

Age & Opportunity
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
Approved by the Board on 29th April 2025

Purpose and Scope

The purpose of this policy is to provide clear guidance as to how Age & Opportunity commits to and promotes an ethos of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI). The policy will also provide the basis on which objectives relating to EDI can be set and then implemented via an annual action plan, subject to organisation needs and requirements.

This policy applies to Age & Opportunity employees, independent contractors and volunteers, including Board members. The policy also applies to participants in our programmes and the communities in which the activities of Age & Opportunity are provided.

Policy Statement

Age & Opportunity is committed to being an organisation where every person feels included, valued, protected and where they can be themselves. We strive to be a place where diversity is recognised and equity is pursued. Age & Opportunity values the contribution of every person, and we are committed to ensuring that every person is treated with dignity, respect and no person is subjected to discrimination in any form.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Equality and Equity

Equality is defined as *“the same status, rights and responsibilities for all the members of a society, group or family”* (Collins Dictionary). The Employment Equality Acts (1998-2015) outlaw discrimination in relation to employment related areas. The Equal Status Acts (2000-2018) prohibits discrimination in the provision of goods and services, accommodation and education. Both of these Acts cover the nine grounds of discrimination which are: Gender, Civil Status, Family Status, Age, Disability, Sexual Orientation, Race, Religion and Membership of the Traveller Community.

The organisation not only recognises and is committed to the concept of equality but also to that of Equity. Equity is defined by Collins Dictionary as *“the quality of being impartial, reasonable or fair”*. Striving for equity ensures that there is fairness while seeking to address inequalities that exist.

Diversity

Diversity is about differences, both seen and unseen. The practice of committing to diversity ensures that organisations involve and include people with many differences in order to benefit from a range of perspectives and experiences and to be representative of the communities we live in.

Inclusion

Inclusion is where differences are valued and used to enable every person to contribute to their full potential. Inclusion allows people to be their full self and can be a part of the groups and communities that they wish to be involved in.

Commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Age & Opportunity ensures that all employees undergo Safe to Create training which is a programme designed and developed by the Irish Arts and Creative Sectors to promote Dignity at Work. This mandatory training consists of three separate modules on the subjects of Unconscious Bias, Tackling Bullying and Harassment at Work and Being an Active Bystander.

Upon completion of this training all employees sign a pledge which states their commitment to contributing to a *“safe, inclusive, respectful workplace environment where every person can thrive, free from all forms of harassment, discrimination, bullying and violence”*.

An emphasis on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion is present throughout our Programmes, policy positions and ethos.

Age & Opportunity commits to Equality, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion by ensuring that:

- Our workplace policies, practices and behaviours foster a fair, open and inclusive culture, in which every person can work together effectively and achieve their potential.
- Any behaviour, actions or words that breach this policy will not be tolerated and will be addressed via the appropriate policy and procedures. The organisation has a robust Dignity at Work policy in relation to bullying, harassment and sexual harassment in the workplace.
- We raise awareness of our own unconscious biases and aim to ensure fairness and equity for all in all aspects of our operations.
- We promote our ‘Mind Your Language’ guidelines amongst Government departments, partners and the media to ensure that older people are appropriately represented.
- We respect all ideas and we work together to develop and support open communication and feedback mechanisms.
- We respond quickly and responsibly to any complaints of discrimination, victimisation, intimidation, harassment, bullying or misconduct. We encourage everyone to call out or challenge exclusionary behaviour.
- We raise awareness of our EDI policy through our website, our written contracts for services and in our communications regarding awards.
- We are committed to prevention of unlawful discrimination against participants in our programmes, volunteers, trainers, artists, suppliers, contractors or members of the public.
- Our employees are treated fairly, and decisions on recruitment, training and development and career progression are based solely on objective and job-related criteria.

- Our work practices reflect the needs of a modern and agile workforce, and our policies support the achievement of a work life balance.
- The requirements of those with caring responsibilities are recognised and supported by our HR Policies.
- Every effort is made to accommodate those with any additional needs and this is supported by our HR Policies.
- We set goals in relation to expanding and diversifying our audiences in a range of ways and we ensure that these goals are monitored and evaluated on a regular basis in line with the organisation's Business Plan

Special category data for EDI reporting

Age & Opportunity requests personal data from programme participants in the form of race, sexual orientation and health status. Specific consent is sought from individuals in relation to the collection and use of this data for reporting purposes. Further information in relation to the collection, processing, storage and use of special category data is available in the Data Protection Policy.

2025 EDI Goals

2024 was the first year that Age & Opportunity set EDI goals. We will review and update our goals on an annual basis.

Goal #	Type	Area	Goal	Date	Progress to date	RAG Status*
1	Internal	Board	Ensure appropriate gender balance is maintained at Board level.	Q4	At the end of 2024 there was a gender balance of 60% females /40% males at Board level.	
2	Internal	Board	Ensure older person representation on Board >60%	Q4	In 2025, 90% or 9 out of 10 of current Board members are aged over 50.	
3	Internal	Employees	Communicate the updated EDI policy to all employees on our internal HR platform.	Q2	This policy will be communicated when approved.	
4	Internal	Employees	Explore the idea of appointing an EDI Champion while also recognising that every employee plays a role.	Q3	The idea of appointing an EDI Champion will be brought to a team meeting for further exploration.	
5	Internal	Volunteers	Provide online information session to volunteers on the EDI policy.	Q3	HR Executive to set dates and communicate to volunteers.	
6	External	Participant	Increase engagement with harder to reach groups i.e. men.	Q4	This is on track through various Programme initiatives.	
7	External	Participant	Increase engagement with structurally vulnerable groups.**	Q4	Introduction of Arts Programme Traveller award	

* RAG Status

Dark green		The action is completed.
Lighter Green		The action is in progress / on track
Amber		The action is delayed or behind target,
Red		The action is at risk of not being delivered
Blue		The action is not due to be commenced

** Structurally vulnerable groups

The Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission defines a structurally vulnerable person as someone who is particularly vulnerable to violations of their civil and political rights due to political, economic, social and cultural structures. Instead of focusing on the personal characteristics of individuals and groups and viewing them as lacking agency 'structural vulnerability' refers to the structures in place which render certain sectors of the population particularly vulnerable to human rights abuses.



Age & Opportunity's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy supports the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

