

LCDC Social Inclusion Group

A Practice Journey

Group overview

- Our Social Inclusion Group is a sub-committee of 22, with membership from a broad range of local agencies, institutions and interest groups.
- We were assigned a role in supporting the monitoring of local programmes which come under the remit of the LCDC.
- When faced with the questions of what & how to monitor - the discussion turned to looking to equality & human rights as a basis.

The journey begins!

- Our committee actively participated in the development of the Equality & Human Rights Statement through a series of meetings and facilitated focus groups which challenged us to explore, define and refine the **values** we saw underlying our work.
- This proved to be a worthwhile exercise that gave us a clear and agreed frame of reference for monitoring.
- To test the Equality & Human Rights Statement, Galway City Council officials kindly proposed their Social Inclusion Grants Scheme for review.

Testing the Statement

The review was carried out through a facilitated session that asked:

- Does the design of the Social Inclusion Grant 2017 advance the agreed value objectives – **outcomes** from funded actions and **process** of delivery?
- Does the communication of the Social Inclusion Grant 2017 engage the agreed equality and human rights values?
- What are the indicators of success for the LCDC in applying the Equality and Human Rights Statement to the funding scheme?

Proposals on foot of this review

The **objective** of the scheme could be moved to an introductory section and developed to further align with the value of inclusion and the objective set for this value in the statement:

- **The scheme is to support projects that enable and recognise the right of people, in particular those experiencing disadvantage and exclusion, to participate in all areas of society.**

Criteria could be developed to guide applicants on the type of activity that will be funded.

- **Projects to be funded will address issues of: isolation; lack of access and barriers to accessibility; diminished sense of belonging in community; and limited recognition of diversity.**

Encouraging engagement

An **engagement with the values** of the LCDC could be encouraged through a further criterion by developing the reference to values made in the draft:

- **Groups funded will be asked to reflect the values of dignity, autonomy, participation, inclusion, social justice and environmental justice espoused by the LCDC for its work.**

To aid **assessment**; the importance of reflecting the values and contributing to the value objective in the statement could be reinforced by including that:

- **In marking projects, the independent assessment committee will accord 40% of the marks to the extent to which the group's values align with those espoused by the LCDC and a further 40% to the extent to which the project proposed reflects the criteria established for the scheme.**

Adapting

The **application form** could be adapted to reflect these amendments using the following questions:

- **Briefly describe the project with reference to the scheme criteria**
- **Identify how your group reflects the values of the LCDC**
- **Who are the target groups**
- **Briefly outline the costs of the project**
- **Identify what you wish to achieve and how success will be measured**

Applying the Equality and Human Rights Statement in future

The LCDC could include the following steps:

- Agencies bringing plans, programmes or proposals at draft stage to the LCDC could be informed in advance of the Equality and Human Rights Statement and of the procedure being used by the LCDC to apply it.
- Data and information could be gathered, as required, by the Social Inclusion Group to assist in its consideration of plans, programmes or proposals.
- The Social Inclusion Group could then assess the plan, programme or proposal against the benchmark of the Equality and Human Rights Statement and report to the LCDC.

Supporting internal review by partners

But the question then arose as to how to support agencies to have a process and tools that would enable them review their own work **before** it was considered by the SIG and LCDC.

- With IHREC support this formed the most recent stage in our work which has been outlined by Niall and previous speakers. SIG members took part in developing and testing the tools within selected member organisations (the afternoon panel will deal with this later in the day!)

Key Moments

Part of the process saw us indentify **key moments** in the life of an organisation where the tools could be used effectively – and one of these was at **drafting of plans** stage

- As it was current, the SIG applied the public sector equality and human rights duty to the recently proposed two-year Implementation Plan for Galway City Local Economic and Community Plan

Key Questions

- **A facilitated workshop** with the Social Inclusion Group was recently held which **lasted 2.5 hours** at which we reviewed:
 - Does the implementation plan includes actions or steps to adequately address the equality and human rights issues identified in the LCDC Equality and Human Rights Statement.
 - Does the implementation plan progress the statement of priority identified for each value in the LCDC Equality and Human Rights Statement.
 - Does the implementation plan include any actions or steps which might run counter to an effective response to the equality and human rights issues identified in the LCDC Equality and Human Rights Statement.

Examples of feedback given:

- ‘Develop a **shared vision** for Galway City and its future to inform consistent messaging and future planning’ was ***identified as central*** to responding to the equality and human rights issues under all six values. This *initiative should be framed and informed by the values of dignity, autonomy, participation, inclusion, social justice and environment justice.*
- The listed partnership to ‘Develop a shared vision for Galway City and its future to inform consistent messaging and future planning’ should be ***expanded to include young people*** through representation from Comhairle na nÓg.
- ***The gathering, analysis and use of equality and human rights data should be improved*** for the next iteration of the LECP strategy.

Lessons learned:

- The equality and human rights impact assessment event needs to be time-limited and focused to keep it practical for all involved.
- This will mean that participants in the process need to receive the draft plans, policies, programmes or procedures sufficiently in advance of the event. It means that participants need to have examined the draft document in the light of the Galway City LCDC Equality and Human Rights Statement so that they can come to the event with issues identified and ready for discussion.
- When Galway City LCDC Equality and Human Rights Statement comes up for review it would be useful to tighten up the equality and human rights issues to avoid duplication.
- It would be important for Galway City LCDC to continue communicating and promoting the Equality and Human Rights Statement and the values it prioritises.

The journey continues

In finishing it's important to state that I believe the practice journey to date has been very positive and worthwhile for our LCDC and the SIG.

We wish the resultant Equality & Human Rights Statement and the new tools developed to be seen by us all as a positive support to organisations that have responsibility under the Public Sector Duty. We want to support people in meeting this Duty – not blame them for failing.