

Irish Chamber Orchestra (ICO) Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan



Overview

The Irish Chamber Orchestra (ICO) is dedicated to promoting Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) across all our activities, including performances, all educational and community engagement initiatives, and internal operations. The following EDI Action Plan aligns with our core values and strategic objectives, aiming to foster a more inclusive, accessible, and diverse environment within the classical music sector.

Joint EDI Policy Area #	Action(s) Required	Timeline(s)	Responsibility	Measures of Success
1. Inclusive Education and Community Engagement Programmes: Ensure ICO’s education and community engagement programmes are accessible and inclusive, with a particular focus on underrepresented and marginalized communities. <i>Outcome: Active promotion of engagement with classical music, particularly for young people from marginalised or minoritised communities.</i>	1.1 Inclusive Recruitment: Use inclusive language in all communications and promotional materials for education and community engagement programmes, to enable and ensure a diverse level of participation.	Ongoing, with annual reviews and updates.	CM/ST	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 95% positive feedback from participants on the inclusivity of all communications and promotional materials.
	1.2 Widen Access: 1.2.1 Expand access to music in disadvantaged areas, including collaborations with schools. 1.2.2 Create pathways for neuro divergent children to engage with us through music.	December 2025, with annual reviews and updates. October 2024.	ST ST	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5% increase in the number of participants from marginalized or underrepresented communities participating in ICO Youth. Develop our national remit to expand our reach beyond Limerick City. Reaching 3 new schools or community organisations with impactful musical exchanges. Professional Development for ICO teachers through the implementation of a comprehensive CPD plan, incl. a bespoke Autism/Neurodiversity workshop. Develop welcome packs to introduce the ICO building/rehearsal space to children/young people with Autism.

	<p>1.3 Review and Adapt Programmes:</p> <p>1.3.1 Continuously review and adapt education programmes to ensure they are inclusive and reflect the diverse needs of participants.</p> <p>1.3.2 Engage with all stakeholder groups through co-ideation sessions to ensure the voices of those with lived experiences are being represented, heard and actioned.</p>	<p>Ongoing, with annual reviews and updates.</p> <p>May 2025, with annual reviews and updates.</p>	<p>ST</p> <p>ST</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual review of satisfaction ratings from stakeholders (e.g., schools, families) on the accessibility of programmes. • Review of programme conducted annually, focusing on inclusivity. • A minimum of 3 stakeholders engaged in co-ideation sessions. • Feedback from stakeholder engagement leading to programme adjustments. For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ St Gabriels/Autism, GOSHH/LGBTQ+, Irish Traveller Movement/Travelling Community, Doras Luimni/Migrants and Asylum Seekers, NCBI/Visually Impaired, Irish Deaf Society/Hearing Impaired, Enable Ireland/ Disability Support. • Annual review to ensure we are working in line with the National Youth Council of Ireland’s 8 steps to youth inclusion framework.
<p>2. Transparent and Equitable Recruitment:</p> <p>Ensure all recruitment processes (in all areas-across employment and artistic engagements) are transparently communicated and open to all qualified individuals to apply.</p> <p><i>Outcome: Clear communication of opportunities to the widest possible talent pool within classical music.</i></p>	<p>2.1 Develop Inclusive Recruitment Materials:</p> <p>Create standardized, inclusive language for job advertisements and recruitment materials to attract diverse applicants.</p>	<p>Ongoing monitoring.</p>	<p>GK/CM</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in the diversity of applicants across gender, ethnicity, and socio-economic backgrounds. • Maintain an equitable gender balance.
	<p>2.2 Broad Dissemination:</p> <p>Ensure job postings reach a wide audience, particularly within underrepresented communities in the classical music sector.</p>	<p>Ongoing monitoring.</p>	<p>GK/CM</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advertise all Orchestral positions on ‘musical chairs’ and ensure adverts are shared across a broad range of social media platforms and diverse networks.

<p>3. Board Diversity: Build diversity into Board succession planning.</p> <p><i>Outcome: Diversity is a core consideration in Board succession planning.</i></p>	<p>3.1 Board Diversity: 3.1.1 Integrate EDI considerations into Board succession planning.</p> <p>3.1.2 Secure and retain a UL Student representative for the Board.</p>	<p>Ongoing monitoring & review.</p> <p>August – Annually.</p>	<p>Board Chair</p> <p>CM</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in diversity among board members where possible (e.g., gender, ethnicity, socio-economic status). • Maintain an equitable gender balance among Board members. • Successful recruitment and retention of a UL Student representative.
<p>4. Diversity in Artistic Programming: Embed diversity and inclusion into all aspects of artistic programming and commissioning.</p> <p><i>Outcome: Inclusion and diversity are main streamed into artistic planning processes.</i></p>	<p>4.1 Framework Development: Develop and implement a framework to ensure diversity in programming and commissioning, including representation from composers and artists of varied ethnic backgrounds and genders.</p>	<p>November 2024.</p>	<p>RT</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion of diversity framework by November 2024. • Number of diverse composers and artists represented in programming each season.
	<p>4.2 Review Existing Works: Review and diversify the existing repertoire to include works by underrepresented composers.</p>	<p>Ongoing, with annual reviews and updates.</p>	<p>RT</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Percentage of repertoire programmed annually to include works by underrepresented composers.
	<p>4.3 New Commissions: Prioritize commissioning new works from diverse composers to ensure equitable opportunities.</p>	<p>Ongoing, with annual reviews and updates.</p>	<p>GK/RT</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of new commissions from diverse composers each year. • Feedback from artists and audiences on the diversity of commissioned works.
<p>5. Accessible Audience Engagement: Remove barriers to participation and create a welcoming environment for all audiences.</p> <p><i>Outcomes: Barriers to engagement with the classical music artform are challenged through proactive initiatives.</i></p>	<p>5.1 Accessibility Enhancements: Pre-show meet and greets tailored to an individual or group’s needs. Develop opportunities with venues and performances suitable for neurodiverse audiences.</p>	<p>Pilot initiatives by Dec-2024, ongoing enhancements.</p>	<p>MB</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of accessible content pieces (e.g., walk-throughs) developed. • Increase in website traffic from neurodiverse audiences. Accessibility tab on website to book in advance for meet and greet. Include welcome pack under accessibility tab. • Targeted ticket subsidy scheme serving over 1,000 people who are furthest from engagement in deprived, underrepresented areas, enhancing accessibility.

	<p>5.2 Pilot Inclusive Events: Implement ‘relaxed performances’ and other accessible concert formats to engage with neurodiverse audiences and those from marginalized communities.</p>	Ongoing.	RT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A minimum of one inclusive or relaxed performances held each year. • Audience feedback on the accessibility and inclusivity of performances.
	<p>5.3 Feedback Mechanisms: Establish feedback mechanisms to continually improve accessibility and inclusivity in audience engagement.</p>	December 2024.	MB/RT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of feedback submissions received annually regarding accessibility. • Percentage of changes implemented based on audience feedback.
<p>6. Inclusive Communications and Public Representation: Ensure that all ICO communications, marketing, and public-facing materials reflect and promote diversity and inclusion.</p>	<p>6.1 Diverse Representation: Highlight diversity within promotional materials, showcasing diverse artists and participants to inspire wider community engagement.</p>	Ongoing.	MB & CE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of promotional materials featuring diverse artists and participants. • Increase in community engagement metrics (e.g., social media reach, audience demographics).
<p><i>Outcome: Visibility and representation are key considerations in public-facing materials.</i></p>	<p>6.2 Inclusive Messaging: Audit and update all communications to ensure inclusive language and representation, particularly in digital and print media.</p>	December 2024.	MB & CE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion of audit and revision of communications by December 2024. • Number of updates to digital and print media to reflect inclusive language.
<p>7. Collaboration and Partnerships: Work with organisational collaborators and partners to identify opportunities to mainstream equality, diversity and inclusion.</p>	<p>7.1 EDI Framework for Partnerships: Develop an EDI framework to guide collaborations, ensuring that equality, diversity, and inclusion are central to all joint ventures.</p>	November 2024.	GK/RT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion and implementation of the EDI framework by the target date (November 2024). • Number of new partnerships established with organizations that align with EDI values.
<p><i>Outcome: Equality, diversity and inclusion become part of ongoing engagement with existing and new partners.</i></p>	<p>7.2 Contractual Obligations: Introduce EDI clauses in contracts with collaborators, committing them to uphold similar values.</p>	Ongoing.	GK/RT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Percentage of contracts including EDI clauses. • Feedback from collaborators on EDI values and practices.
<p>8. Staff Training and Development:</p>	<p>8.1 Annual EDI Training: Implement regular EDI training sessions, including workshops on unconscious</p>	Ongoing.	CM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of EDI training sessions delivered annually.

<p>Build equality, diversity and inclusion training into annual staff training and development planning</p> <p><i>Outcome: ICO continues to develop capacity, awareness and understanding of equality, diversity and inclusion.</i></p>	<p>bias, cultural competence, and neurodiversity.</p>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Percentage of staff completing annual EDI training. • All staff required to complete Safe to Create Training. • Improvement in staff self-assessments regarding cultural competence and unconscious bias. • Provide training in using sensitive and inclusive language when referring to ICO's work with vulnerable people.
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Monitoring and Evaluation

- **Regular Reporting:** Progress on the EDI Action Plan will be reviewed quarterly by the Executive team and reported annually to the Board.
- **Continuous Improvement:** Our EDI Action Plan will be a living document, updated regularly to reflect new insights, challenges, and opportunities in the pursuit of equality, diversity, and inclusion.

This Action Plan represents the Irish Chamber Orchestra's commitment to fostering a more equitable, diverse, and inclusive environment within the classical music community, ensuring that our work resonates with and is accessible to all members of society. These KPIs will help measure the success and progress of the ICO's EDI initiatives across various areas of operation.