

Introduction

The County Galway Traveller Interagency Group agreed to develop and implement a common strategy across public sector organisations to take account of Traveller ethnicity in planning, policy development, and service provision. This acknowledges Travellers as a distinct ethnic group in Irish society and respects their history as an indigenous Irish group.

A survey was prepared and circulated by the Traveller Inter-Agency Group to gather the good practice that is in place in member organisations in responding to Traveller ethnicity, to inform and develop this good practice framework. A values frame shapes this good practice framework, using the values agreed and defined as shared by members in the work of the County Galway Traveller Interagency Group.

It is hoped that this good practice framework can be applied in all member organisations of the County Galway Traveller Interagency Group to further spread and embed good practice in responding to Traveller ethnicity.

Values Frame

Traveller ethnicity encompasses the distinct culture and identity of the Traveller community. Culture and identity are central to the wellbeing and flourishing of all communities, including the Traveller community. Cultural difference has practical implications that need to be addressed in the design and delivery of public services, if they are to be effective for the Traveller community.

The values frame of 'dignity, diversity, participation and inclusion', developed and defined by the Traveller Interagency Group for its work, serves in particular to motivate and shape the approach of our member public bodies in recognising, acknowledging, and making necessary adjustments for Traveller ethnicity.

County Galway Traveller Interagency Group: Values Frame

Dignity is about respecting and valuing people and their Individual human worth.

Diversity is about acknowledging and planning by design for the particular identity, situation and experience of specific groups in society.

Participation is about people having a say in decisions that impact on them and having a capacity to do so effectively.

Inclusion is about securing outcomes for people that reflect their individual choices and for groups that are on a par with the wider society through a mixture of targeted and general services.

Values-Led Response to Traveller Ethnicity in County Galway

The value of **dignity**, as defined with its focus on respecting and valuing people and their individual human worth, motivates us to take the following steps in responding to Traveller ethnicity:

- Communicate and implement an equality policy that sets out our standard of equal treatment for service users and employees, including Travellers, and includes an effective and accessible complaints system to resolve any issues of discrimination or harassment that arise.
- Implement the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty as part of our corporate level planning, service action plans, and programme development.
- Provide ongoing training for all staff to deepen their capacity to fully implement the standard set in our equality policy.
- Provide ongoing training to all staff to develop their understanding of cultural difference and issues of racism, and their capacity to respond to the practical implications of cultural difference in their work, through Continuing Professional Development, Workforce Learning and Development, or Civil Service Learning and Development Curriculum.

The value of **diversity**, as defined with a focus on acknowledging and planning for the particular identity, situation and experience of specific groups, motivates us to take the following steps in responding to Traveller ethnicity:

- Implement procedures to identify, and secure a response to, barriers and specific needs, related to their culture and identity, that arise for Travellers in accessing services or seeking employment.
- Take action to enable Travellers to have and to make informed choices as service-users or employees, free from stereotyping and from constrained ambitions.
- Use an ethnic identifier to gather data on the take-up by, experiences of, and outcomes for Travellers from services and in employment.
- Acknowledge and celebrate cultural diversity in the County and within the organisation by taking or supporting initiatives at relevant moments, such as Traveller Pride Week.

The value of **participation**, as defined with its focus on people having a say on decisions that impact on them, motivates us to take the following steps in responding to Traveller ethnicity:

- Have systems and processes in place to enable and hear the voice of Travellers, including provision of accessible information, outreach activities and liaison worker roles.
- Consult with Travellers and Traveller organisations on plans and programmes of relevance to them.
- Have structures in place to enable a meaningful engagement with Traveller organisations in decision-making, based on partnership.

The value of **Inclusion**, as defined with its focus securing outcomes for people and groups through targeted and general services, motivates us to take the following steps in responding to Traveller ethnicity:

- Undertaking periodic assessment of needs that are specific to the Traveller community.
- Conduct an equality impact assessment on general plans and programmes at final draft stage to assess if and how much Travellers would benefit, and take steps to ensure the final version of these plans and programmes can achieve outcomes for Travellers.
- Implement targeted provision to meet specific needs of the Traveller community.
- Implement positive action activities to achieve greater diversity among service users, including Travellers, in general provision.
- Implement targeted and positive action, in relation to work experience, recruitment and employment, to achieve staff diversity, including Travellers.
- Implement outreach and communication initiatives that are effective in engaging with the Traveller community and ensuring they are informed of services, programmes and employment opportunities.
- Keep progress on implementation of the National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy under review and report on this.

A multi-ground approach, encompassing nine grounds covered by the equality legislation and the ground of socio-economic status, will be taken in implementing elements of this framework, in particular those relating to the public sector equality and human rights duty. This includes the Traveller ground and allows an intersectional approach, taking account of diversity within the Traveller community.

Enabling Implementation

The Traveller Interagency Group will support implementation of this Framework by:

- developing and enabling provision of staff training;
- enabling peer support among public bodies;
- disseminating relevant available resources to support implementation;
- developing joint initiatives; and
- ensuring local drivers in public bodies that operate from a national level.

SIGNED: _____

DATE: _____