

Equality and Diversity Policy

Policy Statement

Carlow Arts Festival is an Equal Opportunities Employer and is committed to Equality of Opportunity for existing and potential employees, where their dignity is protected and respected at all times.

All persons regardless of Gender, Marital status, Family status, Race, Religious beliefs, Sexual Orientation, Disability, Age or Member of the Travelling Community will be provided with equality of access to employment and also encouraged and assisted to achieve their full potential. We will continue to foster a genuine culture of Equality.

Objectives

The aim of the policy is to ensure that no employee receives less favourable treatment on any grounds which cannot be shown to be justified. This applies to Recruitment and Selection, Training, Promotion, Pay and Employee Benefits, Employee Grievances and Discipline Procedures and all Terms and Conditions of Employment.

Responsibilities

The responsibility for ensuring the provision of Equality of Opportunity rests primarily with Carlow Arts Festival as an employer. However, all staff have a responsibility to be respectful of difference and to accommodate Diversity where appropriate. Each staff member has an important role to play in ensuring Equality of Opportunity throughout the organisation. It is also recognised that individual employees on behalf of Carlow Arts Festival have responsibilities in law, as follows:

- a. Required to co-operate with any measures introduced by the company to promote Equal Opportunities.
- b. Must not themselves, either directly or indirectly, discriminate against fellow employees or harass or intimidate them in any way.

Structures

The Company is committed to resourcing an Equality Officer who is responsible for ensuring that appropriate arrangements are in place for effective implementation, monitoring and review of the policy.

Recruitment and Selection

- Carlow Arts Festival will select those suitable for employment solely on the basis of merit.
- Job advertisements, application forms and publicity material will encourage applications from all suitable candidates and will not discriminate intentionally or unintentionally against any group or individual on any unjustifiable grounds.
- Where possible efforts will be made to ensure that interview panels come from diverse backgrounds. We will ensure that interviewers are trained to

conduct interviews in a non-discriminatory way and that questions will relate to the requirements of the job.

- Relevant questions will be asked of all candidates and evaluated in the same way and interviewers will be careful not to ask questions that might be taken as discriminatory.
- Selection will be on merit and those who are successful shall demonstrate their suitability for employment according to pre-determined job-related selection criteria, which will be consistently applied throughout the recruitment process.
- Equality of Opportunity will also include accommodating where possible the special needs of individuals to facilitate their participation in the Recruitment & Selection process.

Career Development and Selection

- Opportunities for Career Development and Training will be open to all and will not discriminate directly or indirectly on any of the grounds outlined in the 1998 Act.
- All employees will be provided with every opportunity to acquire the range of Training, Skills and experience necessary for their career development.
- Opportunities for training will be based on the requirements of the job and career development will be based on people's abilities and merit.
- The Company is committed to a relevant training and career development policy for all staff irrespective of background.

Promotion

- All categories of staff will be encouraged to prepare, plan and consider themselves for promotion.
- All eligible employees will be made aware of promotional opportunities and encouraged to compete.
- Unnecessary barriers to promotion will be removed and employees facilitated to compete by all means possible. Promotion and Re-grading will be decided on objective criteria to the requirements of the job and will not be influenced by any of the nine grounds.

Complaints

- All complaints from employees in relation to Employment Equality or alleged discrimination will be handled in accordance with grievance procedures.
- Any person who wishes to raise issues concerning alleged discrimination or unfairness should do so in the first instance by contacting the Equality Officer.
- The company is committed to ensuring that all issues concerning alleged breaches of this policy will be dealt with seriously, promptly and with appropriate regard for confidentiality.
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Harassment and Bullying

- Carlow Arts Festival is commitment to providing a safe and secure working environment that is free of harassment (including sexual harassment) and bullying and within which all members of staff will be treated with dignity and respect.
- All employees have an obligation to prevent and eliminate Bullying & Harassment. A specific Bullying and Harassment Policy and Procedure are in place

Positive Action

Carlow Arts Festival will take practical measures to facilitate the integration of the following categories into employment:

1. Gender.
2. Persons over the Age of 50.
3. Persons with a Disability.
4. Membership of the Travelling Community.

Review and Monitoring

- Progress in the areas of Equal Opportunities and Diversity will be gauged through the continuous monitoring of the implementation of the Equal Opportunities/Diversity strategy. All aspects of this Equality Policy will be monitored and reviewed by the Equality Officer

Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy

Policy Statement

A 'Vulnerable Adult' is defined as:

A person who is, or who may be, in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness; and who is, or may be, unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation.

Carlow Arts Festival operates a Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy, which is subject to regular review. Carlow Arts Festival has a responsibility to ensure all vulnerable adults attending any of the organisation's events and activities are accompanied by at least one other appointed adult who is aware of, and will follow the Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy. The vulnerable adults must be supervised at all times during the organisation's events and activities to ensure against their involvement in activities which are considered dangerous or disadvantageous in some way(s).

As far as is possible, Carlow Arts Festival will endeavour to ensure that all staff and volunteers have current satisfactory Garda (South of Ireland) and Police (North of Ireland) checks completed before they work with participants considered to be 'vulnerable adults' as part of Carlow Arts Festival projects and events.

Staff and Volunteers Code of Behaviour

- A code of behaviour will be in place which staff (whether full-time or part-time) or volunteers (whether full-time or part-time) must strictly adhere to at all times during Carlow Arts Festival events and activities. (This code can help minimise the risk of abuse or harm to vulnerable adults during Carlow Arts Festival events and activities as well as help protect all staff and volunteers from false accusation.)
- This code of behaviour insists that staff and volunteers must not spend excessive amounts of time alone with vulnerable adults and should, conversely, endeavour to avoid situations where this may arise. Any necessary meetings with vulnerable adults should be conducted as openly as possible with the awareness of other staff, volunteers and/or other adults present.
- Where possible, it is preferred that any necessary meetings are conducted within sight of other staff, volunteers and/or other adults present. Should any meetings be deemed to require privacy, doors to the rooms where the meetings are conducted must be left open (propped open, if necessary).

Staff/Volunteers must NOT;

- Engage in games of a physical nature unless as vital elements of drama/ art workshops or structured sports activities. (In the planning of drama/art workshops and sports activities, staff/volunteers should attempt, where possible, to avoid activities which require such physical contact.)
- Engage or allow inappropriate physical contact with, or make sexually suggestive comments to, vulnerable adults.
- Perform tasks, involving physical contact, for vulnerable adults which they are capable of doing themselves.

Please note that all the above policies apply whether activities or events are conducted in any premises or venues both indoor and outdoor, as well as during travel to and from any other premises/venues, as part of Carlow Arts Festival activities or events.

PARENTAL/CARER RESPONSIBILITY

- Parents/Carers have an obligation to inform Carlow Arts Festival staff of any of the following that may impact on the positive experience or safety of their child or young person when becoming involved in The Voice of Older People activities or events;
- Any relevant medical history should be disclosed to the Co-ordinator and on a need-to-know basis with staff, volunteers or arts facilitators. Correct information as to who is the designated carer and collector of children/older people from Carlow Arts Festival activities and/or events should be disclosed to staff, volunteers or facilitators.
- Where applicable, all parents/carers must adhere to timetables with regard to “drop off and pick up” times in relation to attending events & activities. Any family history that is impacting negatively on their child, and may cause behavioural issues to arise as a result, should also be disclosed if possible to staff, volunteers or facilitators with a proviso that all information is confidential.
- Any special needs, e.g. dietary, social, educational of people should also be made known to staff, volunteers or facilitators.
In the case of a medical emergency, the name of Family Doctor should be offered to staff, volunteers or arts facilitators.
In the case of an emergency, medication will only be given by staff, volunteers or arts facilitators while under their supervision, unless a letter of permission is offered from the child or young person’s parent/ carer with full instructions.
- Provided that all Carlow Arts Festival policies and procedures are adhered to, it is the wish of Carlow Arts Festival staff and board of trustees that staff and volunteers encourage vulnerable adults to participate in activities and help them to develop their own ideas and skills as well as experience the many other positive outcomes, both personally and socially, acquired by participation in such activities.
- This policy fulfils the requirements of the legislation and embraces the principles of best practice in relation to Vulnerable Adult Policies and procedures in both the Republic of Ireland and the United Kingdom.

Complaints

In the event that a vulnerable adult, primary carer or member of staff has a complaint or comment Carlow Arts Festival advises that he/she speaks in person to the designated Child Protection Officer

All complaints or comments made to the company:

- Will be recorded and logged.
- Responded to within 2 weeks.

- Dealt with according to the appropriate guidelines and procedures as stated in the policy

ACCIDENTS PROCEDURE

- Carlow Arts Festivals designated Vulnerable Adult protection Officer undertakes a risk assessment prior to the operation of each project. Where necessary, details of risky equipment are noted and appropriate steps are taken to minimise this risk.
- In the event of an incident/accident, the following steps should be carried out:
 - If the accident is minor, ensure all reasonable and appropriate action is taken to minimise the effect.
 - If the accident is of a more serious nature then an ambulance may need to be called. Carlow Arts Festival register of contact details for Vulnerable Adults should be consulted and the relevant person made aware of the accident and of the actions being taken.
- All accidents should be reported to the Designated Vulnerable Adult protection officer.