**iCCi Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy**

Equality, diversity and inclusion are at the heart of everything iCCi does. iCCi is committed to opening access, being representative and acting with fairness and respect to all. We promote the values of equality, diversity and inclusion amongst our workforce, and aim to integrate them into our culture, actions and structures across the organisation. We are committed to eliminating all forms of discrimination and strive to be a place of opportunity for all.

The aim is for our workforce, audiences, artists, participants, visitors and board to be truly representative of all sections of society, encompassing diversity across all of the protected characteristics. We are committed to ensuring that all who work and engage with us feel respected, included and able to give their best. We believe that the arts and creative industries thrive through a plurality of experiences, viewpoints and approaches.

In addition to this we strive to push forward and be an example of best practice in EDI for the University of Kent and for the arts sector in our region. We will not just do the bare minimum in order to comply with legal requirements but will be proactive in taking a stand against injustice in all forms, striving to pre-empt and eliminate any real or perceived barriers to participation in order that everyone who comes into contact with our organisation can thrive.

**Our Policy’s Purpose**

This policy is an addendum to the University of Kent’s EDI Policy which can be found here:

<https://www.kent.ac.uk/hr-staffinformation/documents/policies/edi/Our%20People%20Practices%20-%20Equality%20Diversity%20and%20Inclusivity%20-%20Policy.pdf>

The purpose of this policy is to outline iCCi’s commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion within the specific remit of this department and to embed our guiding principles, values and action with regard to EDI at all levels of the organisation. This policy will be reviewed and updated annually.

In addition to this we have created an EDI Action Plan. This will be a live document which is reviewed, updated and shared regularly.

Alongside both documents sits our NPO Investment Principles plan for Inclusivity and Relevance which will be submitted and signed off by Arts Council England annually during our NPO funded period. We will be held to account by Arts Council England and our Advisory Board to deliver on this plan.

**Leadership & Governance**

The Advisory Board and Senior Management Team of iCCi have a responsibility to ensure this policy is followed and that a commitment to EDI is embedded into all aspects of the organisation. We have a sub-committee of the Advisory Board focused on Social Responsibility which includes EDI and Environmental Responsibility. Members of the Advisory Board and Senior Management Team sit on this sub-committee as well as the University of Kent’s Head of EDI, and meet on a termly basis. The sub-committee lead on developing and updating the EDI policy and action plan, and NPO Inclusivity & Relevance Investment Principles plan, and monitoring progress against these and reviewing their effectiveness.

In addition to this sub-committee we have an EDI Staff Focus Group, made up of members of staff across all departments of iCCi. This group meet on a bi-monthly and have a focus on operational delivery of the EDI policy and action plan.

Each member of the organisation has responsibility for their own compliance with this policy.

**Workforce: Recruitment, Retention & Training**

As part of the University of Kent we follow the wider University’s EDI policy (see link above) and HR policies and procedures which can be found [here](https://www.kent.ac.uk/hr-staffinformation/policies/a_to_z.html).

In addition to these policies we have the following procedures in place to ensure we are recruiting the most diverse and representative workforce we can:

* Advertise all roles beyond our own social media and website, sharing with diverse networks and where possible paying for targeted social media advertising to reach under-represented communities
* Have a Positive Action Statement on all job adverts that we particularly welcome applications from black, Asian and minority ethnic candidates as they are under-represented in our workforce
* Wherever possible ensure roles have a minimum 6 week window for applications
* Implement blind recruitment practices in our application process
* Ensure diverse interview panels
* Offer the opportunity to apply using video/audio instead of in writing, if possible
* Have written interview questions available for the candidate to have to hand during interviews

The University of Kent is a Disability Confident Employer, meaning we guarantee an interview for all candidates who meet the essential criteria for a role.

We do not host unpaid internships or work placements of longer than 1 week, unless placements are a core part of a specific programme of study.

We are always open to consider requests for flexible working patterns and aim to accommodate these wherever possible subject to business need. We adhere to the University of Kent’s hybrid working scheme, allowing members of staff to apply to work from home up to 2 days per week

In order to ensure our workforce share this commitment to EDI there are a series of mandatory staff training modules which must be completed on induction.

For all staff these are:

* Challenging Racism
* Active Bystander
* Bullying & Harassment
* Mental Health Awareness

For Managers these are:

* Reasonable Adjustments
* Unconscious Bias

There are also a number of optional modules staff are encouraged to take including:

* Deaf Awareness
* LGBTQI Awareness
* Transgender Awareness
* Diversity in HE
* My Best Self

We also run an annual iCCi staff conference which includes refresh EDI training.

We are an equal opportunities organisation and aim to ensure that no one who comes into contact with the organisation in any capacity receives less favourable treatment on the grounds of sex, race, colour, nationality, disability, ethnic or national origins, class, marital or civil status, sexual orientation, gender re-assignment, pregnancy and maternity, political or religious belief.

We strive to create a working environment free of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, promoting dignity and respect for all, and where individual differences and the contributions of all staff are recognised and valued.

We encourage all staff to be alert to anything in the workplace which may contravene the above values and to follow the University of Kent’s grievance and disciplinary policies and procedures accordingly should they see or experience anything concerning. These can be found [here](https://staff.kent.ac.uk/employment/complaints). This includes with whom an employee should raise a grievance – usually their line manager.

On induction we ensure all new members of staff receive a robust induction pack including a visual organisation chart with images and bios for all staff members. This ensures they know who to go to with any issues or grievances, should they not be able to raise this with their line manager.

**Artistic Programming**

We are committed to ensuring the work programmed in our venues and at our events is of a high quality, is innovative and is representative of the diverse society and communities we serve. We need to ensure that the stories and voices presented through our artistic programme are as diverse and inclusive as they can be. In order to ensure this our policy and action plan includes specifically committing to positive targets around the representation within our programme of artists and creatives who are D/deaf or disabled, and artists who are of African or Caribbean heritage and of South Asian, East Asian and South East Asian artists, while also continually looking to ensure that the widest range of interests and experiences are adequately represented. We strongly believe that diversity is essential to our artistic innovation and creativity, as well as the social purpose of our organisation.

In addition to this we strive to ensure our organisation is inclusive and accessible for artists working with us. This includes ensuring accessible facilities both front of house, on stage and backstage and ensuring we pro-actively request access riders and individual requests from artists in advance of their visit.

**Marketing & Communications**

We want to ensure our work reaches the widest possible audience across our local community, cities and region. Marketing campaigns will aim to attract new audiences as well as encourage repeat attendance and loyalty. We will seek to broaden our local and regional reach, thinking about different marketing strategies to reach out to all sections of our community.

We will ensure marketing and communications materials including our website are as accessible as possible and will regularly review this in consultation with our EDI Staff Focus Group. We will ensure images and videos of our work showcase the diversity of artists, audiences, participants, visitors and staff that we represent and want to attract, striving to ensure nobody feels excluded.

As part of our plans to be an example of best practice and to actively promote our EDI values, we will use our communications platforms including social media presence to promote positive messaging around EDI and the actions we are taking to support communities with protected characteristics.

**Participation & Casting**

iCCi’s work with children and young people is a core part of our mission. We are dedicated to widening participation and access in our work with children and young people and ensuring any participants engaging with us feel included, welcome, safe and valued. We want every child or young person who engages with us to be able to reach their full potential, to be able to fully be themselves and to have their voices heard and championed. All our work with children and young people is either fully free to access or heavily subsidised (with free options for those that need).

We will create safe spaces within our projects for children and young people to thrive and will also commit each year to working with new education and community partners in our local area in order to continually diversify the demographics we are engaging with, enriching our work with children and young people and opening up opportunities for more young people to engage with the arts, creativity and culture, and for young people from different backgrounds and circumstances from across Kent to engage with one another – fostering a sense of understanding, cohesion and celebrating difference.

As part of this work our mission is to contribute to the diversification of the cultural and creative industries by supporting young people from all backgrounds and circumstances to access the arts and to have opportunities to progress into further study, training or employment within the creative industries should they choose to. As part of this we have developed a separate Work Experience policy which outlines our approach to ensuring opportunities to undertake work experience at iCCi are fair and inclusive.

Although not a producing house, we do have occasions where we are casting for amateur/non-professional productions. We champion diversity in all forms within casting decisions and actively seek diverse casts for our productions. We understand the importance and value of visibility and representation on stage and we want to reflect the diversity of our local community in our work. We will operate an open audition process for these productions, advertising opportunities across our marketing and comms channels and working with partners to promote opportunities to diverse networks, to reach the widest possible population.

As a general principle we will start from a position of neutral casting for all productions and ensure directors cast with an open mind and without prejudice. Where race/ethnicity, presenting gender or other personal characteristics are integral to the story we will make this clear in audition notices, ensuring that language is as fully inclusive as possible. We will always be open to feedback on this and will make adjustments wherever possible to accommodate the widest pool of people to audition.

We are dedicated to creating a safe and supportive audition, rehearsal and performance environments where auditionees and company members are empowered to do their best work.

We will allocate specific budget lines within our engagement budgets to support access – leaving these flexible and able to respond to support specific needs within projects and our own community productions.

**Venues & Facilities**

We will strive to make our buildings, performances and events as accessible as possible and will audit this regularly, both internally and externally. We want to create an environment that is open, friendly and welcoming to all and be a place where difference is celebrated and valued. We will always be open to feedback and committed to taking this on board and doing whatever we can to address any issues raised, as well as pre-empting potential issues by embedding EDI and accessibility practices into all of our planning processes (including planning new capital work).

We will offer an Access Scheme at our venue which is free for people with physical, sensory or learning disabilities to sign up to. This helps us to understand individual access needs better and improve our audience experience to make it inclusive and accessible to all attendees.

The Access Scheme will offer concessionary ticket prices for some events, and/or a free companion seat (subject to availability and may not be available for certain performances) as well as access to book wheelchair spaces online.

We will commit to reviewing the Access Scheme on a yearly basis in consultation with our Access Scheme members and EDI Staff Focus Group to ensure it remains fit for purpose and make any changes required.

**Monitoring & Review**

We want to embed a data-driven and reflective culture within our organisation. We will always be open to feedback and willing to adapt and change. We will continually reflect upon our EDI practice to ensure it is effective and have mechanisms in place to ensure this, including our EDI Staff Focus Group and Sub-Committee meetings and regular scheduled reviews of our EDI Policy and Action Plans. We will use data such as the census and Local Authority data and reports (e.g. Index of Multiple Deprivation) to understand the demographics of our local communities better and set targets for our activity.

**Anti-Racism Commitment**

We are committed to taking action against all forms of racism at iCCi, within the University and beyond. Along with the University of Kent, we recognise that we have a significant role to play in ensuring that we challenge and deconstruct systemic racism and all forms of discrimination within our institution and beyond.

We are aligned with the University of Kent’s Anti-Racism Strategy which can be found here:

<https://blogs.kent.ac.uk/executive-group/files/2021/08/BT_130984_Antiracism-Strategy_July_2021.pdf>

**Agreement to follow this policy**

This Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy is fully supported by iCCi’s Senior Management Team and Advisory Board and has been agreed with the University of Kent’s Head of EDI.

Review due October 2024.