes Handbook. Probationary periods, disciplinary procedures and methods for facilitation of disputes are included in the GL Staff Handbook. GL also undertakes to advise employees of their legal right to take their case to an industrial tribunal or other relevant agencies.

Job contracts will seek to comply with best practice provisions, within the resources available to GL in relation to:

- Instigating the qualifying period to one year for unfair dismissal
- Creating an open work environment that seeks out views of all staff
- Ensuring staff members' right to trade union representation is protected
- Recognising a trade union which has the backing of the majority of the workforce
- Ensuring employees have the right to trade union representation during grievance or disciplinary hearings
- Providing for continuance of contracts and seniority during maternity or parental leave (unless terminated through dismissal or resignation) and ensuring protection against dismissal or detriment for time off associated with maternity or parental leave, as defined in the Staff Manual.
- Providing a right to reasonable time off for family emergencies

Access Policy

GL will seek to ensure that barriers to the public accessing services and/or GLAC's artistic programmes are removed. In achieving this GL will:

- Review pricing policies
- Monitor accessibility to the building, accessibility within the building and use of equipment to ensure the widest possible access by disabled people
- Review signage and language used to direct people around the buildings

Commissioning and Programme Policies

The commissioning and programme policies will seek to ensure that artists from a range of backgrounds (ethnic diversity, gender/sexuality, disability) are given the opportunity of engaging in any programmes, education and outreach projects and special commissions for GL exhibitions, performances and film.

All artists and creative teams engaged by GL to undertake programmes will be required to promote equality of opportunities as part of their terms of engagement.

Marketing Policy

- Where relevant, GL written marketing will include 'GL strives to be an Equal Opportunities organisation'.

Engagement Programmes

- GL will strive to ensure that there is a balance in its Engagement services to enhance opportunities to arts practices for all, as well as ensuring that employment opportunities for artists are inclusive of artists from culturally diverse backgrounds and disabled artists
- All artists engaged by GL to undertake education or outreach programmes will be required to promote equality of opportunities as part of their terms of engagement.
- Relevant diversity and disability awareness training will be available for all freelance workshop leaders, with additional training focussing on working with specific groups organised for relevant projects.

Training

- Each member of staff will be acquainted with GL's Equality and Diversity Policy to ensure awareness regarding the rights and responsibilities of each individual employee under the policy as well as staff responsibilities to participants in programmes, users and visitors.
- GL will continue to seek adequate funding from its funding bodies to enable appropriate training to be undertaken.
- GL will seek to identify staff training needs to develop, in full, the skills and potential of all employees and offer training and promotion opportunities according to staff members' abilities and without discrimination.
- All staff members will be required to attend Disability and Diversity Awareness training.
- GL will seek to provide training in interview techniques for senior staff regularly involved in interviews.

Monitoring

The Equality and Diversity Policy will be monitored annually to measure effectiveness of the policy.

Monitoring will be carried out by the Executive Director and Managers and will be undertaken by:

- Keeping records of all interview processes and selection panel members for 6 months post interview date.
- Keeping confidential records on the background of current employees adding relevant information to their personnel records and monitoring progress in the organisation.
- Keeping records of any disciplinary matters that arise and how these are dealt with.
- Reviewing the composition of the staff and Board members and analysing visitor / audience profiles wherever practicable.
- Reviewing the quality and quantity of projects and programmes initiated or developed with community, education groups or disabled people, mixed cultural backgrounds, sexuality, gender and age ranges.

- Reviewing prices charged for education and outreach workshops or exhibitions/cinema programmes.
- The Executive Director will undertake a full review of the development, implementation and monitoring of the Equality and Diversity Policy every three years in collaboration with the Board.

Budget

Areas to be costed annually as part of budget setting include:

- Training
- Recruitment
- Marketing - in relation to media and interpretation requirements
- Access and inclusion requirements

Action Plan

It is recognised that the development and implementation of the Equality and Diversity Policy will be ongoing with short-term and long-term objectives, achievable depending on resources.

This Action Plan reflects the short term and long-term nature of the implementation of the Policy and will be reviewed annually by the Management Team and the Board.