



COISCÉIM DANCE THEATRE | COME AS YOU ARE
A plan to mainstream access and inclusivity | 2025-2030

POLICY STATEMENT

From artistic professionals and seasoned amateurs to absolute beginners our goal is to create the conditions for your experience with CoisCéim to be the best it can be – whether you are working with us, participating in a project, attending as an audience member, or engaging as a stakeholder. The ambition of this policy is to foster a climate of care so that YOU feel at ease and able to share any information that is needed to enable this to happen. COME AS YOU ARE.

INTRODUCTION

CoisCéim, pronounced “Kush Came,” takes its name from the Irish word for “footstep.” Led by David Bolger, our purpose is to produce exceptional, inclusive, and sustainable dance theatre, in line with our values of INTEGRITY, VIBRANCY, CONNECTION, AND JOY.

World-renowned, our original and distinctive dance works for stage, film, and public spaces blend diverse dance styles to inspire and spark genuine curiosity in dance and its relevance to our everyday. We seek to be at the forefront of the evolution of dance as an artform – in performance, in access and participation initiatives, as an advocate for dance and those who work in the sector – to provoke, to inspire, to entertain and to bring contemporary dance theatre to new audiences.

We strive for artistic integrity through enabling realistic creative ambition; bringing together artists, technicians and production personnel in ways that stretch, challenge and nourish their practice, the art of performance and audience experience in a manner that places imagination and experimentation at the core of everything we do. We celebrate collaboration and operate in a direct, open and honest manner. In order to achieve this, it is essential that we fully represent the diversity within our society and promote inclusion.

Access and inclusivity are pillars of our current strategic plan – THREE ANCHORS TO THRIVE – underpinning everything we do, every decision we make. CoisCéim published its first Diversity and Inclusion Policy in 2019, with a core aim to find '*a building that can be accessible to all*' – achieving this when we opened our doors at 42 Fairview Strand in 2021.

Highlights under our 2021- 2024 Policy have been the highly successful PAY WHAT YOU CAN scheme to reduce barriers related to pricing and the launch of a new website with accessibility at its core in July 2024. In addition, during this period the Board and Executive also focussed strongly on challenging their thinking around how to effectively embed inclusion into our business model. This included undertaking external training – for example, the Executive Producer is now an alumnus of the Senior Leaders course at COMMON PURPOSE. Please see Appendix A attached for a potted history of our journey to date.

With this plan our core ambition is mainstream access through foregrounding care and we will consider it a success if by 2030, we:

- have harnessed the potential of place with 42 Fairview Strand — and it is celebrated as a beacon for dance at home and abroad – as a vibrant hub of creativity for professionals, enthusiasts and locals alike – valued and championed across the community
- are known and visibly recognised as a company where access and inclusion are normal parts of everyday business practice
- have a Board of Directors that is representative and reflective of the society we serve

ACCESS & INCLUSIVITY ACTION PLAN | 2025 - 2030

THEME	OBJECTIVES	ACTIONS 2025 – 2030	EARLY SUCCESS INDICATORS
<p>DANCE IS FOR EVERYONE</p> <p>Actively encourage meaningful engagement with the artform by all members of our society as audience members, artists, Broadreach participants, supporters and stakeholders</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To attract new audiences for CoisCéim and the performing arts from communities that think that contemporary dance and theatre is not for them. To diversify and widen participation in CoisCéim Broadreach projects to enlarge the cohort of people taking part in dance and the contemporary arts and bring varied communities together. To reduce and remove barriers for people to see and take part in our activities through access initiatives, outdoor experiences and more. To open up structured new pathways for independent artists to build viable careers and connect with the artform and the company in diverse ways. To stay abreast of innovations around access and incorporate advances in thinking and technology into our business on an ongoing basis. 	<p>In order to encourage people from all communities to engage with CoisCéim and dance we will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to make performance work & facilitate participation projects that are relevant to people's everyday lives – that intuitively connect with people and are personally meaningful to audiences and participants by coherently resonating with their own lived experience. Build on the success of high-quality performance projects such as BENCH that break down barriers, build democratic relationships and give audiences agency. Harness innovation through projects such as FRANCIS FOOWORK VR to coherently connect participation and performance projects that encourage communities to experience “theatre” for the first time. Continue to include wherever possible relaxed, audio described, signed performances and access initiatives, where appropriate, in every production run. Continue to work with stakeholders and experts to improve data collection pathways for stakeholders to collate evidence-based systems and benchmarks for the industry to effectively evaluate the success of initiatives against societal goals. Work with like-minded cultural and other organisations to establish connections, build long-term relationships, professional development opportunities and participation projects that actively target communities who feel that contemporary dance is “not for them”. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CoisCéim is recognised in the public domain – e.g. through awards and mainstream media for “<i>making ordinary, extraordinary – elevating the public domain</i>”. Demand for projects that bring high quality art to audiences in a democratic manner e.g. BENCH to grow nationally and internationally and are recognised for their value in improving societal health. CoisCéim's professional development collaborations such as the COISÉIM MOVEMENT AWARD for Dublin Fringe Festival and EMMA O'KANE BURSARY are recognised by artists and stakeholders as valuable initiatives that embed equity into Ireland's performance ecosystem. Audience feedback and the company's followers on social media increasingly mirror Irish society. Demand for Broadreach participation projects increasingly spans a wider demographic.

THEME	OBJECTIVES	ACTIONS 2025 – 2030	EARLY SUCCESS INDICATORS
<p>EMBEDDING INCLUSION & BEING REPRESENTATIVE</p> <p>Striving to ensure that CoisCéim is representative and reflects present day Ireland in everything we do</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To ensure that our company and our activities reflect the community we serve. To continue to reduce and remove barriers to make our studio and all activities as accessible to as wide a section of the population as possible. To nurture inclusivity to ensure that people from all lived experiences feel that our activities are for them. 	<p>In order to further embed inclusivity into our everyday and be reflective and representative of those we serve we will foreground CARE to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be welcoming and foster a climate at 42 Fairview Strand that creates the conditions for people who work and engage with us in any capacity to be themselves and be comfortable and confident in sharing information about any needs they may have. Continue to break down barriers for people to engage with dance “on their terms” through initiatives such as PAY WHAT YOU CAN ticket pricing and joint ventures with high profile national and international institutions such as the Broadreach projects: MOVING SIGNATURES with IMMA Horizons and the transnational Perform Europe project PERFORMING MEMORY. Ensure that all company policies and procedures are clear and fit for purpose and we can provide or signpost services for people with particular needs. Implement as far as possible the recommendations of the independent accessibility audit undertaken in 2024 to improve physical accessibility at 42 Fairview Strand. Form a board working group in 2026 to address the need for our governing body to be representative of the people we serve by 2030. Create opportunities and pathways with partners that will result in the overall ecology being more inclusive by design – such as the COISÉIM MOVEMENT AWARD with Dublin Fringe Festival. Continue to optimise digital accessibility through our website, social media and through <u>NUMERIDANSE</u> – Europe's leading dance video platform. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People who work and engage with CoisCéim feedback that they can COME AS THEY ARE and their needs are met. We are independently recognised by the sector and its stakeholders as a key contributor in the drive to mainstream access and inclusion in the performing arts. CoisCéim’s policies and procedures are recognised as fit for purpose and are shared by colleagues and stakeholders as models of best practice CoisCéim has a Board of Directors that is representative of the society around us. We are independently recognised as an organisation that operates with honesty and integrity particularly with regard to access and inclusion.

THEME	OBJECTIVES	ACTIONS 2025 – 2030	EARLY SUCCESS INDICATORS
<p>CHANGING PERCEPTIONS COMMUNICATION</p> <p>Be proactive in changing perceptions that contemporary dance is "exclusive" and "inaccessible"</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Portray in multiple ways that contemporary dance is an inclusive activity for everyone to see and do. Build new connections to actively market this message to new, more diverse communities. Ensure that CoisCéim's commitment to inclusivity is evident on all promotional materials, physical and digital. 	<p>In order to communicate the fact that DANCE IS FOR EVERYONE we will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to work with an external PR specialist to maximise the reach / impact of our communications. Devise, develop and implement energetically overarching campaigns for all events and opportunities that reach and resonate across society and underline the everyday relevance of dance as an artform. Continue to build existing and new relationships with organisations that have expertise in access and inclusivity especially with regard to communications – visibility to reinforce the fact that dance is for everyone. Work together with organisations and networks such as Arts & Disability Ireland (ADI), Dance Ireland and Performing Arts Forum to promote dance as an accessible artform for all. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CoisCéim's campaigns are highly visible and are widely disseminated by third parties across the demographic spectrum. Our reputation as a change maker is underpinned and supported by our ability to partner with national media heavyweights such as RTE Supporting the Arts.
<p>LEADERSHIP & ADVOCACY</p> <p>Deliver on the company's mission statement and its responsibility to set the highest standards for itself and its collaborators.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Embed inclusivity in selection processes when casting performance and production teams. Actively promote and recognise access and inclusion efforts through online platforms. Ensure that potential funders and partners share our values around access and inclusivity and these are clearly communicated in advance. 	<p>We will underscore our intent and advocate by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lead and take part in new projects with national and international partners that actively improve access and inclusion to and within the artform. Publish, share and amplify thinking and models of best practice that mainstream inclusivity in our everyday. Conduct due diligence to ensure that the values of potential partners and stakeholders align with those of CoisCéim and clearly communicate this position. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CoisCéim's commitment to mainstreaming access and inclusion is visibly recognised across the industry and by its stakeholders. CoisCéim's policies and procedures appear as examples of best practice on third party websites and at conferences and events concerned with access – within and beyond the arts industry.

This policy is published in on our website in the Governance / Policies and Procedures section at <https://www.coisceim.com/us/work/policies/>

If you have any comments or suggestions on this Diversity & Inclusion Policy, please contact our Producer / CEO, Sarah Latty on 01 878 0558 / info@coisceim.com. We welcome all feedback.

APPENDIX A | CoisCéim and EDI | A Potted History

- 2025 CoisCéim publishes COME AS YOU ARE – a five-year policy to mainstream access and inclusivity into its business by 2030 and continues its learning journey with attendance at Arts Council of Ireland’s seminars on *Addressing Micro-aggressions* and *Removing racism from the Arts* seminars in Dublin.
- 2025 Research paper "A CHOREOGRAPHIC ARCHIVE OF IRELAND'S RECENT PASTS: Iterative Contemporaneity in CoisCéim Dance Theatre's *Palimpsest* (2024)" by Huayu Yang, published in *Irish University Review*, Volume 55, Issue 1 "Irish Studies Beyond the Text" notes that the work "*consciously creates a field of cultural encounter that corresponds to contemporary multicultural Ireland.*"
- 2024 CoisCéim defines the parameters for its new EDI policy to be published in 2025. It will foreground access; act as an overarching policy & plan that can be applied across multiple situations..
- 2024 CoisCéim publishes its first PERSONAL DATA STATEMENT to preserve privacy while defining a pathway for 3rd party stakeholders to access and collate personal and demographic information from people it works and directly engages with.
- 2024 CoisCéim completes the fit out of a wheelchair accessible WC and engages OHAC to undertake an independent access audit of the company's premises. Recommendations are being implemented in line with the company's resources.
- 2024 CoisCéim's new website is designed with accessibility at its core. The layout was reviewed by a number of external expert professionals with regard to accessibility and our commitment can be found on every page –www.coisceim.com/accessibility/.
- 2024 PALIMPSEST features the company's first audio described performance. This was swiftly followed by audio-description of THE PIECE WITH THE DRUMS at the Belfast International Arts Festival in 2024 - supported by the Foyle Foundation.
- 2023 CoisCéim updates all employment agreements to include compliance with SAFE TO CREATE's Pledge and Code of Behaviour and actively promotes training to the extended team. First day of rehearsal briefings by the General Manager in addition to an explanation of our policies also include highlighting SAFE TO CREATE resources including MINDING CREATIVE MINDS.
- 2023 CoisCéim adopts SAFE TO CREATE's CODE OF BEHAVIOUR with key personnel completing training in *Addressing Unconscious Bias: Basic Awareness*, *Tackling Bullying and Harassment at Work* and *Being an Active Bystander in the Arts and Creative Sectors* before the end of the year.
- 2023 CoisCéim receives Stream E funding from Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media to improve access.
- 2022 CoisCéim's DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION policy appears as a model of best practice on SAFE TO CREATE's website: www.safetocreate.ie/training-resources/example-policies/.
- 2022 General Manager, Sarah Latty undertakes the in-person SAFE TO CREATEs *Bullying and Harassment at Work Training*.
- 2023 CoisCéim introduces PAY WHAT YOU CAN ticket pricing options for THE PIECE WITH THE DRUMS at Project Arts Centre. Its success leads to the initiative being expanded across all CoisCéim's activities where the company has control over pricing.

- 2022 CoisCéim publishes a five-year strategic plan THREE ANCHORS TO THRIVE that outlines a fit-for-purpose business model as part of a circular, interdependent ecology – anchored by three keystones: CREATIVE RESILIENCE, INCLUSIVITY and SUSTAINABILITY (www.coisceim.com/news/three-anchors-to-thrive/).
- 2022 General Manager, Sarah Latty undertakes the Irish Hospice Foundation's Bereavement and Grief Training Course.
- 2021 CoisCéim publishes its second DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION policy having achieved its objective of "*finding a building that can be accessible to all*".
- 2021 CEO, Bridget Webster undertakes and completes the COMMON PURPOSE Senior Leaders course programme connecting with peers across the world - www.commonpurpose.org.
- 2021 As part of the development of its new strategic plan, CoisCéim challenges its thinking around inclusivity through a series of sessions led by Board member Jacquié Marsh with external experts including Olwen Dawe, Dara Connolly, Amanda Nyoni and Jack Kavanagh
- 2020 CoisCéim develops its Pay Policy – benchmarking base wages against the Irish National Average and embedding equity across the company through satisfying four conditions of equivalence.
- 2020 CoisCéim signs a 25-year lease on the ground floor premises at 42 Fairview Strand with access and inclusion core tenets of the refurbishment plans deepening its relationship with Arts and Disability Ireland.
- 2019 CoisCéim's Board and Executive undertake a facilitated half day session with Janis McAdam to define the starting point of its new strategic plan. This results in the drafting of a new Vision and Values statement for the company.
- 2019 CoisCéim publishes its first annual Board approved Record Form achieving compliance with the Charities Regulator's GOVERNANCE CODE.
- 2019 Steered by Board Working Group leader Olwen Dawe, CoisCéim develops and publishes its first DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION policy outlining clear priorities, objectives and actions.
- 2019 CoisCéim publishes a list of all the policy documentation in place at the company and where to find it on its GOVERNANCE page: www.coisceim.com/us/about/governance/.
- 2018 CoisCéim robustly reviews its organisational structure developing a one-page ORGANISATIONAL SUMMARY that clearly defines the role and responsibility of the Board, Executive and senior team members. Specific focus is given communication lines to ensure an effective complaints and grievance procedure.
- 2018 CoisCéim conducts its first external BOARD EFFECTIVENESS REVIEW.
- 2017 In line with its commitment to transparency, CoisCéim begins to publish wage and other information on its website, building a living online staff handbook: www.coisceim.com/us/work/ that includes clear HEALTH AND SAFETY and GRIEVANCE AND DISCIPLINARY procedures.
- 2017 CoisCéim publishes its first DIGNITY AT WORK policy, which is outlined in detail in a full team session on the first day of each rehearsal period.
- 2017 CoisCéim starts the journey to compliance with The Governance Code as a Type C organisation.
- 2016 CoisCéim introduces a PARITY OF PAY policy across the organisation that includes standardising terms and conditions across Creative Team Agreements with material input from freelance creative professionals around royalties, copyrights and minimum/maximum day rates paid for services.