

Swim Ireland

Diversity & Inclusion Policy

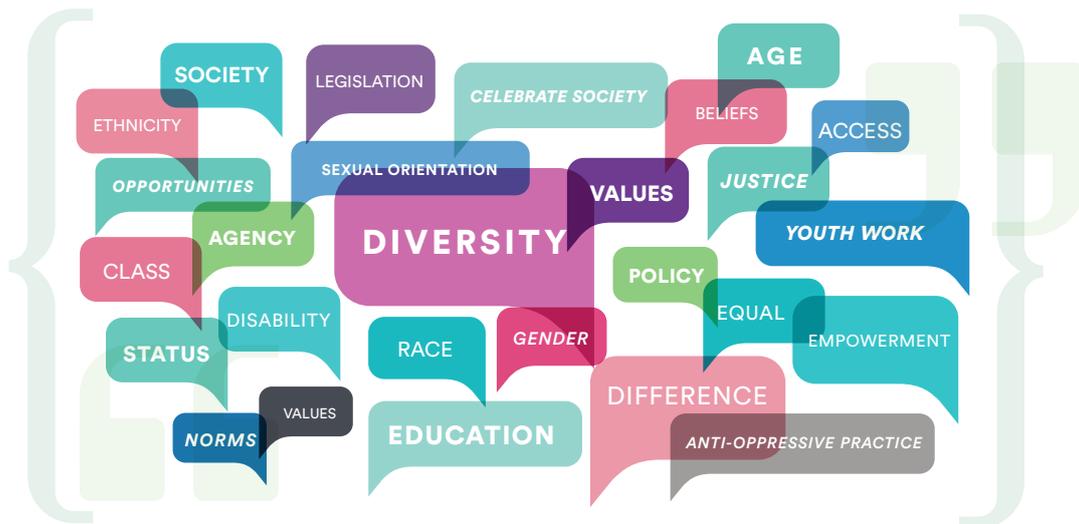
#MeandtheWater
November 2020

**SWIM
IRELAND**

Introduction

Swim Ireland is the National Governing Body (NGB) of Swimming, Diving, Water Polo and Synchronised Swimming on the island of Ireland. We are recognised at a national level by the Irish Government through Sport Ireland, in Northern Ireland by Sport Northern Ireland and by the Olympic Federation of Ireland. Our Mission is “to encourage participation, develop excellence and regulate our sport.”

Water is inclusive. It means different things to different people – fear for the nervous learner, liberation and independence for others and joy and elation for the Olympian. The Swim Ireland ‘Us and the Water’ brand represents the organisation’s commitment to representing all of those who have a relationship with the water. From the non-swimmer to the Olympic swimmer, to the Water Polo player, the daring diver to the Dollymount dipper, we are working to make the aquatics more accessible, safer, and enjoyable for all. Water does not discriminate and #UsandtheWater represents our commitment to the Beginner, Swimmer, Diver and Water Polo player first and foremost.



The aquatic disciplines do not discriminate based on gender, marital or family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, ethnic or social background or as a member of the traveller community. This Policy provides a set of guiding principles that goes beyond what is required by law or regulation in promoting equality and preventing discrimination. Its aim is to provide a culture within our sport that is inclusive for all and sets out our expectations for the conduct of activity that falls under our direct remit such as within our Clubs, Regions, Teams, Education and Programmes. In addition, we expect that any organisation or individual with whom we work will adhere to the principles and spirit of the policy and our guidelines.

VERNA MYERS BEST DESCRIBED OUR INTENTION WHEN SHE SAID,

“DIVERSITY is being asked to the party, INCLUSION is being asked to dance”.
Let us dance together.

It is part of our policy to work closely with bodies such as CARA the national pan-disability sport organisation providing a collaborative and partnership platform to increase sport and physical activity opportunities for people with disabilities and with organisations such as Sporting Pride, the Jesuit Refugee Centre, Irish Transplant Games, Special Olympics, Irish Down Syndrome Sporting Organisation, Vision Sport Ireland, Deaf Sport Ireland, Paralympics Ireland, Local Authority Sports & Wellbeing Partnerships, LSPs and others. We will continue to develop these partnerships and actively seek additional partners.

The Policy does not stand alone but is supported by existing organisational Rules and Codes of Conduct, breaches of which shall be dealt with in accordance with the Swim Ireland Complaints and Disciplinary Policy. It is fully supported by the Board of Swim Ireland who are committed to promoting equality, preventing discrimination, and protecting the human rights of employees, customers, service users and everyone affected by our policies and plans.

In developing this policy, we consulted with a range of stakeholders including Swim Ireland Clubs, Sport Ireland, CARA, Paralympics Ireland, Sporting Pride and the Irish Kidney Association. **The definition of inclusion arrived at by this group was: the practice of accepting responsibility and taking the necessary steps to ensure that everyone is given an equal opportunity and is empowered to participate, and everyone is treated with the same level of respect and importance.**

Principles

Openness and understanding underpin our beliefs and we have identified 5 principles by which our decisions and actions will be guided. These are:



PRINCIPLE 1 – EDUCATE

Policies are only words unless they are driven by people and actions. To be effective they require ownership and buy in from members. Recognising that policies are most effective when understood and supported, we will place the provision of ongoing education and training at the heart of our Policy.



PRINCIPLE 2 – LEAD BY EXAMPLE

We intend to set out the expected inclusive behaviours in respect of everyone associated with the organisation and will lead by example. All our Board and Staff will, as a minimum, undertake Disability Awareness Training and we will proactively identify underrepresented groups and develop strategies to support their inclusion.



PRINCIPLE 3 – PROVISION OF PATHWAYS

This policy is built on our core principle of being open and understanding of all, regardless of ability or background. We see our responsibility as an NGB as being to provide pathways that are free from discrimination for all who wish to participate in our sport and Inclusion will become one of the pillars of our Strategic Plan 2021-2024.



PRINCIPLE 4 – COMMUNICATION

We will seek to communicate widely to our members and the wider public that Swim Ireland is an open and inclusive organisation and that we do not tolerate discrimination. We undertake to disseminate this policy to learners who undertake our education programmes and will provide training to our tutors in communicating our values as a diverse and inclusive organisation. We will actively consider how we portray our sport, being conscious of diversity in the portrayal of those actively engaging in our sport.



PRINCIPLE 5 – EVALUATION

We commit to continuously review our practices and strategies to ensure that they are making a lasting impact and will seek feedback from user groups to inform our plans and strategies.

Actions

This Policy is aimed at enhancing participation in our sport and enriching the experience of all participants. We want people of all backgrounds and abilities to feel welcomed by us and to identify as valued members of the Swim Ireland family, knowing that they are appreciated for what they bring to us. We commit to continuously focus on inclusion and will hold ourselves to account by setting annual targets which will be monitored by our Board. **To this end our short-term targets are:**

TIMELINE	ACTIONS
By end of 2020	This Policy will be formally approved and adopted by the Board
	We will sign and commit to the CARA Disability Inclusion Charter.
	All of our Board and Staff will undergo Disability Awareness Training.
	Our HR Manager will carry out a review of our work practices and recruitment processes to ensure that they are free from discrimination.
	Ensure that we consider inclusion when we are setting goals for our 2021 Business Plan.
	Continue to promote our existing programmes through the Sport Ireland Disability Officer (SIDO) network and work with Local Sports Partnerships (LSPs) to roll out programmes locally that are responsive to the specific needs of individuals and set targets for the numbers of SIDOs with whom we are working within the 2021 Business Plan.
	Achieve the CARA Xcessible Programme Bronze Award.
2021 & Onwards	Attend all SIDO/NGB engagement opportunities, promoting our existing programmes throughout the SIDO network and deliver on the goals set for 2021 with SIDO engagement.
	Form a Diversity and Inclusion Committee to develop and support the roll out of an Action Plan with specific goals to increase involvement from under-represented groups.
	Education and collaboration with organisations and individuals seeking to enhance participation of underrepresented groups will, we believe, break down barriers and is the key to success. We will continue to work with our partners such as CARA, Special Olympics, Irish Down Syndrome Sporting Organisation, Sporting Pride, Irish Transplant Games, Vision Sport Ireland, Deaf Sport Ireland, Paralympics Ireland, Local Authority Sports & Wellbeing Partnerships, LSPs and others to promote equality of opportunity and to oppose all forms of bias, oppressive behaviour, prejudice and discrimination. We will consider what specific actions we will take in 2021 with these partners.
	Recognise the diversity of provision that is needed so that everyone can enjoy the aquatics and work with Sport Ireland, Sport NI, Local Sports Partnerships and others to seek to secure the necessary funding to remove barriers to participation amongst under-represented groups of the population.
	Promote the inclusive nature of our sport across all our communication channels and use imagery that reflects the diversity of a 21st Century Ireland and consistently review our materials and equipment in the setting for messages about diversity – omissions; stereotypes; accuracy; knowledge of appropriate uses of resources.
	We will review our communication and education platforms to consider the difficulties experienced by some individuals and, where we can, will implement changes to ensure that we engage with the widest possible audience.
	We will monitor, on an annual basis, how this Diversity & Inclusion Policy, and any supporting action plan, are working in practice, and considering and taking action to address any issues.
	We will incorporate diversity & inclusion as a key element of our next Strategic Plan (due to be developed 2021) and ensure that we have an Annual Action Plan for Inclusion based on the goals set out in the Plan.