

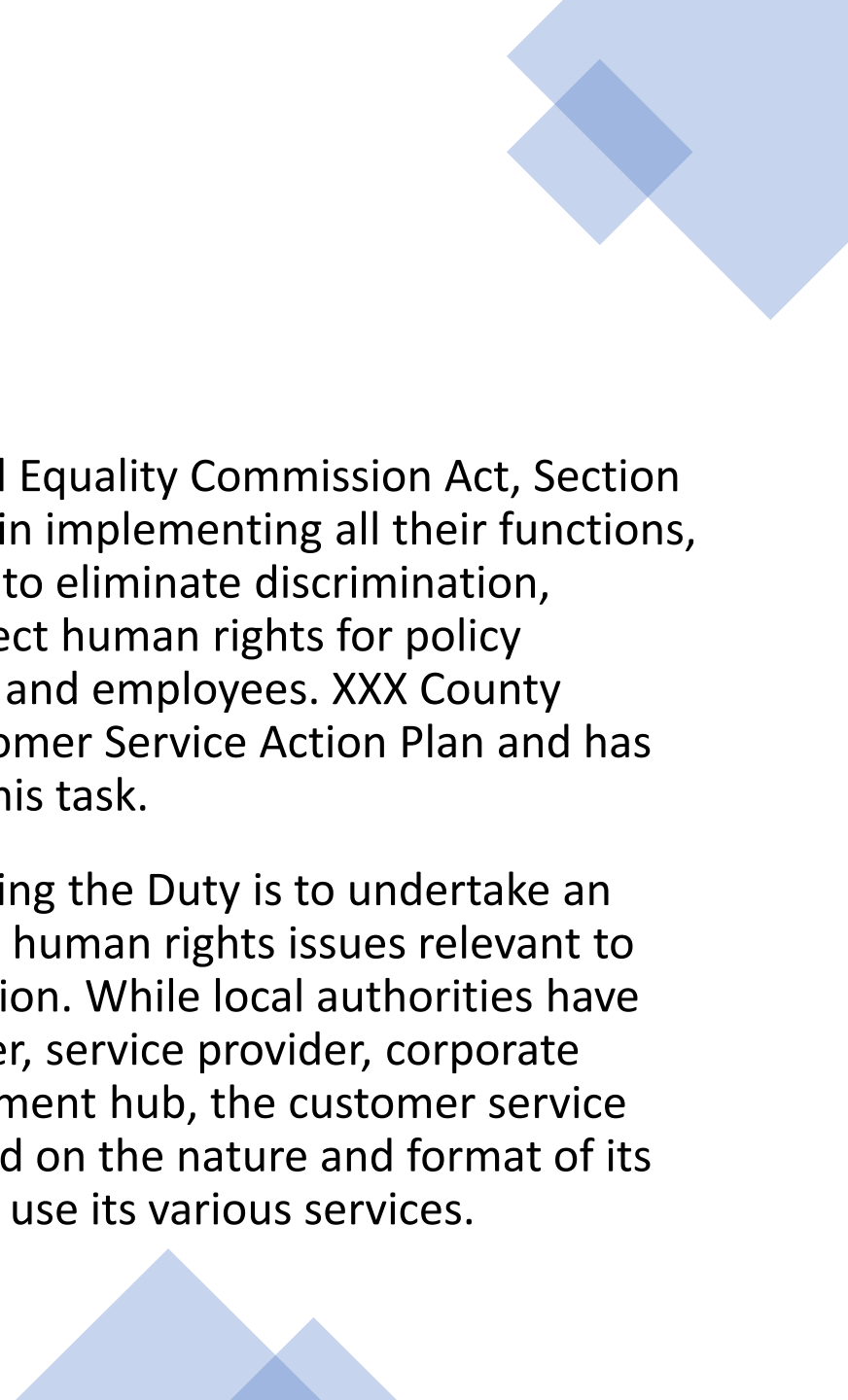


XXX County Council – Implementing the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty

**Civil society workshops to review
the Implementation of the Duty in
relation to Customer Service
Action Plan – Part One**



Background

- The Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act, Section 42, requires public bodies, in implementing all their functions, to have regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, promote equality and protect human rights for policy beneficiaries, service users and employees. XXX County Council is preparing a Customer Service Action Plan and has implemented the Duty in this task.
 - The first step in implementing the Duty is to undertake an assessment of equality and human rights issues relevant to this customer service function. While local authorities have wider functions as employer, service provider, corporate services, and local development hub, the customer service function is narrowly focused on the nature and format of its interaction with those who use its various services.
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The Assessment

This assessment involves an identification of the issues faced by the identified groups covered by the Duty. The identified groups for the Duty are:

- groups under the nine grounds of equality legislation: gender (incl. gender identity), civil status, family status (incl. lone parents, carers), age, sexual orientation, disability, race, religion, and the Traveller community; and
- groups at risk of poverty and social exclusion.



Situation, Experience and Identity

The equality and human rights issues identified are evident in the situation, experience and identity of the identified groups, where:



- **Situation** refers to specific disadvantages in the level and quality of resources the group has access to, such as: income; employment; accommodation; education and training; health and welfare services; and cultural services.
- **Experience** refers to refers to the quality of the group's interactions when engaging with society (**in particular in accessing public services**).
- **Identity** refers to refers to how the group **choose to give expression to their identity** and the **specific needs that arise** from this.

Values



Dignity

Autonomy

Participation

Inclusion

Social Justice

Environmental Justice

implementation of the Duty.

Workshop – Part One

The purpose of the workshop with civil society representatives is to **review and validate the implementation of the Duty in relation to the Customer Service Action Plan**. This will be done over two workshops.

The first workshop will examine and discuss the draft assessment of equality and human rights issues relevant to this function:

- Is the assessment of equality and human rights issues sufficiently comprehensive or are there any gaps evident?
- Have the equality and human rights issues been appropriately described?



Assessment of Equality and Human Rights Issues as Relevant to the Customer Service Function

Dignity

Dignity is about **care and respect** for people. It involves embracing diversity a fulfilling people's rights. It means working with people in a non-judgmental and fair manner, based on a parity of esteem.



Equality and human rights issues relevant to this plan are:

- **Prejudice and attitudinal barriers** for people across the identified groups.
- **Discrimination** in service provision across the identified groups
- Bullying and harassment in service provision across the identified groups.
- **Victimisation as a result of challenging discrimination**, harassment or other failures to live out this value of dignity.
- **Breach of privacy** and data confidentiality.
- **Expectations held across the identified groups, of discrimination and harassment** and barriers to service provision that arise from these.



Autonomy

Autonomy is about **independence, self-determination, choice and a bottom-up approach**. It involves being flexible in meeting changing, emerging, and contextual needs, and supporting a capacity to make choices and be involved in decision-making.

Equality and human rights issues relevant to this plan are:

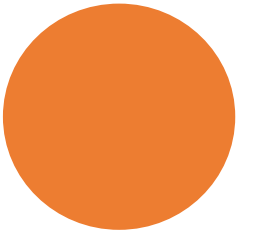
- Lack of confidence and motivation in making choices, including for fear of rejection or due to internalised oppression.

Inclusion

Inclusion is about enabling and recognising the right of people, in particular those experiencing disadvantage and exclusion, to participate.

Equality and human rights issues relevant to this plan are:

- **Invisibility** for diversity in service provision settings.
- **Barriers to access services** due to design, manner of delivery, and inflexibilities in meeting specific needs across the identified groups.
- **Lack of universal design**, in particular for buildings, public spaces, and IT infrastructure.
- **Barriers of communication**, including issues such as lack of interpretation and translation and lack of accessible formats and media.
- **Lack of understanding**, awareness, and recognition of diversity among employers, service providers, and decision-makers.
- **Lack of attention to the specific needs** of people at the intersections between the identified groups.



Social justice

Social justice is about transparency and fairness in the distribution of economic, educational, cultural and other resources. It involves proactive targeted approaches to support those experiencing injustice.

Equality and human rights issues relevant to this plan are:

- Participation barriers due to digital literacy issues, digital access issues across the identified groups.

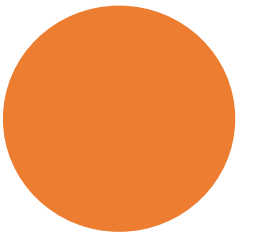


Participation

Participation is about meaningful participation in decision-making and processes of accountability. It involves the right to be heard and to pose a challenge. It includes open debate in building shared visions with spaces for difference and compromise.

Equality and human rights issues relevant to this plan are:

- **Lack of opportunities to voice perspectives** and lack of influence on decision-making across the identified groups.
- **Lack of knowledge due to inadequate information flows** and inappropriate channels of communication used to reach the identified groups.
- **Lack of transparency and accountability** on the part of decision-makers.



Environmental justice

Environmental justice is about recognising **the right to a clean, safe, and sustained environment** for this and future generations. It involves a concern for climate change and its impacts, in particular on marginalised groups and communities.

Equality and human rights issues relevant to this plan are:

- **Lack of information on environmental rights and neglect of environmental justice as an issue.**

