



Assessment of Equality and Human Rights Issues for the Purpose of Planning and Implementing the Galway City Local Economic and Community Plan

LCDC Social Inclusion Sub Group Implementing the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty

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1. Introduction

The public sector equality and human rights duty, Section 42 of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014, requires public bodies to undertake an assessment of the equality and human rights issues that are relevant to their functions. These are the issues that face the different groups covered by the Duty.

These issues can relate to the:

- **Situation** of the group in terms of their access to resources and any particular disadvantage they experience.
- **Experience** of the group in terms of the quality of their interaction with employers and service providers and the wider society.
- **Identity** of the group in terms of how they chose to give expression to their identity and the specific needs that arise from their identity.

The identified groups for the Duty are those:

- covered by the nine grounds under equality legislation: gender (including gender identity), civil status, family status (including lone parents, carers), age, sexual orientation, disability, race (including nationality, skin colour, and ethnicity), religion, and membership of the Traveller community; and
- at risk of poverty and social exclusion, a socio-economic status ground.

Diversity within the identified groups needs attention. There is cross-over between the groups, where people are part of more than one group. This intersectional focus is particularly important in initiatives targeted on a specific group.

The Duty requires public bodies to have regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, promote equality of opportunity, and protect human rights of employees, service-users, policy beneficiaries, and members, across all their function areas. The Local Economic and Community Plan encompasses:

- economic objectives: enterprise and micro-enterprise, employment, economic regeneration, economic objectives in local/community development, and skills.
- community objectives: community services, regeneration, community building, education and training, communications technology, job creation, and climate change.

This assessment is framed by the six values adopted by the LCDC to progress implementation of the public sector equality and human rights duty.

This assessment is relevant to both the community and the economic elements of the LECP. It is deployed in: preparations for developing the LECP; development of the LECP; checking the final draft LECP to ensure it adequately and appropriately addresses the issues; and tracking and reporting annually on progress. It is tailored and applied in the implementation of the various strands of action under the LECP.

2. Assessment

Dignity

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

The equality and human rights issues to be addressed in implementing the Duty, related to this value and relevant to the LECP, are:

Discrimination, both individual and systemic, across the identified groups, including such as:

- High levels of discrimination in work, in accessing work, and in accessing and participating in services.
- Systemic discrimination in terms of racism, ageism, homophobia, transphobia, sexism, disabilism, sectarianism, and classism.

Violence and harassment across the identified groups, including such as:

- Gender-based violence, including sexual and domestic violence, and lack of adequate and appropriate support provision.
- Abuse of older people.
- Harassment and sexual harassment at work, in service provision, and in public spaces.
- Bullying, with particular regard to young people.
- Lack of safety and feelings of insecurity and not being welcome, including in public spaces.

Stereotyping, attitudinal barriers, misinformation, and false assumptions that diminish expectations, limit understanding, dis-respectful engagement, and lead to poor decision-making.

Lack of initiative to address experiences of discrimination, and ensure effective redress, across the grounds, including such as:

- Under-reporting of discrimination due to fear of victimisation, lack of information, and belief that change is not possible.
- Lack of procedures to challenge discrimination, harassment and sexual harassment, including at work and in service provision.
- Lack of policies and plans to prevent discrimination and promote equality at work and in service provision, with particular regard to SMEs.

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.

The equality and human rights issues to be addressed in implementing the Duty, related to this value and relevant to the LECP, are:

Lack of options made available to enable real and informed choices, free from sanction, for people and communities across the identified groups.

Lack of autonomy in making one's own decisions, including such as:

- Dependence, with particular regard to economic dependence due to such as gendered roles, the additional cost of disability, and the lack of independent means available to young people (in accordance with capacity) and to older people.
- Lack of knowledge about and support for supported decision-making processes for disabled people.
- Criteria attached to services and lack of trust and valuing of decisions of people dependent on unemployment supports.
- Lack of supports to enable informed choices.

Provision of services in a manner that limits agency and choice including such as:

- Congregated settings in provision of care for people with disabilities, with lack of supports for independent living.
- Residential care for older people, with lack of services available to enable them to remain at home.
- Direct provision settings for refugees and asylum seekers and lack of provision to enable their participation.

Barriers to cultural integrity, access to, and giving expression to culture, with particular regard to Black and minority ethnic communities, including the Traveller community.

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 space for differences and compromise.

The equality and human rights issues to be addressed in implementing the Duty, related to this value and relevant to the LECP, are:

Lack of voice and platforms to impact on decision-making, across the identified groups, including such as:

- Lack of adequate and appropriate mechanisms to enable and facilitate participation in planning and policymaking.
- Lack of representation from the identified groups and lack of gender balance on organisational structures and committees.
- Lack of feedback to positions put forward, on foot of consultation or engagement.

Lack of influence sufficient to impact on decision-making, across the identified groups, including such as:

- Lack of resources for identified groups to organise in a collective manner.
- Lack of meaningful engagement with, and equal recognition for the input of, the identified groups.
- Lack of capacity on all sides to engage as equal partners in decision-making mechanisms.

Lack of voice and mechanisms to hear the voice of service-users and employees from across the identified groups.

Inclusion

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

The equality and human rights issues to be addressed in implementing the Duty, related to this value and relevant to the LECP, are:

Lack of universal design to cater for diverse and specific needs across the identified groups, including such as:

- Inaccessible environments including, buildings, workplaces, places to access services, and public spaces, with particular regard to disabled people.
- Non-adaptive workplaces that fail to accommodate the practical implications of diversity, with particular regard to disabled people, Black and minority ethnic people including Travellers, parents and carers, and older people.
- Non-adaptive services that fail to accommodate the practical implications of diversity, with particular regard to disabled people, and Black and minority ethnic people including Travellers.

Absence of a focus on diversity and capacity to respond to diversity in key settings across the identified groups, including such as:

- Lack of attention to diversity in educational provision and curricula.
- Lack of initiative to build and sustain inclusive and integrated diverse communities, addressing divisions in communities.
- Lack of understanding of:
 - diversity and of the flexibilities required to respond to its practical implications; and
 - intersectionality and the specific needs of those at the intersections of the identified groups.
- Lack of equality data and limited capacity in effectively and appropriately gathering such data.

Lack of access to supports to meet specific needs, including such as:

- SNAs in education.
- Safe social spaces for LGBT people.
- ISL interpretation.
- Affordable available childcare services.
- English language support, in particular in educational settings.

Invisibility for diversity due to fears about revealing identity, and hiding one's identity, with particular regard to those gender transitioning at work, LGBT+ people, people with hidden disabilities, Roma, and Travellers.

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.

The equality and human rights issues to be addressed in implementing the Duty, related to this value and relevant to the LECP, are:

Poverty across the identified grounds, including such as:

- Inadequate income and deprivation, with particular regard to the socio-economic status ground, Travellers and Roma.
- In-work poverty.
- Additional cost of living for people with disabilities.
- Increasing cost of living.

Employment inequalities and barriers to employment across the identified groups, including such as:

- High levels of unemployment and low levels of employment, with particular regard to Travellers, Roma, people with disabilities, and the socio-economic status ground.
- Underemployment, with particular regard to Black and minority ethnic people facing issues such as lack of recognition for qualifications or experience.
- Lack of representation in management and leadership positions, with barriers to promotion and career progression, with particular regard to women, people with disabilities, and the socio-economic status ground.
- Pay gaps, including a gender pay gap.
- Poor quality employment, including precarious work and low incomes.
- Lack of access to entrepreneurship opportunities and supports.
- Lack of access to apprenticeships.

Educational inequalities and disadvantage, and barriers to achieving educational outcomes across the identified groups, including such as:

- Low levels of literacy and numeracy.
- Lack of access to early childhood education, with particular regard to Travellers and Roma.
- Early school leaving and barriers to effective transitions within educational provision, with particular regard to LGBT+ people, people with disabilities, Travellers, and the socio-economic status ground.
- Gender segregation in subject choices and participation in different educational fields.
- Lack of access to third level, with particular regard to Travellers, Roma, people with disabilities, and the socio-economic status ground.

Inadequate and disadvantaged living conditions, encompassing homelessness, housing deprivation, and lack of appropriate provision across the identified groups, including such as:

- Homelessness, poor housing conditions, overcrowding and risk of homelessness, with particular regard to Travellers, Roma, and the socio-economic status ground.
- Inadequate provision of culturally appropriate accommodation for Travellers.
- Community environments in need of regeneration.
- Lack of community facilities and infrastructure, including youth clubs and play spaces.
- Lack of understanding of and response to the requirements for sustainable communities.

Digital disadvantage across the identified groups, including such as:

- Lack of access to infrastructure.
- Lack of equipment.
- Lack of skills.
- Inaccessible websites.

Over-policing and under-protection of communities, with particular regard to Black and minority communities, including Travellers.

Disproportionate legacy effects, in particular mental health, of the COVID-19 pandemic across the identified groups, with particular regard to young people and the socio-economic status ground.

Lack of positive action to redress disadvantage and inequality across the identified groups.

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.

The equality and human rights issues to be addressed in implementing the Duty, related to this value and relevant to the LECP, are:

Uneven distribution of impacts of climate disruption and of pollution, and lack of a just transition focus.

Lack of inclusion in adaptation opportunities and new employment opportunities.

Energy poverty due to cost of energy, low level of household income, and lack of energy efficiency of the home, with particular regard to Travellers, older people, and the socio-economic status ground.

Lack of access to: nature; public open spaces; and invitations to play in public spaces.

Lack of attention to the need for a just transition in a context of climate disruption.