



**National Youth
Orchestra of Ireland**
*Ceolfhoireann Náisiúnta
Óige na hÉireann*

POLICY & ACTION PLAN ON EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

JULY 2024

Introduction

The Board of the National Youth Orchestra of Ireland (NYOI) has adopted this policy and action plan to promote equality, diversity and inclusion in our work. Our values include active participation in our work, making it a far-reaching social, cultural, and artistic experience for everyone involved. We also value our connection with players, parents/carers, teachers, peer organisations and professional ensembles.

The purpose of this policy and plan is to demonstrate the NYOI's commitment to equality of opportunity in line with the requirements of the Employment Equality Acts, 1998-2015. The policy also supports the rights of people availing of goods or services under the Equal Status Acts, 2000-2018.

Our aim is to promote equality of opportunity and fair treatment for all employees, course staff, job applicants, players, audiences and everybody with whom our employees come into contact in the course of their day-to-day work.

Scope

This policy and plan apply to all employees and course staff and should be followed when dealing with:

- All applicants for employment, employees and all those who work for the NYOI in relation to all decisions regarding recruitment and selection, promotion, access to training and terms and conditions of employment.
- All children and young people who apply for, and gain a place in the NYOI.
- All contractors and service providers to the NYOI.
- The continual artistic and strategic development of the organisation.

Policy

We promote a work and performing environment free from unlawful discrimination.

The Employment Equality Acts and the Equal Status Acts set out nine protected grounds in relation to which no discrimination should occur. These grounds are *gender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, age, disability, race, religion and membership of the Traveller community*.

The NYOI is committed to equality of opportunity, and operates non-discriminatory practices in relation to access to employment, conditions of employment and access to performing experience for all who come into contact with the NYOI in the course of our work.

Employment decisions will not be made with reference to these grounds unless there are legitimate criteria given the particular situation, as permitted by legislation.

It is the policy of the NYOI to recognise people (employees, course staff, players) as a key resource required for the successful attainment of our mission. In support of this, we recognise that the differences between people, whether derived from their different backgrounds and personalities, cultures and/or their different abilities, can be a source of strength to the NYOI.

Direct discrimination occurs where one person is treated less favourably than another person, in one or more of the nine protected grounds specified in this policy.

Indirect discrimination is taken to occur where an apparently neutral provision, requirement, policy or rule puts a person with one characteristic at a particular disadvantage compared with others without that characteristic.

Procedures – Employment

Access to full-time or part-time employment (including course staff):

All recruitment and selection competitions will be open to all suitably qualified applicants.

Recruitment decisions will be made against specified criteria as required for the particular vacancy.

The NYOI will seek to ensure that the recruitment process is free from any direct or indirect discrimination on any of the nine protected grounds.

Every applicant, external or internal, will be assessed against fair and consistent criteria relating to the job.

If an applicant indicates that they have special needs, to facilitate their participation in the recruitment and selection process, reasonable accommodation will be provided, subject to this not imposing a disproportionate financial or operational load on the NYOI.

Access to membership of the NYOI:

Membership of the NYOI is subject to competitive audition in-person annually, and will be offered on the basis of individual musical performance ability and promise, and on the requirements of the orchestra.

Selection for participation in the NYOI will not be based on any of the nine protected grounds.

If an individual's disability impedes their ability to participate fully and engage as a member of the orchestra, reasonable accommodation will be provided.

Conditions of employment:

Terms and conditions of employment will be applied fairly to all employees, with no reference to any of the grounds in the Employment Equality Acts.

The NYOI provides equal pay for like work.

The NYOI endeavours to provide a work environment for its employees and course staff free from bullying or harassment of any kind.

Promotion:

There will be equality of opportunity at all stages of the promotions process.

Selection for promotion will be based on defined criteria related to the requirements of the post, and no reference will be made to the nine protected grounds of equality in the selection process.

Classification of Posts:

Gender neutral job titles will be used and no reference will be made to any of the other eight grounds in classifying positions.

Reasonable Accommodation:

Reasonable accommodation shall be provided in order to facilitate a person with a disability to apply for positions with the NYOI, to attend for interview, to engage in employment and to participate in the work of the orchestra as applicable.

Equal Status:

No person will be discriminated against or treated adversely while availing of goods or services provided by the NYOI, except where this is legally permitted and undertaken with a legitimate aim.

No person availing of our services will be subject to bullying, harassment or sexual harassment while availing of these.

Any complaints about the implementation of these policies will be brought to the General Manager (or if the complaint is about them) to the Board.

Any employee who feels that there has been a breach of this policy or procedure may raise the matter through the NYOI's grievance procedure. No employee will be subject to adverse treatment as a consequence of raising a complaint in relation to this policy. The Board will monitor the workplace for incidents of victimisation following a complaint.

The NYOI will take appropriate disciplinary action towards any employee who fails to follow this Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy & Action Plan.

Procedures - Orchestra members:

Advertising and Information

The NYOI's publications and advertisements for player recruitment will state its commitment to equality, diversity & inclusion. Language and images used in all publications, written and electronic material will not be discriminatory. The NYOI will make information on its policy and procedures with respect to admissions, complaints, equality, harassment (including sexual harassment) and bullying available to all players and their parents/guardians.

Admissions

Fundamental to the implementation of the NYOI's Admissions Policy are the principles of

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion, and in particular, equality of access, of participation and of outcome.

We welcome and support young people with disabilities. We will make reasonable accommodations, and endeavour to meet specific learning requirements to allow qualifying musicians to participate fully in the work of the NYOI.

Procedures - All:

The NYOI will demonstrate its commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion by using non-discriminatory language and images in all its documents and publications.

Everyone is expected to seek to ensure that the NYOI's written, spoken and electronically transmitted or published material does not contain language that may knowingly cause offence to others. Rather than be prescriptive about use of language, employees and course staff are asked to exercise good judgement and be aware of common, inappropriate or offensive references to any of the nine grounds.

In order to better understand and support diversity and inclusion across its community, activities and organisation, the NYOI commits to the following actions:

ACTION PLAN
Establish effective data collection methods on NYOI members and collaborators, respecting GDPR regulations, and carry out diversity surveys, gathering with relation to: race, gender, age, disability (visible and/or non-visible), ethnicity, religion, nationality, sexual orientation, socio-economic background.
Analyse and share such statistics internally to improve awareness of diversity, equality and inclusion.
Monitor policies, best practices and workplace cultures across all NYOI activities. Ensure those are stated in the NYOI Code of Conduct and shared with NYOI members and collaborators annually.
Provide space and time for dedicated discussions on EDI matters and their implementation with the orchestra (during residencies), NYOI staff, and the Board of Directors (in dedicated meetings annually).
Provide trained welfare staff in all NYOI activities, and engage an appropriate staff member with relevant qualifications in awareness of EDI & Gender Policy, first aid and mental health.
Plan and implement dedicated projects through national collaborations in diverse communities, and ensure involvement of people with disability in at least one performance annually, and accessibility across all NYOI activities and concerts.
Pursue increasingly diverse programming, including composers and artists from

underrepresented and historically excluded groups. Endeavour to include female composer's compositions in annual projects.

Survey programming and artistic guests annually, including previously performed, current and future.

Publicise fair, accessible, and based on merit recruitment protocols, available for all disabilities and is devoid of subconscious bias.

Establish working conditions in compliance with legal requirements in each area of activity, including accessibility, disability, and family obligations (maternity, paternity).

Contribute to public awareness by sharing communications on NYOI's activities related to equality, diversity and inclusion.

Ensure training opportunities on EDI matters are in place bi-annually for NYOI staff.

Review

This policy and plan, including its implementation in practice, will be reviewed two years from the date it was approved or earlier if changes in the law affect it.