

Write By The Sea (WBTS) – Fair Usage and Equal Opportunities Policy and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Statement

Part 1: Equal Opportunities Policy

1. Statement of policy

WBTS recognises that in our society, individuals and groups of people experience discrimination in many forms, both directly and indirectly. Equality of opportunity may be experienced on the grounds of:

- Age
- Disability
- Ethnicity
- Gender
- Socio-Economic background
- Marital or family status and civil partnership
- Pregnancy, maternity or paternity
- Religion or belief
- Sexual orientation

WBTS endeavours to create an environment in which equal opportunities are promoted. This is achieved by fulfilling our legal obligations and by taking positive action which goes beyond the requirements of the law, by avoiding stereotyping, tokenism and labelling.

2. General principles

Scope

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance on all aspects of equal opportunities in WBTS.

Responsibility

The WBTS Management Committee is responsible for ensuring that the policy and the procedures in this document are implemented efficiently and effectively. All volunteers (including voluntary management committee members) are expected to facilitate this process.

Approach

These procedures list the approach that must be taken in order to fulfil the policy. They must be adhered to at all times. If they are breached, the appropriate procedures (e.g. complaints, grievance or disciplinary) may be used to resolve the problem and to make improvements. Anyone who chooses to take such action will not be penalised by WBTS or treated less favourably as a result.

3. Employment Practice

WBTS currently does not employ staff or interns. Should vacancies arise, WBTS aims to be an equal opportunities employer ensuring fairness to potential and actual employees. WBTS employees will be recruited and selected on objective criteria that test the relevant skills, knowledge, experience, qualifications and personal qualities necessary for posts. No applicants will be placed at a disadvantage by requirements which are not genuine occupational qualifications, as this would constitute indirect discrimination. This does not preclude the setting of certain legitimate limits and exclusions, however. Examples are a retirement age of 65, not employing immigrants without work permits, etc. Job vacancies will be advertised as widely as possible and will refer to the operation of an equal opportunities policy to which staff and volunteers are expected to adhere.

4. Volunteers working at WBTS

General

WBTS has a positive and open approach to the treatment of its volunteers and expects its volunteers to share its commitment to equal opportunities. Each volunteer will receive a copy of this document. We actively look for ways in which we can achieve adequate representation amongst our volunteers. As a literary festival based in a small fishing community, we strive to ensure that those who volunteer reflect the diversity of the Kilmore Quay community and the wider Irish community.

Premises, facilities and Venues

- WBTS strives to make the physical environment in which we operate as attractive and user-friendly as possible for everyone. Local venues are limited in nature and number; however, it is our objective that all meeting rooms and festival venues be fully accessible, and we select venues with this in mind.
- WBTS equipment installed or stored in SMC is available for the use of the wider community and its organisations, subject to agreement with SMC and the user that due care will be taken to ensure proper use of the equipment. Procedures and checklists will be put in place to ensure the safety and maintenance of all WBTS equipment. No bias will be shown towards any one group over another in terms of use or access to the equipment. Usage by external groups will be reviewed regularly at committee meetings.

Dealing with harassment

WBTS is committed to social justice and equality and believes that everyone involved with WBTS has the right to freedom from harassment, whether this is on the basis of disability, race, sex, sexual orientation or any other grounds. WBTS does not condone any harassment whatsoever and will deal with it quickly and fairly, using the disciplinary procedure in the case of a member of staff and any other appropriate form of action with other individuals.

5. Monitoring and Evaluation

Success of policy

WBTS monitors, reviews and evaluates the success of its equal opportunities policy and procedures on a regular basis and seeks to make ongoing improvements. It also studies its other policies and procedures to see that they operate in tandem with this policy and can be

improved in terms of equal opportunities. WBTS is always on the lookout for new ideas to improve the equal opportunities performance of the organisation.

Feedback

Constructive feedback on this document is always welcome. It must be given to the WBTS Chairperson who will ensure that the WBTS organising committee gives it full consideration.

Review

This document will be reviewed by the organising committee on an annual basis, or sooner if circumstances change.

This policy was adopted at a general meeting of the group on:

Wednesday, 11 August 2021 [Insert date]

Signed by: Anne O'Brien

Chairperson: Lucy Moore

Secretary: Jean Cullinane

Treasurer: Sylvia Kehoe

Review Date: October 2022

Part 2: Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Statement

Introduction

Write by the Sea Literary Festival aims to provide a wide platform for writers, facilitators, artists and audiences to participate in festival events, Zoom/Room to Write Events, Competition Celebration events and any other activities that we stage during our literary festival or throughout the year.

Inclusivity and Diversity Values

We respect the rights of all artists and members of the community and the wider society to participate, regardless of:

- Age
- Disability
- Ethnicity
- Gender
- Socio-Economic background
- Marital or family status and civil partnership
- Pregnancy, maternity or paternity
- Religion or belief
- Sexual orientation

We are committed to ensuring that everyone has the right to enjoy the festival and associated activities and events in an environment free from threat of intimidation, harassment and abuse. All committee members and volunteers have a responsibility to oppose discriminatory behaviours and promote equality of opportunity and an environment that respects diversity.

Diversity Statement

We recognise that prejudice and discrimination continue to result in unfair treatment for many people. Such unfair treatment has the potential to affect organisations, communities and society. At Write by the Sea we are ideally placed to play a vital role in helping to create a more diverse and inclusive environment where everyone feels valued and respected and where minority voices are clearly heard. We are committed to addressing this by:

- Ensuring the effectiveness of our action to make our policies a lived reality
- Ensuring that Write by the Sea is recognised as a festival that causes people to reflect on and to understand opposing views, and that showcases the diversity of the literature, writers and facilitators available to be featured
- Developing the Write by the Sea brand as a diverse and inclusive platform
- Listening, learning and taking action to bring about change
- Being clear and open about our values and promoting them
- Seeking feedback and evaluating audience reaction to our programme of events