

HIGHLANES GALLERY

Policy no 41

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

Highlanes Gallery's Gender Equality and Diversity Policy sets out the core areas of the business wherein principles of equality, diversity and inclusivity are mainstreamed and applied on an ongoing basis. This policy seeks to ensure we are open, accessible and inclusive for all. To this end, we intend to:

Cultivate and value a diversity of perspectives among our staff and artists in our exhibition, School and studio programmes and in the communities we serve; and

Foster a work environment in which everyone involved in whatever capacity feels respected, supported in their growth and able to contribute fully to the organisation's work.

We commit to positive policy 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. The legislation defines discrimination as treating one person in a less favourable way than another person.

- **Gender:** this means man, woman or transgender
- **Civil status:** includes single, married, separated, divorced, widowed people, civil partners and former civil partners
- **Family status:** this refers to the parent of a person under 18 years or the resident primary carer or parent of a person with a disability
- **Sexual orientation:** includes gay, lesbian, bisexual and heterosexual
- **Religion:** means religious belief, background, outlook or none
- **Age:** this does not apply to a person aged under 16
- **Disability:** includes people with physical, intellectual, learning, cognitive or emotional disabilities and a range of medical conditions
- **Race:** includes race, skin colour, nationality or ethnic origin
- Membership of the **Traveller community**.

This policy seeks to ensure we are open, accessible and inclusive for all.

Gender Equality & Diversity Policy

Board & Governance

Highlanes Gallery will continue its consistent approach to ensuring gender parity on its Board and in its Governance and Management structures. It will also restate its interest in diverse voices in its communications regarding Board vacancies.

We are committed to anti-racism and anti-discrimination, in our working practices, our programme, our policies and our organisational ethos. We are committed to ensuring that no conscious or unconscious bias is at play in all of our activities and as an organisation.

We will continue to challenge ourselves as staff and Board to understand and correct any inequities we may discover within our organisation and the work that we produce.

We are committed to being a safe space for everyone with no tolerance for disrespectful speech or behaviour. We want to challenge perceptions and behaviours relating to all the grounds.

HR Policies, Recruitment & Selection

Within all existing HR policies – in particular, recruitment, induction – the issue of gender equality & diversity will remain of central importance.

Through open and transparent recruitment processes, the aim of the policy is to ensure no job applicant, employee or worker is discriminated against either directly or indirectly on the grounds of gender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race, or membership of the Traveller Community, social or economic background.

In relation to recruitment Highlanes Gallery will:

- Seek to recruit from as wide a talent pool as possible, and will proactively ensure that its recruitment activity is inclusive.
- Not discriminate directly or indirectly against any applicant or candidate to employment in relation to Gender.
- Select candidates on the basis of merit – ensuring the candidate with the talent, skills, competencies and experience most suited to the post is selected.
- Identify and remove any unnecessary barriers that might impede the application or selection of an eligible candidate, across all nine equality grounds.
- Ensure transparency of recruitment procedures.

It is the responsibility of all staff to ensure that visitors to gallery and participants in the programme are treated equally and with respect. Diversity is about learning from others

who are not the same and about dignity and respect for all.

The Board is committed and proactive in developing board diversity and to include individuals regardless of gender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race, membership of the Traveller Community or social or economic background. All employees are expected to respect the right of each individual to dignity in their working life. All employees will be treated equally and respected for their individuality and diversity. All artists, students and the public using the Gallery are entitled to expect the same behaviour.

Public Programme

The role of Highlanes Gallery in nurturing artists and new audience members is crucial. It achieves this purpose by engaging with groups and communities that may not always have perceived museums and galleries as welcoming or accessible to them. The team will continue to work alongside academic institutions, local schools, community groups and other representative organisations to ensure access, learning and development opportunities are made available to the widest possible demographic and that the approach to gender equality & diversity is embedded in all of these public programme activities. Other off site partners include Day Care Centres, Care Homes, Poetry Groups and Creative Writing Groups.

We maintain and develop networks with other arts organisations through collaborations and partnerships. For example, with educational institutions by facilitating trips to the Gallery.

Programming

In ensuring that the Highlanes Gallery fulfils its role as a Gallery, it must serve its audiences through programming a diverse and wide-ranging repertoire. This necessitates: **(i)** an awareness and interrogation of narratives not currently expressed or seen; and **(ii)** ensuring work from new and diverse perspectives is actively nurtured.

Artistic Development

Supporting the development of the artform, in all its diversity, places a requirement on the Highlanes Gallery, to ensure it is accessible and receptive to Ireland's artists in all their diversity.

Marketing and Communications

Our marketing materials are disseminated through our website, newsletter, word-of-mouth, and social media/print media platforms are non-discriminatory and reflect BCPS's commitment to equality for all stakeholders.

Reporting & Measurement

The ongoing necessity for measurement and if required, evolution of this policy, will be overseen by the Board on a bi-annual basis. It is considered to be a living document which will be reviewed on the basis of its effectiveness, and revised, should this be required.

Inclusion

The following principles set out the everyday behaviours that foster a healthy, inclusive culture at the Highlanes Gallery.

For our staff, an Inclusive Culture means:

- 1)** Treating each other with respect and actively listening to one another;
- 2)** Being genuinely open to feedback and interrogating our own behaviours;
- 3)** Amplifying colleagues when their voices are not heard;
- 4)** Being consciously aware of bias and its impact on our decision-making – ensuring we question it in others, too;
- 5)** Challenging offensive or inappropriate behaviours, through informal and open dialogue with colleagues, and if necessary, through relevant HR policies and processes;
- 6)** Understanding that we all play a role in creating and sustaining an inclusive culture.
- 7)** All employees are expected to respect the right of each individual to dignity in their working life.
- 8)** All employees will be treated equally and respected for their individuality and diversity.
- 9)** All artists, students and the public using the Highlanes Gallery are entitled to expect the same behaviour.

Reviewed, updated and approved by Board of Directors, July 2026

HIGHLANES GALLERY

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan

Policy Action	Desired Outcome	Timeline	Department
Establish an EDI committee	To have a working EDI committee chaired by senior management	2025	Senior Management
Highlanes Staff Training	Provide training opportunities for staff around areas such as Equal Opportunities, Unconscious Bias, Dignity at Work, Intercultural and Anti-racism training	On-Going	All Staff
Drogheda Cultural Services Staff Training	Provide training opportunities for staff around areas such as Equal Opportunities, Unconscious Bias, Dignity at Work, Intercultural and Anti-racism training	On-Going	CE Staff
Incorporate EDI objectives into the Gallery's strategic plan	Ensure EDI objectives play a key role in informing the gallery's new strategic plan & annual action plan. Provide opportunity for the EDI committee and staff to have an input into this process	2026	Senior Management, Visitors Service Officer PR & Marketing/Admin
Ensure EDI is an on-going focus for the gallery	The Committee will regularly review EDI initiatives within the gallery to ensure actions are being implemented and adjustment made where necessary	On-Going	Senior Management
Update Social Narrative online	Continue to reflect and update our Social Narrative online to ensure we are working within the most update and accessible practices	On-Going	Senior Management Visitors Service Officer Pr & Marketing/Admin
Establish working partners with an aim of creating more accessible programming	Work with Arts and Disability Ireland, Age and Opportunity, Alzheimer Society of Ireland, and Drogheda Outcomers & Development Perspectives	On-Going	Senior Management Visitors Service Officer
Build inclusive relationships with diverse communities both locally and nationally	Host workshops and events that celebrate and promote different cultures which will encourage future engagement opportunities within the Gallery	On-Going	Learning and Public Engagement