



**Galway Community Circus**

## **Equality Diversity and Inclusion Policy and Strategy**

*“Diversity is strength, difference is a teacher, fear difference and we learn nothing.”*

Hannah Gadsby

## Contents

Opening Statement.....	3
Purpose.....	5
Galway Community Circus’ Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Policy and Strategy.....	6
What do we need?.....	6
Inclusive Workplace.....	7
Management / Human Resources .....	8
Access .....	9
Fees.....	11
Do No Harm (DNH).....	11
Guiding Behaviour.....	12
Communication.....	12
Assessment .....	14
Funding .....	15
Training.....	15
Board of Directors.....	15
Who must observe his policy? .....	17
The Inclusion Coordinator.....	18
Desired Outcomes and Actions.....	19
Implementation and Monitoring .....	21
Actions to be Followed if the Policy is not followed/implemented .....	24
Legislation/regulatory requirements & Bibliography.....	25
Definitions/Glossary .....	27
Appendix 1: Access Award Application .....	29
Appendix 2: Equality Impact Assessment Tool.....	30

Our Equality Diversity and Inclusion Policy & Strategy consists of:

1. Inhouse detailed document to act as a usable resource for staff and tutors to help each GCC team member understand and embrace EDI and our place as an organisation, in making a more inclusive, diverse and equal society.
2. A designed website model that accurately depicts our stance and the measures we are talking towards a more inclusive, diverse and equal society.

## Opening Statement

Galway Community Circus was founded in 2002 and is Ireland's flagship youth and social circus organisation. We are committed to creating an innovative and imaginative learning experience where all young people can unlock their full personal and creative potential, as we deliver social inclusion for young people through circus arts.

Galway Community Circus as a whole promotes EDI values. These values are embedded in every activity and action we deliver within our programme. We believe that circus is for everyone, and equality, diversity and inclusion are at the heart of circus practice. 'Circus for All' is an international movement supported by a close circus network that successfully supports one another and works together to drive change on a local, national and international level.

EDI values are embedded in each strand of our organisation, circus school, community programmes, artists and artform development programmes, organisational structure and our Board of Directors. EDI principles inform our staffing, programme, and decision-making at a board level. As part of our new [strategic plan 2023-2027](#), EDI is included as its own development area.

EDI is embedded in the history of circus practice and has been with Galway Community Circus since the beginning. In continuing to strive for better in this area our organisation undergoes constant change. Education, exposure, and understanding are crucial in any such evolution. To enact the changes and developments required our organisation continues to look inwards and revise all of our policies, practices, and culture. With this policy and strategy, we aim to firmly state our stance on EDI in our organisation and outline future developments and aims toward a more inclusive organisation.

Societal change and our own education and awareness of the barriers many in our community face when it comes to participation, have all been factors in the development of this policy. According to Census figures, in 2017 Galway was the most multicultural city in the country. The last census showed that around 1 in every 5 people were non-Irish nationals, 13% of the population of Galway City have at least one disability and the Traveller Community makes up 2% of the population. This is the beautiful, multicultural reality of our community. Our programmes and organisation need to reflect our community, otherwise, we are missing something vital within the services we provide.

Galway Community Circus has a platform to enact change and aims to play a role in advancing EDI at a systematic level.

**Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, or EDI as it is more commonly known, ensures fair treatment and opportunity for all. It aims to eradicate prejudice and discrimination based on an individual or group of individuals' protected characteristics.**

**Diversity can be defined as the variety of people and ideas within an organisation, the things that make anyone diverse can be both visible and underlying characteristics.**

**Inclusion is about creating an environment in which all individuals feel valued and connected.**

**These characteristics do not operate as unitary, mutually exclusive entities, and should always be looked at through an intersectional lens.**

**“Diversity is being asked to the party and inclusion is being asked to dance”**

**Verna Myers**

Galway Community Circus commits to continually supporting, engaging with and delivering inclusive practices to and with a diverse membership, public participants, staff and board, toward a more equal society.

‘In an inclusive setting, there is an awareness and respect for each child’s individual strengths and areas of difficulty. Inclusive settings engage in meaningful collaboration with parents/guardians and other professionals to ensure access, equality and full participation for all children.’

Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Charter and Guidelines for Early Childhood Care and Education (Department of Children and Youth Affairs 2016)

“Inclusive circus is a relatively new field of practice. There is still learning, sharing and responding to be done together, exploring how to encourage growth and awareness in the field. Having the confidence to embrace ‘not knowing’ and to experiment with doing things differently is where the future of circus gets exciting” [www.extraordinarybodies.org.uk](http://www.extraordinarybodies.org.uk)

At Galway Community Circus we respect the dignity, value and uniqueness of our community, by supporting, advocating and helping to safeguard our members and participants’ rights to enjoy their lives. At Galway Community Circus we provide the opportunity for young people to thrive through the promotion of positive identities and abilities, the celebration of diversity and difference, and the provision of an inclusive, participative culture and environment.

**All forms of youth services should be;**

‘...without discrimination of any kind, irrespective of the child’s, their parent’s or legal guardian’s race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, nationality, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status’.

U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child 2.1

## Purpose

The purpose of this Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy is to ensure that:

- Galway Community Circus is a place where everyone, irrespective of their age, ethnicity, culture, gender identity, religion, language, sexual orientation, ability, disability or social circumstances, feels safe, feels a sense of belonging, is respected and valued and has their individual needs understood and met as far as our resources allow.
- Children and young people who are insufficiently or inadequately represented are represented throughout Galway Community Circus community.
- Equality of opportunity remains an integral part of all planning and decision making within Galway Community Circus and that our planning embraces the needs of our staff and membership and works to deliver an inclusive and accessible environment for all.
- Galway Community Circus provides opportunities that help develop children's sense of personal and group identity so that they can become confident, open to difference, receptive to change and respectful towards other identities.
- Galway Community Circus enables children and staff members to have the confidence and skills to challenge instances of prejudice and discrimination.
- Galway Community Circus operates inclusive recruitment, training and development practices.
- That our EDI actions are not performative nor tokenistic and that we are held accountable for the commitments we make within this policy.

(Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Charter and Guidelines for Early Childhood Care and Education - DCYA, 2016)

EVERYONE IS WANTED, EVERYONE IS NEEDED,  
EVERYONE IS SUPPORTED



## Galway Community Circus' Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Policy and Strategy

Galway Community Circus believes that diversity means representation across a wide range of traits, backgrounds, and experiences. When we can connect and engage with members and co-workers with different perspectives than our own, we can more successfully achieve our overall goals. Inclusion within our organisation translates to that of a sense of belonging in Galway Community Circus and equality for all those who engage with us.

To that aim, this policy will outline the current and future practices that Galway Community Circus commits to in EDI.

### What do we need?

Children need:

- A safe, accessible environment that facilitates, supports and encourages a positive individual and group identity.
- Well-trained and informed staff who understand their individual culture, identity, needs and interests.
- Equal access to a differentiated and full programme that caters for both individual and particular needs.
- To feel a sense of belonging when visiting Galway Community Circus.

Parents/guardians need:

- To know that their child will have their needs met and that their family culture and identity will be recognised, respected and valued.
- To be communicated with clearly and effectively, and be able to communicate effectively, with the people whom they trust to care for their children.
- Parents and other family members also need to have equal access to the Galway Community Circus environment and to feel a sense of belonging when visiting Galway Community Circus.

Staff members need:

- To know and to ensure that all of Galway Community Circus' processes are fair, open and transparent and not discriminatory.
- To work in and be involved in providing a safe, anti-bias, accessible environment.
- To be supported to be comfortable with differences and to engage effectively with parents/guardians/families and colleagues; to be able to critically think about and confidently engage in dialogue around issues of equality, diversity, inclusion, bias and discrimination.
- To be able to have effective two-way communication with all of the children they teach, and with their parents/guardians, families and colleagues.

Management needs:

- To know that all those who use the service or who work in it have their individual needs met as far as possible within the context of Galway Community Circus and that staff members have the appropriate skills and knowledge to meet the diverse needs of all of the children and their families who come to the Circus.

- To be supported in training and the development of EDI actions for Galway Community Circus and to receive adequate training themselves to ensure the confidence and skills to deliver this policy.

To ensure through this policy that:

- Galway Community Circus does not discriminate against anyone directly or indirectly, all relevant legislation and regulation are fully complied with and Galway Community Circus meets quality standards.
- All of Galway Community Circus' policies and procedures reflect a commitment to equality and inclusion and that Galway Community Circus promotes positive and proactive approaches to valuing and respecting diversity.
- Management and board members contribute to the development and review of policies.
- Steps are taken to enable the contribution of the children to the development of policies and procedures (for example in-depth youth consultations).
- Parents/guardians are facilitated to contribute in whatever ways suit them best.
- The review and evaluation of policies are used to identify specific actions to address equality, diversity and inclusion issues.
- Interactions with children and programme content are monitored to ensure appropriate content is developed.

### Inclusive Workplace

An inclusive workplace is defined as a work environment that makes every employee feel valued while also acknowledging their differences and how these differences contribute to the organisation's culture and business outcomes. An inclusive workplace is characterised by affirmative action, wherein any impact of bias/discrimination/unequal opportunity is negated.

Galway Community Circus commits to the continuation and constant improvement of retaining an inclusive workspace. Policies relevant to this area include the Equal Opportunities Policy, Recruitment and Selection Policy, Staff Support and Supervision - Appraisals, Employee Code of Conduct, Tutor Code of Conduct, Grievance Procedure, Disciplinary Policy and Procedure, Bullying and Harassment Policy, Complaints Procedure, Remote Working Policy and that of a company/staff handbook.

Galway Community Circus commits to continuing to review all areas associated with an inclusive workplace. This includes regular feedback sessions with staff on their experience of Galway Community Circus as a workplace regarding EDI. We commit to the development of:

- Training and Development Policy
- Promotion of Inclusive Events Policy
- EDI monitoring and evaluation system (results printed in our annual report)
- EDI officer position within Galway Community Circus. This role will be with a current employee for a given period and then moved to another employee. This action will ensure that each member of the team is invested, accountable and knowledgeable about the EDI practices of Galway Community Circus.

## Management / Human Resources

Galway Community Circus operates under the policies outlined in the inclusive workplace section and additional procedures in employment; advertising; recruitment; selection; interviewing; promotion; access to training and employee benefits, remote working possibilities, pay, TOIL and sick/annual leave. All of which support equality, diversity and inclusion within the organisation.

Galway Community Circus commits to the further development of our management and HR resources.

This will include but is not limited to:

1. Inclusive recruitment strategies. Because a diverse workforce adds tremendous value to an organisation.
  - Training recruiters about bias.
  - Advertising with inclusive job descriptions, explicitly conveying openness to work with people from various backgrounds.
  - Not limiting ourselves to just a few job portals but tapping into multiple channels including social media, ensuring that we attract a diverse talent pool.
  - Being flexible while evaluating candidates.
  - Being clear about the kind of employees Galway Community Circus is looking to hire in terms of work ethics and skills.
  - Align our hiring process with our goals of inclusive recruitment from the very beginning.
  - Balancing diversity with merit.
  - Provide supports to employees with additional needs.
2. Training and development. For training and development to be truly effective, they must be designed with the employee in mind.
  - GCC will look into personalised alternatives where training/mentorship is tailored to each employee's personal needs and goals within the company.
  - Management will continue to foster a culture that promotes learning at every level within the organisation and provide annual training around EDI to empower the staff in this area.
  - Management will continue to learn more about employees and use on-the-job training to help our employees develop the skills they're interested in.
  - We will provide regular and constructive feedback.
3. Evaluating resources – Galway Community Circus commits to carefully and continually evaluating all the materials and equipment in Galway Community Circus for messages about EDI.
4. Evaluating pedagogy and learning styles – Galway Community Circus will continue to consider the different learning styles of members when planning Circus activities and programmes.
  - GCC will work toward ensuring equal access for all children. This will involve consultation in considering the physical layout of rooms;
  - Ensuring visible representations of diversity;
  - Evaluating the individual needs of children with physical and/or intellectual disabilities;
  - Considering the needs of children learning English as an additional language – valuing home languages and dialects, understanding bilingualism.



Galway Community Circus currently incorporates an anti-bias approach and a way to counter the learning of negative attitudes and behaviour towards differences, by talking openly about and celebrating differences. We also involve our parents and guardians in considering whether specific action needs to be taken to address inequalities.

## Access

Accessibility involves designing systems to optimise access. Being inclusive is about giving equal access and opportunities to everyone wherever possible.

Galway Community Circus has always endeavoured to be accessible within our activities, space, workforce and community.

The current rented location of our circus space/offices and facilities in St. Joseph's Community Centre are all wheelchair accessible and we as an organisation are continually open to working towards a completely accessible circus space. Galway Community Circus' activities lend themselves to accessibility with a proven track record and research available on the successes of circus practice for those with additional/sensory needs. In 2022 we carried out an access audit for the Community Centre to see what we may need to put in place to improve ourselves in this area.

## Access Audit

### Entrance

1. Posters with access info/building mapping

### *Checklist of Physical Access*

**Access and use;** sanitary conveniences; audience/member facilities.

While legislation provides for minimum standards in accessibility, universal accessibility is the overall goal. It is a key concept that states that all environments should be accessible to everyone, regardless of ability. Everybody is different and there is no 'average' person. As a result, the implementation of universal accessibility, from the beginning, will benefit all because disabled people, of small or tall stature, parents with buggies, delivery persons and so forth will have greater access to all environments.

- Physical access, which involves people with physical disabilities requiring the use of wheelchairs or walking aids and requires the provision of, for example, handrails, ramps, lifts and lowered counters;
- Sensory access, which includes people with various sensory needs, requires the provision of a "sensory room" - an umbrella term used to categorize a broad variety of therapeutic spaces specifically designed and utilized to promote self-organization and positive change. There are multiple types of sensory rooms and purposes for use that have been created and implemented in different practice areas to date. When used appropriately, sensory rooms:
  - Help to create a safe space
  - Facilitate the therapeutic alliance
  - Provide opportunities for engagement in prevention and crisis de-escalation strategies, as well as a host of other therapeutic exchanges (to teach skills, offer a variety of therapeutic activities, etc.)

- Promote self-care/self-nurturance, resilience and recovery
- Sensory access, which includes people with hearing or vision impairment requiring the provision of, for example, tactile markings, signs and labels, hearing augmentation listening systems and audio cues;
- Communication access, which involves people who have difficulty with the written word, vision, speech, and language.
- Cognitive access, which involves people who have impaired awareness, perception, reasoning and judgement.

## Management Actions

### Access handbook

- Provide a general introduction to the building
- Include information about the user groups of the building (public/staff)
- Describe the main functions of the building and any events that are held

*Example: Individual organisations, employees and members of the public use this building. Approximately 50 staff members use the building daily. The building is also used for public conferences, seminars and meetings and, therefore, is used by a wide range of people with various abilities regularly. The lounge is also open to members of the public from Monday to Friday.*

- Provide location and transport information on the exact whereabouts of the building
- Detailed information on how to get there from the major arrival points in the city, town or area.
- Maps - details on arrival by car, taxi, bus, train, and from the nearest airport.
- Accessibility information on the transport routes; for example, whether the bus service is wheelchair accessible.
- Pricing and contact details.

*Example: Getting to St Joseph's Community Centre by City Bus offers 2 routes that pass close to the Centre. The buses which stop in Shantalla include the 210 & B10 (100% wheelchair accessible) The fair costs €2.70.*

Visual stories are also needed for the building, classes and events. They include photographs and descriptions which talk you through what to expect when visiting GCC. This will help to reduce any anxiety someone might be feeling ahead of their visit.

Examples:

<https://roundhouse-assets.s3.amazonaws.com/assets/File/13815.pdf>

[http://www.otherroomtheatre.com/files/7615/3805/2069/Visual\\_Story\\_TOR.pdf](http://www.otherroomtheatre.com/files/7615/3805/2069/Visual_Story_TOR.pdf)

[https://cdn2.rsc.org.uk/sitefinity/access-pdfs/the-boy-in-the-dress-visual-story-short.pdf?sfvrsn=4129a221\\_0](https://cdn2.rsc.org.uk/sitefinity/access-pdfs/the-boy-in-the-dress-visual-story-short.pdf?sfvrsn=4129a221_0)

## Layout of Building

- Complete freedom of movement - where the user or visitor is free to enter, wander around, probably in no particular sequence and leave without the need to make any contact with potential assistance points such as reception/information desk or security.
- Free entry/controlled movement - some point of control usually a payment desk or security point, but, after passing that point, users will be allowed the type of free, usually unrestricted, movement described above.
- Controlled entry/controlled movement - some point of control, usually a payment desk or security point, but after passing that point, users will be allowed the type of free, usually unrestricted, movement described above.

Descriptions include information on the use of the different areas and where the toilets and any other facilities are situated.

Building plans are provided in conjunction with written explanations.

Access and safety, management responsibilities;

- External environment – car parking, routes, ramps, steps and doors;
- Vertical and horizontal circulation - steps and stairs, lifts, corridors and internal doors;
- Facilities - reception, toilets, seating areas, changing rooms;
- Interior design - lighting, colour and contrast, fixtures;
- Evacuation - emergency equipment, alarms, signage, evacuation equipment, evacuation plans;
- Communication facilities - signage, phones, tactile features, acoustics.

## Fees

Galway Community Circus currently offers a bursary to allow individuals with financial/other constraints access to our services through free classes or classes at a reduced rate.

Our Access Award is open to applications on an ongoing basis and welcomes applications from any person or persons that meet the criteria of the award.

For those who may need support in filling out the application, we provide support and guidance in this area and have kept the application form as simple as possible.

Galway Community Circus also offers various payment schemes to ensure that there is an option that suits everyone's financial circumstances.

Email [info@galwaycircus](mailto:info@galwaycircus) to request all information on payment options and Access Award.

## See Appendix 1: Access Award Application

## Do No Harm (DNH)

Galway Community Circus aims to step back annually from our organisation to ensure we review the risk of any potential negative effects in anything we do. Constant evaluation aims to strengthen program design and management methodologies in a way that allows for a better understanding of any negative effects that may arise in future.

Galway Community Circus, social change and DNH:

Galway Community Circus aims to address any aspect of discrimination through early intervention of cultural education to prevent further discrimination.

The practices that Galway Community Circus routinely adopt to prevent and control negative effects are comprised of the following:

- Initial review while the programmes/projects are being conceptualized. This stage involves the analysis of those involved, their positions, challenges, and relationships. This includes an understanding of local culture (including all stakeholders and considering discriminated groups).
- Risk analysis including risks to beneficiaries and risks to the organisation.
- Management of data, protection of beneficiaries and methods for beneficiary feedback (including complaints management).

Galway Community Circus is managed within a framework of multiple practices implemented with varying degrees of frequency. Of these practices, a significant number have a direct link with Do No Harm principles:

Staff management

- Accessible information on ethical principles and principles of intervention
- Training
- Project management tools
- Risks and mitigation measures
- Complaints management system and surveys
- Decision-making tools to resolve complex DNH-related situations
- Monitoring and evaluation, organisational and holistic based on "DNH indicators" in evaluation criteria and accessible feedback mechanisms
- Conclusion and recommendations

Galway Community Circus continually reevaluates our current structures to ensure we are seeing the full picture of our programme and projects and the needs that they have, ensuring that as an organisation we are aligning ourselves within the framework of international best practice in this area.

### Guiding Behaviour

The organisations guiding behaviour addresses issues such as bullying, inappropriate body language, harassment, name-calling and anything else negative that may arise in our space, through our policies on bullying and harassment and our company code of conduct. Within each circus class, an individual contract of participation/trust contract is drawn up by the participants. Within this statement, the membership decides together how they will conduct themselves throughout the term to ensure dignity and respect within the class.

### Communication

Ensuring that all parents/guardians and staff members can communicate clearly with one another ('plain English', translation/interpretation and other methods where necessary). Galway Community

Circus has a staff of 20 containing 11 nationalities. Our tutors and team have experience in communicating in plain English, ensuring that all members and the wider community can be heard and understood. We strive to have open and transparent communication with our team and membership to encourage each person to have a voice. We host four European volunteers annually who also come to Ireland to improve their English, and this has assisted in teaching our employee team a great deal about effective simple communication techniques that have also contributed to their ability to communicate with children who would not have a high level of English. Galway Community Circus also communicates with its membership and the wider public through our website and social media platforms. All actions on EDI will be shared through all of our current communication channels and support will be given to those who need it regarding any communication processes.

### **Communication Plan**

All parents/guardians are to be informed of the policy and procedures regarding diversity, equality and inclusion on registering with Galway Community Circus. Staff members will check with parents/guardians that they have read and understood the policy and provide any assistance needed.

The policy statement will also be included in registration materials and available on our website. This policy will also be reviewed with all staff members at induction and annual staff training in EDI will be delivered.

A copy of all policies and procedures will be available during all hours of operation to staff members, parents/guardians and the wider community in the policy folder located in the reception office and on our website in the dedicated EDI area.

Parents/guardians may receive a copy of the policy at any time upon request.

Parents/guardians and all staff members will receive written notification of any updates.

\*NALA Plain English Guidelines at a Glance:

[www.nala.ie/sites/default/files/publications/Plain%20English%20guidelines%20at%20a%20glance\\_1.pdf](http://www.nala.ie/sites/default/files/publications/Plain%20English%20guidelines%20at%20a%20glance_1.pdf)

**Galway Community Circus commits to researching and implementing further measures that we can take to support clearer and more inclusive communication methods, including but not limited to;**

- Getting the right advice and mentorship to ensure what we implement is useful and accessible to all
- Say my name function on emails
- Accessible documents and emails – accessible fonts, good contrast, accessible headings, alt text (this means adding a description to any picture we use) and accessible document format (considering all dyslexia types - dysgraphia and dyscalculia, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and dyspraxia).
- Use of video description as well as alt text
- ISL interpreters

## Assessment

Galway Community Circus will ensure that no form of assessment discriminates unjustifiably. Including but not limited to; interview assessments, class and project monitoring and evaluation, staff reviews, annual evaluations and in-depth consultations.

**Galway Community Circus commits to the implementation of the following Equality Impact Assessment tool throughout our programmes.**

### **Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)**

What is an Equality Impact Assessment?

An equality impact assessment (EIA) tool is a tool that helps or enables anyone who is supporting change in how policies, projects and decision-making affects diverse groups of people.

Carrying out an EIA helps support good decision-making and involves systematically assessing the likely (or actual) effects of our activities on people relating to the nine protected characteristics (age, civil status, disability, family status, gender, membership of the traveller community, race, religion and sexual orientation) and caring responsibilities.

This includes looking for opportunities to promote equality that may have previously been missed or could be better used, as well as negative or adverse impacts that can be removed or mitigated, where possible. If any negative or adverse impacts amount to unlawful discrimination, they must be removed.

This process will support Galway Community Circus to work towards fulfilling our equality mission to be a beacon of excellence in the sector, promoting a culture of inclusion, respect and equality of opportunity for all.

### **When should an EIA be carried out?**

An EIA should be carried out when there are changes suggested to a policy, project or decision-making process. It should include both current approaches and those under development.

Negative or adverse impact: the outcome of a decision, policy or practice that creates a disadvantage to or unequal treatment of a person with a protected characteristic.

Positive impact: the outcome creates a benefit to support the advancement of equality of groups and opportunities for people with protected characteristics and/or promotes good relations.

### **EIA (Equality Impact Assessment) tool**

1. **Plan:** What kind of decision is needed? Is this EIA part of the project start, middle or end?
2. **Outline:** What are the major changes in the policy/decision? How does this affect these demographics/groups of people? Is the effect on internal and external audiences?
3. **Detail:** What are the nuanced effects on particular demographics/groups of people? Who has been consulted?
4. **Review feedback and make changes**

5. **Recommend and share:** To the project team or decision maker, what actions need to be taken
6. **Follow-up:** Ensure that the actions committed to are followed up by the decision maker/s

## See Appendix 2: Equality Impact Assessment Tool

### Funding

Galway Community Circus commits to identifying any funding that may be available to implement this policy and/or to ensure there is no discrimination. We will alert the Arts Council on inclusion measures for hiring employees, supporting existing employees and implementing changes within our organisational structure to deliver on our EDI goals.

### Training

Ensuring that all training needs relevant to diversity, equality and inclusion are identified and included in the budget and that appropriate in-house training is provided for all staff members annually. (See also Management/Human Resources)

### Board of Directors

Galway Community Circus commits to the maintenance and further development of a board that has:

**Talent** – The board is educated on inclusion and inclusive governance and supports the development of senior management in the area of EDI. The board members’ knowledge and competencies in EDI are reviewed annually through a board skills audit. All new board members also receive board orientation training.

**Appropriate knowledge in governance** – The board will embed EDI into all board processes. EDI will be a standing item at all board meetings and be integrated into all board policies and procedures.

**Integrity** – In this Policy the board and senior management have defined what EDI means for Galway Community Circus, what behaviours support it, what actions the organisation commits to, and to the upholding of these across all levels of the organisation.

**Performance** – The board and staff of Galway Community Circus prioritise inclusion as a strategic imperative on the board’s agenda and will monitor relevant metrics regarding this to ensure constant and continuous improvement or maintenance of a successful area. This will be monitored through rates/retention rates of employees, diversity and inclusion of membership, and training and development opportunities (EDI dashboard, tracking the retention rate of GCC employees and retains in different demographics- understanding the reasons for any differences, levels of engagement, overall employee experience, etc).

## What GCC commits to doing at a board level for EDI

### EDI data

- EDI Dashboard

- Storytelling
- Understanding data and gaps and the whys
- Setting goals and following progression

### Recruitment and selection

- Consider EDI through all stages of selection and recruitment.
- Ensure there is diversity in the selection panel.
- Ensure underrepresented groups are supported (onboarding buddies, etc.). Are we sourcing enough diverse applicants, are there any applying?

### Training and professional development

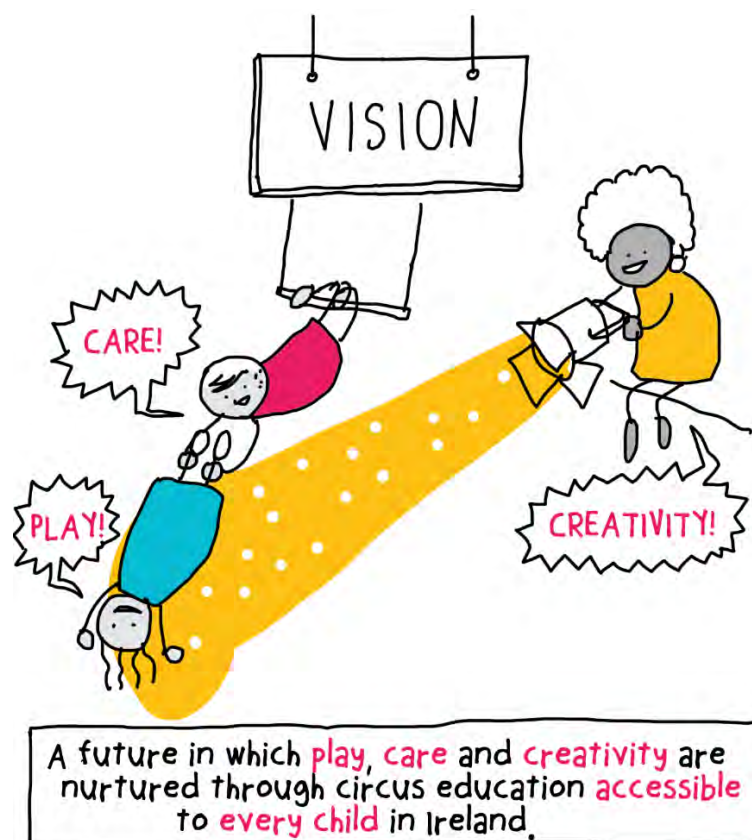
- EDI training to all staff and board annually
- Specialised learning opportunities and accessible development opportunities during work hours

### Structure and culture

- Encourage employee resource groups or inclusion think tanks
- Annual reviews of EDI policies and training
- Embed EDI culture into the workforce and ensure all staff are comfortable to challenge non-inclusive behaviours

### Inclusive leadership

- Committed leaders in EDI and shared responsibility to achieve the objectives of the EDI policy
- Leaders that display courage and that challenge non-inclusive behaviours
- Training leaders on unconscious bias





## Who must observe his policy?

### **Management, staff and board**

- Ensuring the service complies with all relevant legislation, guidelines and the Diversity, Equality and Inclusion National Charter.
- Ensuring the policy and its related procedures and practices are implemented.
- Implementing the policy and its related procedures and practices.
- Ensuring that all staff members are aware of their responsibilities and given appropriate training and support.
- Taking the appropriate action in any cases of discrimination.
- Having a member of staff designated and trained as Inclusion Coordinator.

### **All staff team members**

- Knowing how to identify and challenge bias and stereotyping and dealing with any related incidents.
- Promoting equality and good relations and not discriminating on grounds of gender, ethnicity, culture, religion, language, sexual orientation, age, ability, disability or social circumstances.
- Keeping up to date on diversity, equality and inclusion issues by attending training and information opportunities.

### **Parents, guardians and membership**

- Being aware of and complying with Galway Community Circus' Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Policy and understanding that it applies to all children and all those involved in and with Galway Community Circus.
- Supporting Galway Community Circus team members in developing a shared understanding and an appreciation of the benefits of an anti-bias/anti-discriminatory approach.
- Supporting Galway Community Circus in the future development and implementation of the policy.

### **Visitors**

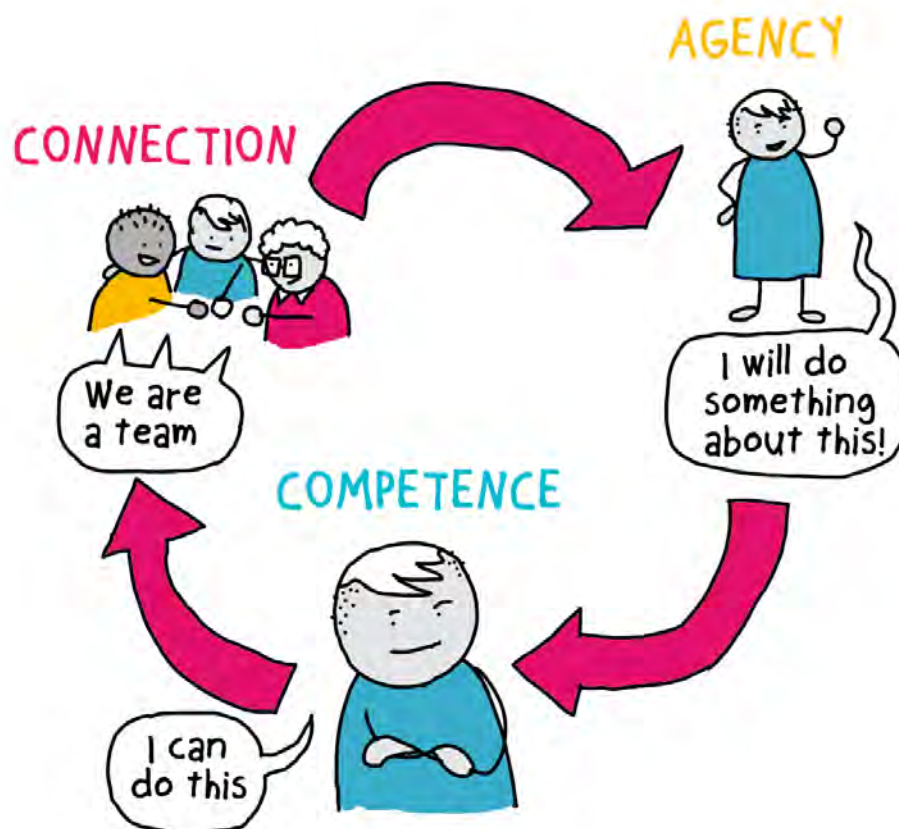
- Being aware of and complying with Galway Community Circus' Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Policy.

## The Inclusion Coordinator

The role of the inclusion coordinator will be to support the management in providing leadership within Galway Community Circus about issues of diversity, equality and inclusion and ensuring the appropriate implementation of this policy.

The specific nature of this role and the responsibilities associated are outlined as follows:

1. Leading inclusive practice, inclusive pedagogy and inclusive culture within Galway Community Circus and providing support and information to staff and parents on the inclusion of all children and staff, with reference to Galway Community Circus' EDI policy.
2. Cascading learning throughout the team and Circus to foster an inclusive, supportive culture.
3. Supporting staff in the implementation of inclusive practices, planning and assessment which supports the regular reviewing of the Galway Community Circus environment, daily routines, activities and social interactions to enable all abilities and backgrounds to participate at an appropriate level in our activities and business.
4. Sharing learning and good practice regarding observations, documentation, planning and development, modelling good practice and utilising different strategies for collaborating with the team and membership regarding effective communication.
5. Engaging with national and local government bodies related to inclusion to continue to lead the implementation of good practices within Galway Community Circus.



## Desired Outcomes and Actions

### **Galway Community Circus wants;**

To deliver this policy meaningfully and effectively to ensure improved accessibility to Galway Community Circus for all children and young people.

### **This is important because;**

A more equal and diverse staff/membership/board within our space will assist in fostering a more equal and diverse community that holds human rights, equality, respect and dignity at the forefront of all other things.

### **We will achieve this through;**

- Developing/reviewing and evaluating all areas highlighted throughout this policy. This includes but is not limited to the further development and implementation of;
  - EDI coordinator position
  - EDI monitoring and evaluation system (EDI monitoring system -results printed in our annual report)
  - Training and development (practical in-house/external development and annual policy review)
  - Developing a Promotion of Inclusive Events Policy
  - Developing inclusive recruitment strategies
  - Evaluating our resources
  - Evaluating our pedagogy and learning styles
  - Annual access audit
  - Annual review of 'Do No Harm' principles
  - Developing our inclusive communication strategies
  - Implementing the use of our Equality Impact Assessment tool
  - Acquiring specific funding towards EDI
- Revisiting and continually questioning all areas of EDI regarding our organisation and all who engage with us.
- Continuing to use circus as a tool toward a more inclusive society.
- Tracking the successes and failures of this policy implementation to ensure we are open, honest and transparent about who we are as an organisation and where we are regarding the implementation of this policy.

### **Galway Community Circus wants;**

A diverse organisation with a skilled workforce and board which is reflective of the diversity within our community.

A diverse membership that reflects the diversity within the community we serve.

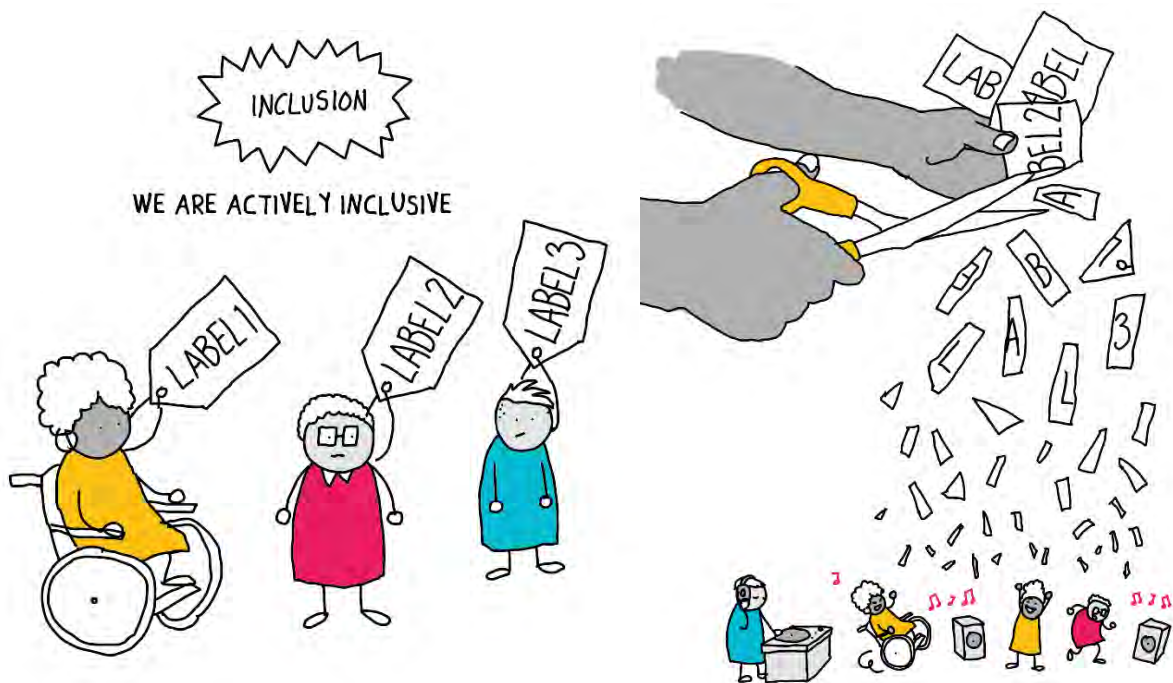
### **This is important because;**

Representation matters.

A culture within a workplace and organisation that supports, values and celebrates difference, strives toward the elimination of all forms of discrimination.

**We will achieve this through;**

- The creation of systems to monitor and evaluate data regarding EDI, allowing us to see the gaps in areas that may create boundaries toward equality, diversity and inclusion so that we may address these gaps and ensure adequate actions are delivered towards their mitigation.
- Embedding EDI-related training into ongoing training programmes and inductions.
- Implementing inclusive recruitment strategies toward membership and workforce recruitment.
- Revaluating access to our services and increasing our existing Access Award to no less than 20% of our membership by 2027.
- Challenging any behaviours that undermine the right of our employees/board/membership to be diverse and to express a diverse identity within Galway Community Circus.
- Championing and telling stories about diversity and inclusion.
- Training and support of the EDI coordinator within our organisation.



## Implementation and Monitoring

Galway Community Circus' vision is that all people are treated fairly and respectfully, have equality of opportunities and resources, and can contribute fully to the success of Galway Community Circus.

This policy is a 'living' document and should be viewed in the knowledge that we as an organisation will grow and change where and when needed to ensure that equality, diversity and inclusion continue to be embedded within our organisation. This document outlines a set of desired outcomes and priority actions to guide us towards the realisation of this vision with a more detailed statement of activities indicating who is taking a lead.

Concerning the practical implementation of the actions underpinning this strategy, these will be fully integrated into our existing policies and planning, including that of our strategic priorities, laid out in our [strategic plan 2023-2027](#). This will ensure there is a consistent review of progress and a process to report on how we are living up to our EDI goals.

The Galway Community Circus Board of Directors will monitor the implementation of this EDI strategy on an ongoing basis. Through continuous reflection, the development of the EDI monitoring system, further policies to support these areas and that of the EDI coordinator, we strive toward a robust, accountable system that will allow us to see our progress in real-time.

We will continue to put in place the infrastructure, resources and leadership to deliver the goals set out in this strategy.

## ACTIONS

Actions	Level of Priority	Timescale	Resources Needed	Team Member(s)
EDI coordinator development	High	February 2023	Training and staff time	All employees - shared accountability – 6 months in the position
EDI monitoring system development and implementation	High	Development complete Feb 2023 – use of system – ongoing (review of system annually)	Consultation	EDI Coordinator, CEO and board
EDI training and development (Bystander training, unconscious bias training etc)	High	2023 – Feb/March/April/May specific training for EDI coordinators – induction training for all other staff (Sept annually)	Certified trainers	Head of Circus School

Actions	Level of Priority	Timescale	Resources Needed	Team Member(s)
Inclusive recruitment strategies	High	June 2023	Research and development time	CEO and Board (staffing) Head of Circus School (membership)
Inclusive events policy	Mid	December 2023	Research and development time/surveys	Head of Projects and Development
Pedagogy evaluation	High	Annually	Research and development time/consultation	Lead tutors
Resource evaluation	High	Annually	Consultation	EDI Coordinator
Access audit	High	Annually	Consultation	EDI Coordinator
'Do No Harm' principles	Med	Annually	Consultation	EDI Coordinator
Development of inclusive communication strategies	High	Jan 2023 – July 2023  (On annual policy review, new inclusive communication strategies will be outlined to replace those that have been completed)	Consultation (Enclude + HR Connections)	Communications Coordinator
Implementation of Equality Impact Assessment Tool	High	Jan - December 2023  (On annual review, data collected from the use of the EIAT will be assessed and evaluated)	Training	All employees  External evaluation
Funding towards EDI	Med	Ongoing	Staff time	CEO  Head of Projects and Development

Actions	Level of Priority	Timescale	Resources Needed	Team Member(s)
Representation	High	Ongoing	PR and marketing, partnership building (staff & board time)	CEO and Board, Communications Coordinator
Code of conduct/ dignity in the workplace	High	Annually	HR Company review Safe to Create	CEO and Board
All GCC policies and procedures supporting EDI	High	Annually	HR Company Review Staff time	Head of Finance and Governance
Youth voice and EDI consultation	High	Annually	Tender	External
Access Award bursary scheme towards 20% of membership	High	2023 -2027	Recruitment strategies/Circus venue locations/staff time	Head of Circus School

## Actions to be Followed if the Policy is not followed/implemented

Victims of bullying, harassment and/or discrimination will be given every support from Galway Community Circus.

Those responsible will also be supported by Galway Community Circus appropriately, challenging the behaviour, providing accurate information on the issue and giving the person an opportunity to think about the effects of their actions so that they may learn from the experience.

**Galway Community Circus would like to make it very clear to any individual or group that expresses behaviour that contradicts Galway Community Circus' EDI policy, will not be tolerated within this organisation. The following policies will be adhered to.**

Galway Community Circus will follow all policies relating to and supporting EDI including:

- Employee Code of Conduct
- Tutor Code of Conduct
- Complaints Procedure
- Grievance procedure
- Disciplinary Policy & Procedure
- Bullying and Harassment Policy
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Recruitment and Selection Policy
- Staff Support & Supervision - Appraisals Policy
- Training & development

Galway Community Circus requires certain standards of behaviour from all our participants and staff members. Continuing breaches of Galway Community Circus EDI policy will render participants and staff members liable to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal/expulsion from Galway Community Circus school.

Galway Community Circus hopes that it will not become necessary to dismiss or expel any employee or Circus school member due to EDI misconduct. However, your participation/employment may be terminated as a result of:

- Misconduct in EDI (serious or persistent actions around bias/bullying and harassment/violence/inappropriate behaviour)
- Other substantial reasons within the framework of Galway Community Circus' EDI policy.

Note: It is not practical to list all possible examples of gross misconduct regarding EDI, therefore the examples above are not exhaustive.

Equality, diversity and inclusion is a standing item at all board and staff meetings and any issues that may arise will be discussed regularly. The effectiveness of the policy will be evaluated annually by the team with the support of senior management and the board.



## Legislation/regulatory requirements & Bibliography

- TUSLA: Quality and Regulatory Framework
- Child Care Act 1991(Early Years Services) Regulations 2016
- U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child in particular Article 2 (UNCRC, 1989)
- Irish Constitution (Bunreacht na hEireann) in particular Articles 40.1, 40.3.1, 40.3.2 and 44.3.3.
- Equal Status Acts 2000-2012
- Employment Equality Acts 1998-2015
- See also p9 of Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Charter and Guidelines for Early Childhood Care and Education Department of Children and Youth Affairs 2016 for a more extensive list of international agreements, Irish legislation and national and European policy
- Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Charter and Guidelines for Early Childhood Care and Education
- Better Start Access and Inclusion Model (AIM)
- Síolta: The National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education
- Aistear: The Early Childhood Curriculum Framework
- Early Years Education focussed Inspection (EYEI) Framework (Department of Education and Skills)

### National Quality Frameworks

- TUSLA: Quality and Regulatory Framework
- Síolta: The National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education
- Aistear: The Early Childhood Curriculum Framework
- Early Years Education focussed Inspection (EYEI) Framework (Department of Education and Skills)

### **Bibliography:**

Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Charter and Guidelines for Early Childhood Care and Education

Better Start Access and Inclusion Model (AIM)

Department of Justice - Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy

Building a Policy for Inclusive Arts Practice - Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Toolkit – Arts Council of Ireland.

<https://iadt.ie/about/equality-diversity-inclusion/edi-resources/>

<https://environment.uw.edu/about/diversity-equity-inclusion/tools-and-additional-resources/glossary-dei-concepts/>

<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/bb647-insights-equality-diversity-and-inclusion/>

<https://lincprogramme.ie/>

<https://aim.gov.ie/>

<https://www.lamh.org/>

<https://incredibleyears.com/>

<https://www.early-years.org/respecting-difference>

<https://environment.uw.edu/about/diversity-equity-inclusion/tools-and-additional-resources/glossary-dei-concepts/>

<https://theequalityblog.co.uk/2019/10/21/equality-diversity-inclusion-a-glossary-of-terms/>

<https://www.diversity.pitt.edu/education/diversity-equity-and-inclusion-glossary>

<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/57dd8-diversity-equality-and-inclusion-policy/>

<https://www.artscouncil.ie/Equality-Diversity-Inclusion/>

<https://www.iua.ie/ourwork/diversity-equality/>

<https://ncisupporthub.ncirl.ie/hc/en-ie/articles/6246602514460-Equality-Diversity-and-Inclusion-Policy>

<https://www.belongto.org/>

<https://www.amachlgbt.com/about>

<https://www.disability-federation.ie/>

<https://nda.ie/>

<https://inclusionireland.ie/>

<https://www.invisibledisabilityireland.com/>

<https://adiarts.ie/>

<https://www.artscouncil.ie/Arts-in-Ireland/Arts-participation/Arts-and-disability/>

## Definitions/Glossary

The following glossary has been sourced from multiple platforms and academic resources found in the bibliography.

### **Access and Outreach**

Access and Outreach refers to the measures and activities undertaken by Galway Community Circus to support underrepresented groups to access the Galway Community Circus programme and Circus employment.

### **Dignity**

A value owed to all humans, to be treated with respect.

### **Diversity**

Recognising that everyone is different in a variety of visible and non-visible ways and that those differences are to be recognised, respected and valued.

### **Equal opportunities**

Equal opportunities, or equality of opportunity, may be defined as ensuring that everyone is entitled to freedom from discrimination, where individuals have an equal opportunity to fulfil their potential and access opportunities.

### **Equality**

Equality is about ensuring that every individual has an equal opportunity to make the most of their lives and talents, and believing that no one should have poorer life chances because of where, what or whom they were born, or because of other characteristics.

### **Human rights**

Human rights are the basic rights and freedoms to which all humans are entitled. They ensure people can live freely and that they are able to flourish, reach their potential and participate in society. They help to ensure that people are treated fairly and with dignity and respect. An individual has human rights by virtue of them being a human and they cannot be taken away.

### **Identity**

Identity relates to the characteristics and qualities of a person, considered collectively, and regarded as essential to that person's self-awareness.

### **Inclusion**

This concerns the active creation of a learning, working and social environment that is welcoming, which recognises and celebrates difference and is reflected in structures, practices and attitudes.

### **Intersectionality**

Refers to the idea that an individual's identity consists of various biological, social and cultural factors, including their race, ethnicity, gender, religion and sexual orientation etc, and that each of these contributes to their overall identity and to who they are as an individual.

### **(Equality) Monitoring**

This is one of the ways that Galway Community Circus can find out more and build an accurate picture of the diverse composition of our staff and community, so that it may create policies,

procedures and sources of support that directly benefit and respond to the needs of our membership, staff and board.

### **Performative**

Concerning EDI, performative activism is a negative term that refers to an individual or an organisation's activist work in such a way as to suggest that the motives behind such efforts are for the purpose of appearing more inclusive or progressive, rather than resulting from a sincere devotion to a particular cause or goal.

### **Respect**

Taking into account the views and desires of others in how you treat people.

### **Tokenism**

Tokenism is the practice of making only superficial or symbolic gestures to appear inclusive of members of underrepresented or minoritised groups. For instance, by recruiting people from minority ethnic groups an organisation may attempt to give the appearance of racial integration or balance within a workforce, but may make no further efforts to invest additional resources into exploring the root cause of such imbalance, or to improving the experiences of minority groups once they are part of the workforce. Also, see the 'performative' definition.

### **Unconscious Bias**

The unconscious associations and beliefs that are said to form outside of our own conscious awareness, which lead to positive or negative inclinations towards or against other people, groups or communities.

Unconscious biases can lead to stereotyping and interfere with impartial judgement and decision-making and have been shown to influence recruitment and selection decisions, as people tend to form positive associations with those who are like them, which leads to more negative outcomes for those people who are not like them.

### **Underrepresented groups**

Groups of people who are insufficiently or inadequately represented, relative to their representation in broader society. People within these groups may be subject to barriers and forms of discrimination.

For example, this may be groups who share the following particular characteristics where data shows gaps in equality of opportunity about access, success or progression:

- Children and Young people from areas of low higher education participation, low household income or low socio-economic status
- Children and Young people from Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds
- Disabled Children and Young people
- Children and Young people estranged from their families
- Children and Young people from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities
- Children and Young people who are refugees
- Children and Young people who are a part of the LGBTQI Community

### **Pedagogy**

The method and practice of teaching. The art, science, or profession of teaching.

## Appendix 1: Access Award Application

Galway Community Circus is a charitable organisation dedicated to inspiring and empowering people of all ages and abilities through circus arts. The purpose of our Access Award is to allow individuals with financial/ other constraints to apply for a reduced rate or free classes.

### Who can apply?

The Access Award is open to those who, for one reason or another, cannot make the term contribution to classes.

Name of Child:

Name of Parent/ Guardian:

Date of Birth:

Contact Number:

Address:

Are you applying for a full bursary, half-bursary or quarter bursary? (Please circle)

Please let us know if any of the following apply. You can tick more than 1 answer. GCC may request supporting documentation in this regard.

- Living on or below minimum wage
- Unemployed
- Is the child/young person in foster care OR living in Direct Provision
- A refugee
- A young person living independently
- Cannot afford participation for another reason

Please let us know of any circumstances that we may need to cater for. A member of GCC staff may be in touch for further information to ensure that we have everything we need to make sure that the participant is supported in the ways that are necessary for them to truly immerse themselves in the programme.

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Thank you for filling in these details. We know it can be hard to talk about these things so please rest assured that we treat all of this information with the utmost confidentiality and respect. We believe that access to our services is your right, and we want to work with you to ensure the best possible outcome for our youth.

Applications will be assessed by Galway Community Circus Access Award Committee and kept strictly confidential. We will be in touch one week after the close of applications.

If successful, we expect Access Award recipients to:

- Attend more than 80% of classes.
- Be committed to learning circus and immerse themselves in the programme
- Take part in GCC's regular feedback and evaluation activities.

Please note that low attendance and repeated poor behaviour may result in the access award being withdrawn.

Please send your finished application to [accessaward@galwaycircus.com](mailto:accessaward@galwaycircus.com)

## Appendix 2: Equality Impact Assessment Tool

Name of policy/decision/activity this EIA refers to:

*An example could be something like: Are we accessible to young Muslim girls? Is there a need for a specific circus class for young Muslim girls that would allow them to engage with our services?*

Summarise the policy/decision/activity this EIA refers to: (Tell the history behind the decision, and the reasons for the change/decision being needed. Do you have any associated documents or links to add)?

*Context: Are there any areas which you are concerned about that you may need support with? Yes – we need more education about whether young Muslim girls in our community can participate in activities with male participants. Is that a barrier to our activities?*

Below; please list how the policy/decision/activity impacts each of the characteristics, this will enable Galway Community Circus to consider how the positive and negative direct/indirect results of this change will impact our colleagues and membership, it will also help us to get the best out of our initiative. Share positive stories within this EIA, this is a tool to help consider the impact both positive and negative.

Do these multiple times where needed regarding the different aspects/areas you are looking at (age/disability/ marginalised participant/gender/race/religion/), whatever it is that has sparked the question around this)

### **Impact?**

Positive:

Negative:

### **Mitigation/justification?**

If negative - How is this justified?

What will be done to limit justified negative impact?

The Socio-Economic Duty: what is the likely effect on the socially and economically disadvantaged?

### **Impact?**

Positive:

Negative:

**Mitigation/justification?**

If negative - How is this justified?

What will be done to limit justified negative impact?

**Further observations**

How does this play to National inequalities? Are we respectfully and meaningfully assessing this topic? Have we the right people around the table for this discussion?

Summary: Summarise the actions you have committed to take to limit impact on protected characteristics. Insert more rows as needed.

<b>ACTION</b>	<b>Date which action will be delivered</b>	<b>Protected characteristic</b>

**Your Name**

**Your Job Title**