Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy 2026-2028

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1. Introduction

CÉHI was established in 2016 by harpers in collaboration with An Chomhairle Ealaíon, The Arts Council, to support and promote the continuing development of Irish harping. It is the national resource organisation for the harp, its organisations, harp players and harp makers in Ireland. It's mission is twofold: firstly to continue its current momentum - attracting more performers, more learners, more harp makers and new audiences, nationally and internationally, and secondly that a World Centre for Irish Harping will be established in Dublin to act as a national asset and showcase for this iconic instrument and its practice.

Our artistic policy acknowledges that the harp occupies a unique niche in the traditional arts eco-system in Ireland and is an integral part of our national identity. The designation of harping on the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage list reflects its critical place at the centre of our living culture. Sustaining and safeguarding harping is integral to our mission.

Inclusivity, ensuring equal access to harping for all, is among our core values detailed in our strategic plan, Resonance: Building Tradition and Tomorrow, underpinning our commitment to and appreciation of the value of inclusion and diversity in the arts sector in general. Cruit Éireann|Harp Ireland (CÉHI) aims to respect diversity in our harping community, through harping practices, in public engagement, and of our harping traditions. We firmly believe that every person living on the island of Ireland has the right to engage with, enjoy and participate in every element of harping. Notwithstanding that, we recognise that there are considerable barriers to engagement with harping as an artform, as a performance channel and as a career pathway.

For many, the lack of access to harping is caused by the cost of tuition and instruments. We acknowledge that in facilitating access to harping that several approaches are necessary; from early-stage interaction with the instrument and its tradition to broaden participation and open learning opportunities, to actively seeking to promote diversity. We also recognise that our policy must be embedded in our own institutional structure and practice, and we will work towards ensuring that our board, advisory group and members reflect and represent the diversity of contemporary

Ireland. This EDI policy will be integrated into all future strategic planning and implemented through our Action Plan.

2. Policy Scope

This policy applies to all Cruit Éireann|Harp Ireland activities which involve artists, support staff, volunteers, employees (full-time, part-time and temporary), contractors, applicants and board members.

3. Policy Responsibility

The CÉHI board has responsibility for this policy, for the review thereof and for ensuring the effectiveness of actions taken in response to concerns raised under or in relation to this policy.

4. Policy Context

CÉHI's values are aligned with the Arts Council's policy *Making Great Art Work*, and the Arts Council's values. This CÉHI policy document is therefore framed in the context of the Arts Council's Equality, Human Rights and Diversity Policy and Strategy (2019), the Employment Equality Acts (1998-2015), the Equal Status Acts (2000-2018) and Section 42 of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Act 2014, otherwise known as the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty. Cruit Éireann|Harp Ireland recognises the nine protected grounds enshrined in Irish equality legislation:

- gender: self-identified, including man, woman, non-binary, transgender, and all other identities
- civil status: including single, married, separated, divorced, widowed, civil partner, former civil partner
- family status: including those who are pregnant, a parent of a person under 18 years, or the resident primary carer or parent of a person with a disability
- age: this does not apply to a person aged under 16
- race and ethnicity: including race, skin colour, nationality or ethnic origin
- religion: including religious belief, background, outlook or none
- disability: this is broadly defined including people with physical, intellectual,

learning, cognitive or emotional disabilities and a range of medical conditions
- sexual orientation: includes gay, lesbian, bisexual, or heterosexual and other orientation definitions
- membership of the Traveller community: people who are commonly called Travellers, who are identified both by Travellers and others as people with a shared history, culture and traditions, identified historically as a nomadic way of life on the island of Ireland.

Furthermore, we note the ground of socio-economic background as a further basis for which equality of opportunity, access and outcomes must be guaranteed. Cruit Éireann|Harp Ireland recognises the intersectionality of identity, and the intersecting lived experiences and backgrounds that can lead to discrimination and inequality.

5. Policy statements

5.1. Artist and Staff Engagement

Cruit Éireann|Harp Ireland will ensure that all colleagues are treated with dignity and respect and will provide a welcoming and safe environment for all. In the engagement of staff, contractors, artists, and board members CÉHI will uphold best practice by:

- Making explicit reference to our desire to recruit from underrepresented and minoritised groups in our recruitment processes.
- Ensuring that all applicants are assessed against fair and consistent criteria relating to any vacancies, and that recruitment decisions will be made against specified criteria as required for the particular vacancy.
- Ensuring that recruitment and selection competitions are open to all suitably qualified applicants, and that the recruitment process is free from any form of discrimination on any of the nine protected grounds.
- Providing equal and fair pay in accordance with our Artist Pay and Conditions Policy.
- Recognising the right of staff, contractors, volunteers to self-identify their gender and reflecting this in the use of the individual's preferred pronouns and

names in CÉHI documentation.

- Using gender neutral job titles. No reference will be made to any of the other eight grounds in classifying positions.
- Providing reasonable accommodations to facilitate persons with a disability/disabilities to apply for positions with CÉHI, to attend for interview, to engage in employment and to participate in training activities as applicable.
- Undertaking to ensure that harpers in receipt of funding reflect the population profile of contemporary Ireland, inclusive of the most disadvantaged and marginalised groups.
- Ensuring that all staff and board members undertake *Safe to Create* training.

5.2. Programme Development

Diversity will continue to be an integral part of CÉHI's event programming. CÉHI is invested in the creative case for diversity in all areas, recognising that increased diversity and equality in harping supports richer creativity in Ireland and impacts positively on development of the practice, as well as wider social and cultural impact. CÉHI will continue to make equality and diversity a key focal point in current and future programming endeavours through the implementation of our EDI Action Plan.

5.3. Public Engagement

CÉHI acknowledges the need for the harping sector to be reflective of Ireland in all its diversity, and to the best of our ability, to ensure equality of opportunity, access, participation, and representation. CÉHI is committed to inclusion and accessibility for all audience members, musicians and members of the harping community. Accessibility is hereby understood to refer to the physical accessibility of venues for audience and participants, geographic accessibility and financial accessibility. CÉHI will continue to ensure that our activities and opportunities are available nationally. We will nurture and grow our national and regional networks, designing and utilising our online media and social media platforms with accessibility as a primary concern. Access is a key priority in our EDI action plan.

5.4 Education and training

CÉHI is committed to education, training and good practice in all aspects of equality, diversity and inclusion. We will retain an open dialogue with the communities with whom we engage in order to ensure their adequate representation and access. *Safe to Create* unconscious bias, antiracism and diversity awareness training will be a minimum training requirement for those employed/contracted by CÉHI.

6. EDI Action Plan

In the development of this policy, Cruit Éireann|Harp Ireland has identified three principles which underscore our action plan and future strategy:

- *Access for All*: Cruit Éireann|Harp Ireland believes that every person living on the island of Ireland has the right to engage with, enjoy and participate in every element of harping.
- *Communication and Outreach*: Cruit Éireann | Harp Ireland acknowledges that maintaining open and accessible channels of communication is essential to the sustainability of the harping tradition in Ireland.
- *Performance and Representation*: As Ireland's national organisation for the Harp, Cruit Éireann|Harp Ireland recognises its responsibility to promote the harp as a living and evolving tradition that is reflective of the diversity of contemporary Ireland.

7. Implementation Plan

Principle 1. Access For All

Actions	**Responsibility**	**Timing**	**Measure of Success**
Clear actions emerged from cross-border symposium (NASC 2025) focusing on EDI to address lack of access to harping.	Chair, CEO	2026	Champions identified from within the sector to act as ambassadors to promote EDI. EDI an active topic for discussion at our young harpers' forum (Fóram na nÓg)

Physical access: We will ensure that insofar as possible any future purpose built CÉHI premises are fully accessible with relevant signage and design/layout considerations.	CÉHI Board and Building Project Advisory Group	Ongoing, Subject to Construction Plans	Future premises are fully accessible to all
Work with partners to support access to harping for specific communities including cross border and cross community organisations, migrants, men, people in care settings.	CÉHI Chair, CEO	Ongoing	Cross-border festival includes cross community contexts. Harp recitals take place in care settings annually. Harp music at events welcome and celebrate the culture of new communities. Hands on Harps events delivered. Harp making workshops rolled out in men's sheds

Work with partners to deliver workshops in schools and develop resource pack	CÉHI Chair, CEO	Ongoing	Schools' workshop programme delivered countrywide and resource pack distributed.
Further develop engagement with young people through Fóram na nÓg (12-18) and expand All Island Ensemble (18-25)	CÉHI Chair, CEO	Ongoing	Young people engaged countrywide on an ongoing basis, their voices heard and their needs met as young and emerging harpers

Principle 2. Communication and Outreach

Actions	**Responsibility**	**Timing**	**Measure of Success**
Our Lá na Cruite programme of events will see the harp showcased at locations across Ireland and globally.	CEO	Ongoing	Increased in-person engagement during Lá na Cruite
We will ensure that accessibility information is readily available for all CÉHI events on all ticketing platforms.	CEO	Ongoing	Accessibility information readily available for all events.

Through our *Harps for All* initiative, CÉHI will actively engage with marginalised communities through performance and participation-based activities.	CEO	Ongoing	Increase in number of events occurring in marginalised communities. Nos of collaborations initiated with community organisations, arts organisations and local authorities increased.
CÉHI will continue to actively develop working partnerships with relevant organisations, to create increased opportunities for artists and individuals experiencing disadvantage and marginalisation.	CÉHI Chair, CEO	Ongoing	Working partnerships in place and growing, and opportunities provided for marginalised harpers and audiences
We will continue to ensure that harpers from all backgrounds are included in our programmes and events.	CÉHI Chair, CEO	Ongoing	Increase in diversity of harpers represented at CÉHI events

We will make explicit reference to our desire to engage and employ individuals from minority communities in all recruitment drives	Board and CEO	Ongoing	Increase in representation from underrepresented groups.
CÉHI will continue to offer financially accessible learning opportunities for harpers countrywide.	CÉHI Chair and CEO	Ongoing	Increased low or no cost workshop opportunities for harpers at all stages of learning.

Principle 3. Performance and Representation

Actions	**Responsibility**	**Timing**	**Measure of Success**
Through regional concert initiatives, we will feature events in all four provinces ensuring access for all.	CÉHI Chair, CEO	Ongoing	Growth in audiences countrywide
Provide free introductory education on the history and cultural significance of the harp in Ireland to young people across Ireland.	CÉHI Chair, CEO	2028	Online resource pack available online and extended to secondary schools. Increase in interest in the harp across the Island.

Through the *Perspectives and Podcasts* initiative, CÉHI will continue to give voice to harpers who represent the diversity of contemporary Ireland	CÉHI Chair, CEO	Ongoing	Increased diversity of voices platformed and growth in engagement with online resources.
Diversity is central to board succession plans and hiring processes.	CÉHI Board and CEO	Ongoing	Increase in diversity among employees, Board and Advisory Groups
We will encourage harpers with disabilities and of all genders, social and ethnic groups to present and develop their work.	CÉHI Chair, CEO	Ongoing	Increased exposure to harpers from marginalised groups at events and concerts.

8. Policy Review

Cruit Eireann|Harp Ireland acknowledges that issues of equality, diversity and inclusion are constantly evolving and require regular evaluation and reporting to ensure that the ambitions of the policy are realised. This policy will be reviewed annually and amended to reflect changes in legislation, industry standards or organisational requirements as necessary. Artists and our core funders will be informed of any significant changes to the policy, and the policy will be available on the Cruit Éireann|Harp Ireland website.

9. Conclusion

At Cruit Éireann|Harp Ireland, our commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusion is integral to who we are and how we operate. We believe that embracing the rich diversity of our employees, customers, partners and community not only enhances our culture but also drives innovation. This policy reaffirms our dedication to creating an inclusive environment where every individual feels valued, respected, and empowered to contribute to their fullest potential and promote diversity among harpers.

The success of our Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion initiatives depends on the active participation and support of everyone within the organisation. By fostering a workplace culture that celebrates differences and promotes equity, we are better equipped to serve our diverse communities and achieve our goals.

As we move forward, we will continuously review and refine our practices to ensure they remain effective and aligned with our core values. We are committed to ongoing learning and improvement, knowing that the journey toward true inclusivity is continuous. Together, we can build a more inclusive, fair, and welcoming environment for all.

10. Contact Information

For any queries on this policy, please contact CÉHI Chair or CEO at info@harpireland.ie