



An Roinn Fiontar,  
Trádála agus Fostaíochta  
Department of Enterprise,  
Trade and Employment

# Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Statement

As required under Section 42 of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014, the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment has a duty to eliminate discrimination, promote equality and protect the human rights of staff and the people availing of its services. This policy sets out how the Department works to ensure equality, diversity and inclusion as an employer and public body.

## 1. Objective

- 1.1 As a Department we seek to deliver on our strategic priorities by developing innovative policy solutions and providing high quality and inclusive services that take account of the diversity of our society.
- 1.2 We recognise the moral and strategic imperative of developing a workforce that reflects the diversity of those we serve.
- 1.3 We want to ensure an inclusive organisational culture that values differences and actively supports contributions from a diverse range of staff, service users and stakeholders.

## 2. Rationale

- 2.1 Under the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014, as a public body the Department has a duty to eliminate discrimination, promote equality and protect the human rights of staff and the people availing of its services. However, the rationale for seeking to embed Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (E, D&I) into our way of doing business goes far beyond legal commitments and moral obligations.
- 2.2 Delivering on the Department's "Vision" as set out in the Statement of Strategy requires us to view our policies through an E, D&I lens to ensure optimal outcomes are achieved. By proactively engaging with a diverse range of staff, customers, service users and stakeholders to shape policies, processes, and services we will enhance the positive impact of our work for citizens.
- 2.3 As an organisation, we recognise that our people are our greatest asset. We want to support our staff to achieve their full potential by nurturing an inclusive environment that champions diversity. As an open and welcoming workplace, we aim to attract and retain the high skilled workforce required to deliver on the Department's strategic agenda. A diverse and inclusive organisation that is representative of the society it serves is more effective in achieving its objectives.

## 3. Scope

- 3.1 This Statement applies to the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, its Offices and employees.

- 3.2 E, D&I imposes rights and responsibilities on every member of staff. All employees will be informed of this E, D&I Statement and that they are bound to comply with its requirements.
- 3.3 This policy helps to ensure that our statutory equality duties outlined in the Employment Equality Acts 1998–2015, the Equal Status Acts 2000-2018 and Section 42 of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014 are met.
- 3.4 The 9 Grounds under which discrimination is outlawed under legislation are:
- Gender,
  - Civil status,
  - Family status,
  - Sexual orientation,
  - Religion,
  - Age,
  - Disability,
  - Race (includes race, colour, nationality or ethnic or national origins), and
  - Membership of the Traveller community.

## **4. Responsibility for Implementation and Development**

- 4.1 Fairness, Respect, Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Engagement are the responsibility of everyone within the Department.
- 4.2 The Department's Management Board is committed to embedding E, D&I into all elements of the organisation's work, ensuring that everything we do and the manner in which it is done considers the impact upon our E, D&I objectives.
- 4.3 To support achievement of the Department's E, D&I objectives, Management Board have agreed to the development of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy for the Department. Through consultation with staff, the Strategy will set out actions required to assist the Department to become a more inclusive workplace.
- 4.4 Building on the work carried out in the development of the Department's Strategic Statement, the Strategy will further develop the Department's approach to assessing, addressing and reporting on the human rights and equality issues that are relevant to the work of the Department as required under the Section 42 of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014.
- 4.5 The development of the Strategy will be the responsibility of a cross-divisional E, D&I Working Group. The Working Group will be provided with a secretariat and policy

support from the HR Unit and the Government and Management Support Unit (GMSU). The Working Group will be chaired by an Assistant Secretary of the Department who will act as E, D&I Champion at Management Board. In addition to representatives from key business units and Offices of the Department, the Working Group will include staff representatives who are willing to act as E, D&I champions in their Divisions, networks and peer groups within the Department.

- 4.6 Management Board will be responsible for approving the E, D&I Statement and E, D&I Strategy as well as any subsequent updates or revisions to these.
- 4.7 It will be the responsibility of the chair of the E, D&I Working Group to ensure Management Board is regularly updated in terms of the development and implementation of the E, D&I Strategy, and its implications for this Policy.
- 4.8 This Statement will be communicated to all staff, service users and stakeholders using a variety of methods such as internal seminars, the staff intranet and the Department's website.
- 4.9 A copy of this Statement will be provided to all new staff when they commence employment in the Department. A briefing on the Department's approach to E, D&I will also be included as part of the Induction process.
- 4.10 All staff will have access to E, D&I focussed training, and will be encouraged and supported to avail of this training. Data on uptake of this training will be monitored to ensure that the awareness and commitment to E, D&I becomes part of our way of doing business and working together.
- 4.11 All staff will be made aware of the Dignity at Work (Anti-Bullying and Harassment) Policy and the obligations that arise under that policy.
- 4.12 Existing processes will be used to review and investigate any complaints that arise under this Statement in relation to discrimination, harassment or bullying as follows:
  - staff – Disciplinary, Grievance and Dignity at Work policies and procedures.
  - persons to whom it provides services - Complaints Procedures.
- 4.13 It is expected that when staff represent the Department externally, including through attendance at committees, meetings with external stakeholders and contact with customers and service users, they will ensure that the E, D&I principles and practices outlined in this Statement are adhered to.
- 4.14 When representing the Department or its Offices on the committees of other organisations, staff will endeavour to promote positive E, D&I principles and practices.

## 5. Selection and Recruitment

- 5.1 The Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment aim to promote diversity and inclusion as an employer. In line with the Employment Equality legislation, no employee or candidate for employment will receive less favourable treatment or be disadvantaged by conditions or requirements that cannot be shown to be justifiable.
- 5.2 The Public Appointment Service (PAS) is responsible for undertaking a significant proportion of external recruitment of staff into the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment and its Offices. The Department fully supports the PAS “Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy” and works with PAS to proactively support recruitment of a workforce that is responsive, accessible, resilient, and reflective of the communities we serve.
- 5.3 Recruitment and promotion competitions managed by the Department adhere to the Code of Practice for Appointment in the Civil and Public Service and are fair, transparent merit based, and guided by the principles of equality, diversity, and inclusion.
- 5.4 Internal policies for selection, recruitment, training, promotion and employment practices will be subject to regular review to ensure they comply with this Statement. The Department will consider how it can effectively gather and monitor data from Department managed competitions in order to identify any practices that unintentionally discriminate against specific groups, having due regard for GDPR requirements.
- 5.5 Employees involved in the selection and recruitment process will receive appropriate training to ensure they recognise when they are making stereotypical assumptions or judgements about people and avoid any discriminatory practices in the way in which they shortlist or recruit employees. This will include unconscious bias training.

## 6. Work Practices and Staff Retention

The Department has considered the working practices it has in place to address inequality and discrimination and how it promotes fairness for all. As we develop our E, D&I Strategy, we will identify and commit to additional activities to support equality, ensure elimination of discrimination across the nine grounds and promote diversity and inclusion.

- 6.1 We recognise that employees have different needs at different stages during their career, for example to balance work and caring responsibilities. We work to accommodate staff requests to access blended working arrangements and other flexible

working arrangements, for whatever reason, so long as agreement is consistent with the business needs of the organisation.

- 6.2 People are complex, and some may belong to more than one marginalised group, hence experiencing a cumulative disadvantage. We recognise that some staff and service users might have differing needs and we will aim to work with staff to identify a way of addressing their needs where relevant.
- 6.3 Our terms and conditions of employment allow for paternity and partner leave in addition to standard maternity leave, adoptive leave and lactation breaks without loss of pay or an adjustment of working hours in accordance with current legislation. Allowance is also made for compassionate and dependant's leave to deal with domestic emergencies through centralised civil service policies.
- 6.4 We do not discriminate on the grounds of an individual's disability. The Department is committed to meeting its obligations under the Employment Equality Acts 1998–2015, in particular, with respect to reasonable accommodation. Where appropriate, in consultation with the Chief Medical Officer for the Civil Service, the Department will assist people with reasonable accommodations to enable them to fulfil their roles, as far as practicable. The Department has a dedicated Disability Liaison Officer in place to support employees seeking reasonable accommodation. The Department participates in a number of initiatives that support employment for people with disabilities and is currently exploring further opportunities to enhance our inclusiveness of people with disabilities.
- 6.5 We are committed to ensuring employees do not experience discrimination (or less favourable opportunities/treatment) on the basis of their race, religion or belief. We will develop additional actions to support this commitment in our E, D & I Strategy.
- 6.6 We do not discriminate on the grounds of age including in the areas of recruitment, promotion, training or the availability of benefits.
- 6.7 We do not discriminate on the grounds of an individual's gender, gender identity and/or gender expression: female, male, non-binary; or where an individual is in the process of gender transition or where an individual has completed this reassignment or undergoing any associated medical supports.
- 6.8 We do not discriminate on the grounds of sexual orientation by providing all staff with the same opportunity to achieve their goals.
- 6.9 We do not discriminate on the grounds of civil status whether married, single, in a civil partnership, divorced, or widowed and support individual needs as required.

- 6.10 The Department operates a Performance Management and Development System (PMDS). Where possible training and development supports, to enhance employee potential within existing roles and in terms of career development identified through the PMDS process will be provided.
- 6.11 All training opportunities are published widely through the Department's Intranet, via emails and the Learning Management System to all relevant employees. Line Managers and the Learning and Career Development Unit pay due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination and will ensure accessibility to training on the grounds set out in this policy and ensure that training opportunities will not exclude or disproportionately reduce the numbers of applicants from a particular group in any way.
- 6.12 We regard discrimination, harassment, abuse, victimisation or bullying of staff, and/ or persons to whom we provide services to or of others whom we engaged with in the course of work as disciplinary issues that could be regarded as gross misconduct. Such issues will be addressed through appropriate disciplinary procedures.

## **7. Policy Development, Stakeholder Engagement and Service Delivery**

Section 42 of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act places a statutory obligation on public bodies to eliminate discrimination, promote equality of opportunity and protect the human rights of those to whom they provide services and staff. The Department's commitment to delivering on this Duty is set out under Goal 6 of the Statement of Strategy. The E, D&I Strategy will identify further actions to support the Department's efforts in this area and progress on these actions will be reported in an accessible manner to the public in the Department's annual report.

- 7.1 We will seek to engage with a diverse range of stakeholders to inform the development of policies and the drafting of legislation which fall under the Department's remit.
- 7.2 In addition to the mandated requirement to budget and policy proof the impact of policy decisions and legislation on socially excluded or vulnerable groups, we will seek to take account of their impacts on E, D&I issues more broadly.
- 7.3 We will use a variety of methods to regularly consult with persons to whom we provide services. We will gather their views on existing and planned services, including

identifying changes in how we design and deliver services to improve accessibility for service users.

7.4 We will make public our commitment to combating discriminatory attitudes where these are encountered by publicising this Statement widely amongst staff, trade unions, external stakeholders and customers and service users.

## 8. Monitoring and Evaluation

8.1 The Department will systematically evaluate its services and the effectiveness of its E, D&I Statement and strategy by a variety of means including through staff surveys on E, D&I related issues. All engagements will be treated with strict confidentiality.

8.2 As part of our E, D&I strategy, we will explore how information gathered through the complaints, grievances, disciplinary or other appropriate processes can be assessed to identify any particular trends under the 9 grounds of discrimination. Where any negative trends are identified, these will be investigated fully, and recommendations made to the Management Board.

8.3 The E, D&I Working Group will report to the Management Board on the outcomes of monitoring and evaluation activities, including any trends in relation to the 9 Grounds.

## 9. Review Cycle

9.1 Responsibility for review of this Statement rests with the E, D&I Working Group.

9.2 The current Statement will be reviewed as part of the development of the Department's E, D&I Strategy in 2023. Thereafter, a formal review will be completed every 3 years.

9.3 Additionally, an interim review will be conducted in the following circumstances:

- A change is made to relevant legislation, including but not limited to the Employment Equality Acts 1998–2015, the Equal Status Acts 2000-2018 and Irish Human Rights Commission Equality Act, 2014.
- Management Board requests a review be undertaken or amendment or addition be made.
- The investigation into a negative trend indicates a review of this policy is appropriate: and/or
- An external review of our services identifies the need for a policy review.



9.4 All reviews or amendments will involve staff engagement and where relevant consultation with external stakeholders and service users.