



Comhairle Chontae na Gaillimhe
Galway County Council

**Galway County Council: Implementing the Public Sector Equality
and Human Rights Duty**

Assessment of Equality and Human Rights Issues & Evidence Book

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1. Introduction

This assessment of equality and human rights issues has been undertaken by Galway County Council in compliance with S42 of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014: the public sector equality and human rights duty (the Duty) ¹.

The Duty involves two separate but interconnected Duties:

- an ongoing Duty, Section 42(1), which requires public bodies to have regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, promote equality of opportunity, and protect human rights for employees, service users, and policy beneficiaries, across all their function areas.
- a strategic Duty, Section 42(2), which requires public bodies to undertake three steps: Assess – undertake an assessment of equality and human rights issues facing the identified groups for the Duty and relevant to the functions of a public body; Address – identify the plans, policies, and actions in place or proposed to address these issues; and Report – report annually on developments and achievements in implementing the Duty.

The first step of the strategic Duty, under Section 42(2), requires a public body to prepare and publish an assessment of the equality and human rights issues, facing the identified groups under the Duty, that are relevant to the functions of the public body. Given that these two Duties are connected, this assessment further serves implementation of the overarching Duty, under Section 42(1). This assessment is not an assessment of the performance of Galway County Council in regard to equality and human rights.

The assessment of equality and human rights issues involves an examination of the situation, experience, and identity of the identified groups for the Duty, where:

- **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 groups identified for the Duty are covered by the grounds of gender (including gender expression, gender identity and sex characteristics), civil status, family status (including lone parents and people with caring responsibilities), age, disability (including mobility, sensory, and intellectual disabilities, mental health issues, and chronic illness), sexual orientation, race (encompassing skin colour, nationality and ethnic origin), religion (any or no religious

¹ [Section 42](#), Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014.

belief), membership of the Traveller community, and disadvantaged socio-economic status (at risk of or experiencing poverty and exclusion). This includes those at the intersections of these grounds. It further includes rights holders under the various human rights instruments relevant to the functions of the public body.

The functions of Galway County Council encompass: employment; service provision; promotion; regulator; policy making; and corporate affairs

Galway County Council has identified and defined four values that motivate our ambitions for equality and human rights in implementing the Duty: dignity; diversity; inclusion; and participation. These values are used as a framework to set out this assessment of the equality and human rights issues.

This assessment undertaken by Galway County Council is aligned with guidance issued by the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission.²

2. Assessment of Equality and Human Rights Issues

Addressing the equality and human rights issues identified below reflects a commitment to respond to the specific oppressions involved in racism, classism, ableism, homophobia, transphobia, sectarianism, sexism, and ageism.

The equality and human rights issues identified below relate to all of the identified groups unless otherwise indicated. In some instances, specific examples are given for particular groups where there is a unique experience for that group in regard to the issue(s) or where that group experience significant/persistent inequality/discrimination/human rights violations in regard to the issue(s).

Dignity

Dignity is about respect, courtesy, fairness, and belonging. It involves equal treatment, and being responsive to individual needs

The equality and human rights issues to be addressed in implementing the Duty, related to this value and relevant to the functions of Galway County Council, are:

- Bias, false assumptions, and stereotypes, including:
 - comparatively high levels of stereotyping of older people, Travellers, women, and LGBTI+ people; and
 - Stigma experienced by LGBTI+ people.
- Discrimination, systemic and individual, including:
 - seeking work, in the workplace and in accessing public and private services, including housing;
 - pregnancy related discrimination, and discrimination when transitioning gender identity at work; and
 - comparatively high levels of discrimination experienced by Black and minority ethnic groups, including Travellers and Roma, people with disabilities, and LGBTI+ people.

² [Tool for an Evidence Based Assessment of Equality and Human Rights Issues](#), Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (2020); and [Implementing the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty](#), Guidance for Public Bodies – Second Edition, Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission, 2024.

- Harassment, sexual harassment, bullying, abuse and violence, including:
 - gender-based violence with repercussions at work, in becoming homeless, and with lack of support services; and
 - lack of safety and insecurity for older people and LGBTI+ people in public spaces.
- Having to hide one's identity for fear of discrimination or harassment at work, in accessing services, and in public spaces, including:
 - for Travellers, Roma, LGBTI+ people and people with hidden disabilities in the workplace.
- Limitations on independence and autonomy, including:
 - institutionalisation of people with disabilities and failure to enable choice and control over where they might live;
 - lack of support and provision for assisted decision making for people with disabilities;
 - institutionalisation of older people and failure to enable people to age in place;
 - financial dependence for young people;
 - application of the Habitual Residence Conditions in relation to Roma; and
 - lack of access to information and failure to enable informed choices.
- Isolation, including:
 - for Travellers in terms of the location of their accommodation;
 - LGBTI+ people in coming out and in living in rural areas; and
 - older people and people with disabilities living alone.
- Lack of policies and procedures to respond to and resolve issues of discrimination, harassment and sexual harassment that arise and failure to adequately apply such policies and procedures when such issues arise.
- Under-reporting of discrimination for fear of victimisation, lack of awareness of rights, perspectives that change is not possible, and lack of information on policies and procedures in place.

Diversity

Diversity is about an organisation being reflective of the society it serves and being accessible in all its functions. It involves adapting for the specific needs of the diversity of people.

The equality and human rights issues to be addressed in implementing the Duty, related to this value and relevant to the functions of Galway County Council, are:

- Failure to make reasonable accommodation and adapt for specific needs in employment and in service provision, including:
 - making accommodations and flexibility in adapting the workplace and service provision for people with disability;
 - lack of language interpretation and translation in the workplace and in service provision, including sign language;
 - failure to adapt for and resource cultural difference across minority ethnic groups, including lack of recognition for and accommodation of the distinct identity and culture of the Traveller community;

- lack of culturally appropriate accommodation available to the Traveller community;
- lack of gradual and flexible retirement arrangements for older people;
- lack of recognition for same sex couples and lack of provision of gender neutral services to accommodate LGBTI+ people; and
- lack of flexible working arrangements and of flexibility in the delivery of services to enable access for those with caring responsibilities
- Lack of supports and services to meet specific needs of people from the identified groups, including:
 - supports and services required by disabled employees or service users;
 - supports required by older people for independent living; and
 - lack of supports to Black and minority ethnic groups including Travellers and Roma to preserve, sustain and maintain their distinct cultures.
- Failure to plan by design for diversity and its practical implications and absence of the systems required for such planning and development.
- Lack of understanding of diversity, lack of knowledge on how to make reasonable accommodation, absence of a policy on adapting for diversity, and lack of capacity to put in place the systems required to accommodate and adapt for diversity.
- Lack of information made available and accessible on the reasonable accommodation available and how to get access to this.
- Unwelcoming institutional environments, workplace and service provision settings, including:
 - situations that preclude or fail to encourage and enable people to be fully open about their identity; and
 - situations where there is no positive visibility for diversity.
- Inaccessibility of the public realm, buildings, IT systems, and transport services, including:
 - barriers of access faced by people with disability;
 - lack of age friendly public spaces;
 - absence of universal design principles and their application; and
 - lack of adaptability of residential units for the life-course.
- Communication and consultation and participation processes failing to take account of specific needs and barriers, including:
 - literacy;
 - language diversity;
 - the need for plain English;
 - rural locations; and
 - digital inequality.
- Lack of outreach to the identified groups
- Failure to take account of intersectionality and the diversity within the identified groups, and to respond adequately and appropriately to this diversity, in particular in targeted initiatives.
- Lack of equality data on the identified groups, including in particular Black and minority ethnic groups, including Travellers, and LGBTI+ people.

Inclusion

Inclusion is about the distribution of and access to resources, and improving wellbeing and quality of life for the diversity of people. It involves targeting people experiencing inequality and enabling their progress and change for the better in their circumstances.

The equality and human rights issues to be addressed in implementing the Duty, related to this value and relevant to the functions of Galway County Council, are:

- Homelessness, including:
 - particular relevance to the socio-economic status group;
 - over-representation of Black and minority ethnic people including Travellers, Roma, lone parents, migrants, people from minority religions, and young people; and
 - under-representation of people with disabilities among housing applicants.
- Housing disadvantage, including:
 - particular relevance to the socio-economic status group;
 - overcrowding in housing in particular for Black and minority ethnic people including Travellers, Roma, people with disabilities and young people;
 - sub-standard accommodation and living conditions, in particular for Travellers, Roma, lone parents and people with disabilities;
 - housing insecurity and poor conditions for the identified groups in the private rented sector; and
 - lack of financial support for home adaptations for people with disabilities.
- Poverty and low income
 - particular relevance to the socio-economic status group;
 - comparatively high levels of poverty for lone parents, people with disabilities, Roma, Travellers, and refugees;
 - low incomes, in particular for women and for people with disabilities;
 - additional costs of disability not catered for; and
 - pay and pension gaps, in particular for women.
- Unemployment, under-employment and precarious work, including:
 - comparatively high levels of unemployment among young people, Black and minority ethnic people including Travellers and Roma, lone parents, and people with disabilities;
 - lack of access to decent work, in particular for women, lone parents, migrants, minority ethnic people including Travellers and people with disabilities;
 - lack of recognition for qualifications of migrant people;
 - concentration in part-time and precarious work, in particular for women and lone parents; and
 - employment segregation including predominance of women in care work.
- Lack of promotion and career progression, including:
 - barriers to promotion experienced by women and by people with disabilities.
- Digital inequality, lack of infrastructure, equipment and skills, including
 - significant inequalities for older people, people living in poverty, and Travellers; and
 - increase in online service provision and information provision in a context of digital inequality.

- Inequalities within the arts, including:
 - barriers to engaging with the arts and participating in the arts as consumers and as producers; and
 - barriers to advancing careers within the arts, in particular for women.
- Inadequate care infrastructure, including:
 - high cost of childcare;
 - inadequate provision of childcare;
 - lack of care services for older people; and
 - unequal sharing of care responsibilities between women and men.
- Lack of targeting and positive action to directly address the disadvantage of the identified groups.

Participation

Participation is about being heard and having a say, and about engagement and collaboration. It involves being open, informing, listening to, and involving the diversity of people, and their representative organisations, in consultation and decision-making processes and in partnership endeavours.

The equality and human rights issues to be addressed in implementing the Duty, related to this value and relevant to the functions of Galway County Council, are:

- Lack of opportunities to have a say and participate in consultations and in decision-making processes, including:
 - lack of structures and systems in place to enable people to have a say;
 - inappropriate design of structures and systems for people to have a say; and
 - limited range of policy fields that are open for consultation and participation.
- Lack of influence through consultation processes and in decision-making processes, and lack of feedback after consultation and participation.
- Limited presence of people from the identified groups in decision-making positions.
- Lack of representation for people from the identified groups in public and political life, including:
 - under-representation of women in elected positions; and
 - lack of presence of Travellers and non-Irish citizens in elected positions and as candidates for election.
- Lack of, limited development of and/or limited resources for organisation within some identified groups.
- Lack of skills, knowledge, and awareness within the identified groups for an effective participation

3. Evidence Book

This assessment of equality and human rights is evidence-based in drawing from:

- A. Local Policy Strategies
- B. National Policy Strategies
- C. National research
- D. International and national submissions
- E. An online validation meeting with civil society organisations

A: Local Policy Strategies

The [GCC Strategic Plan for Housing People with a Disability 2021-2026](#) identifies issues of situation, experience and identity in relation to the disability ground.

In relation to **situation**:

- Disabled people should be entitled to an adequate standard of living including housing, the opportunity to choose their place of residence on an equal basis with others and the opportunity to live independently in the community.
- There are 22,523 people in County Galway living with one or more disabilities. This is 13% of the overall population of the County. The number of people with a disability is forecasted to increase by 20% by 2026. Proportional representation – where the prevailing percentage of disability within the social housing list is automatically reflected in new build design without the requirement for further justification is a challenge.
- There is an under representation of housing applicants with a disability.
- There are challenges of housing provision: As of September 2021, there was 653 approved households in GCC for the four categories of disability and a further 31 for unspecified disabilities.
- People with disabilities have lived with extremely high levels of poverty and social exclusion for years, which often perpetuate or exacerbate the problems with housing that they experience.
- Families are often unable to finance the excess cost required to complete home adaptation despite the funding available via the Housing Adaptation Grant scheme.
- There is an ongoing gap between the housing need/provision and the support/care need in some cases, specifically regarding individuals who require a regular support worker input to provide support with activities of daily living (ADLs).
- Disabled people living in institutional or congregated settings with the experience of institutionalisation is not related simply to location or size of the property, but rather to life conditions and the degree to which a resident has real and substantial control over their living arrangements.

In relation to **experience**:

- Rent Allowance/HAP tenants' requiring adaptations/aids/appliances are often not accepted by landlords in private rented accommodation.
- Clients availing of mental health services residing in HAP accommodation have raised the issue of the 'mental stress of insecure tenure'.

In relation to **identity**:

- Ongoing and further development in relation to the principle of universal design and lifelong adaptability of residential units is required.

The [Galway Age Friendly Programme Strategy 2014-2019](#) identifies issues of situation in relation to older people.

In relation to **situation**:

Independent living:

- Most older adults wish to "age in place" in their own homes and communities, but there is an issue as to whether they have access to housing that permits them to do

so, safely, affordably and with the services and supports they need to maintain their independence.

- Inadequacy of home help hours and public grants for aids and supports essential to enable people to stay at home, alongside concern about the increased waiting list for home help assistance and the lengthy assessment time for financial support for home adaptation and personal safety equipment.
- The lack of support systems in the home for people discharged from hospital.

Public transport:

- Over 70% of the rural population reported the public transport system as poor compared to 20% in Dublin. Public transport can: reduce social exclusion; improve people's quality of life; strengthen social networks, reduce isolation and prevent social segregation; and encourage and promote more sustainable uses of time and (public) space. Current transport service provision to rural areas is seen as inadequate to meet the community transport needs and does not link well with more mainstream routes and public transport options.
- Physical and financial accessibility are two barriers preventing older people from accessing transport systems. Bus shelters are of particular concern with regard to their suitability for older people in terms of a lack of seating and shelter and the safety risks they currently present.

Lifelong learning:

- Need for more social events to stop social exclusion and support ongoing education and technology training which helps keep older people active in the community.

Digital exclusion:

- Not everyone has the internet and by putting all information on line they are actually excluding people from accessing services.
- There are limitations in broadband access need for a better roll out of the broadband programme, especially in rural areas.

Decision making:

- Need to enable older people to influence policy and initiate change.
- Need for improved consultation methods which give older people a real opportunity to contribute and an ongoing insight into the development of projects and programmes by service providers and planners.

In relation to **experience**:

- Policy makers and service providers need to be more aware of the needs of older people and to review the way they work to ensure quality and sustainability of service and need for improved consultation methods which gave older people a real opportunity to contribute and an ongoing insight into the development of projects and programmes by service providers and planners.
- Stereotyping with the media stereotype of older people needing changing and organisations needing to support older people to develop a more positive profile and find a way to highlight the positive contribution they make to local communities.
- Safety and the need to better inform older people about remaining safe in their homes and communities.

- Confusion about entitlements and need for better, more co-ordinated information to be available and for organisations to consider their needs when developing application processes and information packs.

In relation to **identity**:

- Older people, now and in the future, will encompass a broader spectrum of socioeconomic, physical, ethnic and cultural conditions and capacities. One size does not fit all. Older people have diverse interests and needs; class, socio-economic and health factors influence levels of social inclusion.

The [Galway County LECP 2016-2022](#) identifies issues of situation in relation to the socio-economic status ground.

In relation to **situation**:

- The age dependency ratio in County Galway at 54.4%, higher than the national rate of 49.3%.
- The relative deprivation index for County Galway indicates an arc of disadvantage around the periphery of the County. Rural disadvantage can be found at all corners of the County and there is a commonality of problems in this arc of disadvantage.
- The total numbers signing on the Live Register in offices in County Galway in Sept 2015 was 7,982. Of these 1,020 were aged under twenty-five years of age.
- The unemployment rate in County Galway went from 7.7% in 2006 to 18.1% in 2011. In County Galway the unemployment rate for males was 21.6% whereas the unemployment rate for females was 13.7%. The rate of unemployment in urban areas in the County was significantly higher than the average figure throughout the County. In 2011, the highest rates of unemployment were found in the RAPID towns of Ballinasloe (27.3%) and Tuam (25.7%), followed by Portumna (24.2%), Gort (23.7%) (which the CEDRA team ranked as the most disadvantaged town in County Galway) and Loughrea (23.4%). It should be noted that the towns with the top 5 highest rates of unemployment are located in the east of the County.
- Education attainment levels in County Galway are improving when comparing levels of education from 2006 to 2011. There was a slightly higher percentage of the population in County Galway, aged 15 and over, than the State in 2011, who ceased education at 'Non Degree Level' (15.9% compared to 15.7%).
- There is a lack of services for children with a disability including physiotherapy, speech and language therapy, occupational therapy, psychology services and school supports.
- The lack of highspeed broadband services throughout the county will undermine the sustainability of towns, villages, rural areas and inhabited islands.
- County Galway has a higher percentage of the population who indicate that they are able to speak Irish at 51%.

The [Galway County Traveller Accommodation Programme 2019-2024](#) identifies issues of situation, experience and identity in relation to Travellers.

In relation to **situation**:

- Overcrowding, with nearly two in five Traveller households (39.1%) had more persons than rooms compared with less than six per cent of all households.

- Homelessness, with the number of Travellers recorded as homeless in 2016 was 517 compared to 163 in 2011, an increase of 217%, compared to an increase of 81% for the general population.
- Inadequate provision of accommodation, living in sub-standard accommodation, insecurity in accommodation.
- Poverty and social exclusion.
- Exclusion from having an input into decision making, as individuals or collectively as a group, with barriers to participation, including financial costs, lack of transport, and inappropriate models for organising participation, lack of encouragement, information and capacity to enable effective participation, and not being listened to or contributions made in consultation processes not being valued.
- Failure to respond to and take account of stated needs and requirements.
- Lack of access to the information and capacity required for making informed choices.

In relation to **experience**:

- Experiencing discrimination, harassment, and stereotyping, including and perceived notions of needs and aspirations.
- Isolation due to locations that limit access to economic and social supports and opportunities, and exclusion from being part of the community.

In relation to **identity**:

- Failure to acknowledge and plan by design for the diversity of a community.
- Failure to acknowledge and plan by design for diversity within a community.
- Lack of provision for or failure to make the necessary space for diversity.
- Lack of data on Travellers and absence of an ethnic identifier.

B: National Policy Strategies

The [National Youth Strategy 2015-2020](#) (2014) identifies issues of situation, experience and identity in relation to the age ground (young people age 10-24).

In relation to **situation**:

- In 2014, it was reported that about 74,000 15-24 year-olds in Ireland (16.7%) were not in education, employment or training compared with the OECD average of 12.6%. Over 50% of young people who are unemployed (20-24 years) have no more than lower secondary education.
- In 2014, 23.9% of young people aged 15-24 years were unemployed. The trend is down, from almost 80,000 on average in 2009 to 47,000 on average in 2014.
- In 2013, 14% of young people aged 15-24 years were living in consistent poverty.
- Only 12% of post-primary school children engage in recommended levels of physical activity; 6% of 13-year-olds are obese, and a further 20% are overweight. It is estimated that 20% of 16 year olds are weekly drinkers.
- In 2013 the suicide rate for young people in Ireland aged 15-19 years was the fourth highest in the EU. The majority of young people who die by suicide have not had any contact with a mental health professional
- Young people identified mental health, education, inclusion, employment, access to services, youthwork/youth organisations, and supporting transitions as areas requiring a focus.

In relation to **experience**:

- Almost one-quarter of 9-16 year-olds (23%) surveyed in Ireland in 2012 experienced some form of bullying, online or offline (the latter being the most frequent).
- Young people, especially young girls, are particularly vulnerable to negative self-image and media pressure surrounding body image.

In relation to **identity**:

- Research indicates a high level of homophobic bullying in schools and other settings, and this, together with family rejection, has been identified as leading to poor mental health outcomes in later life for young LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender) people.
- For those young people in Ireland who self-identify as LGBT, the most common age is 12 years, while the most common age at which they begin the process of 'coming out' to others is 17 years. This can often be a time of profound isolation for young LGBT people.

The [LGBTI National Youth Strategy 2018-2020](#) identifies issues of situation, experience and identity in relation to the gender and sexual orientation grounds.

In relation to **situation**:

- LGBTI+ young people experience high levels of mental health problems, including higher rates of severe stress, anxiety, depression, self-harm and attempted suicide.

In relation to **experience**:

- LGBTI+ young people face challenges of discrimination, victimisation, stigmatisation and abuse.
- LGBTI+ young people face challenges of difficulties coming out in the workplace, particularly for transgender people.
- LGBTI+ young people face challenges of difficulties associated with acceptance of LGBTI+ identity by families, communities and broader society.

In relation to **identity**:

- Limited knowledge and understanding of LGBTI+ issues by mainstream service providers and professionals who encounter LGBTI+ young people.
- LGBTI+ young people face challenges of gender-segregated spaces, such as single-sex schools, toilets and changing facilities, for transgender and non-binary young people.
- Research and data-gathering mechanisms for LGBTI+ people in Ireland and internationally remain in their infancy and require substantial development. No official data on transgender or non-binary people. Intersex young people are another cohort that is difficult to quantify given the complexities surrounding a clear definition of this group.

The [National LGBTI Inclusion Strategy 2019-2021](#) identifies issues of situation, experience and identity in relation to LGBTI+ people.

In relation to **situation**:

- The importance of workplace inclusion was underscored at almost every workshop with participants reporting that significant barriers still persist for LGBTI+ employees.
- LGBTI+ people in rural areas have pointed to the risk of being isolated.

In relation to **experience**:

- In recent CSO data, the highest rates of discrimination were reported by people who identify as LGBTI+ (33.2%), followed by persons from non-white ethnic backgrounds (33.1%), unemployed (30.2%) and non-Irish (26.7%).
- Threats in relation to safety and security experienced by LGBTI+ people. LGBTI+ people do not always feel safe in the public space and on public transport.
- LGBTI+ people continue to experience unacceptable levels of harassment, discrimination in some workplaces and face particular health issues.
- The need for increased and non- stereotypical representation of LGBTI+ identities arose as a consistent theme throughout the consultation process.

In relation to **identity**:

- For LGBTI+ people to enjoy access to services on an equal basis with other people, mainstream services will need to ensure that they apply a LGBTI+ lens to service provision.
- From a review of relevant literature, being able to work in an environment where a person can be fully open about their sexuality and gender identity and bringing their authentic self without fear of discrimination was rated the most important issue by respondents in the first 'Burning Issues' survey of LGBT people.
- LGBTI+ community constitutes a rich diversity of identities each with specific needs and perspectives that cannot be addressed in a homogenous manner.

The [Arts Council Equality, Diversity & Human Rights Strategy](#) identifies issues of situation, experience and identity for a range of groups.

In relation to **situation**:

- Within the arts in Ireland, many inequities still exist and that there is a substantial number of people who continue to experience barriers to engaging with and participating in the arts because of their socio-economic background, their ethnicity or religion, their sexual orientation or gender identity, their family status, their age, their membership of the Traveller Community, or through lack of accommodation of a disability.
- Women artists across a range of artistic disciplines continue to encounter serious impediments to advancing their careers and repertoire in a way that equates with their male peers.

The 2017-2022 [National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy](#) identifies issues of situation, experience and identity in relation to Travellers and Roma.

In relation to **situation**:

- The research found that Travellers stand out as a group that experiences extreme disadvantage in terms of employment, housing and health and that faces exceptionally strong level of prejudice.
- Travellers are much less likely than the general population to own their own home (20% v 70%) while four times as many Traveller families live in only one room.
- In 2013: 361 Traveller families lived on "unauthorised sites"; 188 Traveller families lived on "basic service bays"; 182 Traveller families shared permanent halting sites;

17 Traveller families shared basic service bays/transient halting sites; and 663 Traveller families shared houses.

- Travellers have reported that Traveller-specific accommodation is not being used by Travellers for the following reasons: tension, conflict and intimidation within and between Traveller families, the location and design of sites and schemes, health, overcrowding and poor maintenance/management of sites.
- There is a very large disparity between Travellers and non-Travellers in the level of education completed. The labour market disadvantage of Travellers is largely linked to that educational disadvantage.
- The All Ireland Health Study of 2010, found 84% of Travellers during the study were unemployed. Census 2011 reveals that out of a total labour force of 4,144 Traveller women, 81.2% were without work. Many young Travellers indicate that there is very little point in staying on at school because there was no chance of gaining paid employment afterwards because of discrimination. They feel that the only way to get on and get jobs was to integrate, become like the settled population and deny one's identity.
- A press release by the Fundamental Rights Agency (on 29 November 2016) noted that 80% of Roma interviewed are at risk of poverty compared with an EU average of 17%.

In relation to **experience**:

- Over 40% of Travellers not always treated with dignity and respect.

In relation to **identity**:

- Recognition of the distinct heritage, culture and identity of Travellers and their special place in Irish society would be hugely important to Traveller pride, to Traveller self-esteem and to overcoming the legacy of marginalisation and discrimination that the community has experienced.

The [National Disability Inclusion Strategy 2017-2022](#) identifies or points to issues of situation, experience, and identity for disabled people.

With regard to **situation**:

- 31% of people with a disability are in paid employment compared with 71% of people without a disability being in employment.
- 42% of people with disabilities live in a jobless household putting them at high risk of poverty.
- People with disabilities have poorer educational participation and outcomes. 50% of people with a disability had not completed second level education compared to 22% of people without a disability.

With regard to **experience**:

- People with disabilities are more likely to live alone.
- People with disabilities living in congregated settings.
- Lack of information and awareness among people with disabilities about their options for supported decision making.
- Lack of training for staff working with people with a disability.

With regard to **identity**,

- Access issues for people with disabilities in relation to public buildings, public transport, IT systems used in service provision, and outdoor facilities, absence of universal design of built environment.
- Lack of provision for Irish Sign Language users when accessing public services with free interpretation needed when accessing/availing of services.

C: National Research

The research report [Roma in Ireland, Access to Fair and Decent Work, Pavee Point, 2023](#) identifies issues of situation, experience and identity in relation to the Roma community.

In relation to **situation**:

- 95% of the Roma households have a right to work in Ireland. 83.3% of Roma are unemployed. Barriers to employment included language and literacy barriers, lack of access to necessary training or qualification, and health issues often caused by poor living and employment conditions.
- 39% of adults in households reported that they had never been to school, with a marked gender difference - 41% of women reporting they have never been to school, compared to 22% of men
- 20% of Roma surveyed were completely marginalised from services and supports. This included living in extreme poverty, in sub-standard accommodation, sometimes with no bathroom, kitchen or cooker. A further 60% of respondents reported experiences of consistent poverty, including not always having enough fuel, food or heat.
- The Habitual Residency Condition and how it is applied in Ireland is a big challenge. There is a lack of transparency in the process and it was used as a tool to exclude Roma from accessing basic supports.
- 48.1% of respondents who had applied for social protection were unsuccessful. 17.6% of adults reported begging as their source of income and 14% reported having no income.
- 19.8% reported that they do not have a PPS number which is vital for accessing a wide range of services, including applying for a medical card and social protection.
- Many Roma are living in severely overcrowded and unsafe conditions. 46% of Roma report being homeless at some stage in their lives.
- A lack of childcare support also featured as barriers for Roma who were trying to access employment, particularly for Roma women.

In relation to **experience**:

- Racism and discrimination is a feature of the daily lives of all Roma in Ireland with racism being experienced throughout their lives and across all dimensions of their lives. Where Roma were employed, there were many reports of discrimination in the workplace. 84% of Roma reported discriminated against in attempting to access social protection and almost two-thirds of Roma who were successful in obtaining a social welfare payment, felt they were discriminated against in accessing payments.
- The majority of Roma live in Private Rented Accommodation, and 93% report facing discrimination when trying to rent a home, with landlords refusing to accept Roma as tenants.

- The 2017 European Value Survey highlighted negative attitudes towards Roma in housing noting that 62% of the population over 18 years of age oppose having Roma as their neighbours

In relation to **identity**:

- Proficiency in English is a challenge with 71% of respondents reporting having difficulty in reading English. Roma with fluent English were less likely to report experiencing discrimination in accessing social protection, than Roma with limited English.
- There were some improvements for second generation Roma who were born or raised in Ireland. However, many Roma do not identify publicly as Roma. For many Roma who are working there is a fear of discrimination, and as a result many hide their ethnicity. Roma women experienced additional barriers to employment. Many of the women describe how they changed their dress style so that they could conceal their identity.
- There is a failure by statutory stakeholders to provide culturally competent services and to address the levels of social exclusion and socio-economic disadvantage that hinder access to education, training and employment networks and opportunities.

The research report [Discrimination and Inequality in Housing, IHREC & ESRI, 2018](#) identifies issues of situation and experience in relation to the disability, family status, age, race, Traveller, and socio-economic status grounds.

In relation to **situation**:

- People with a disability experience higher housing and environmental deprivation and are more likely to live in over-crowded conditions. In the case of over-crowding this is accounted for by low income, however their disadvantage on the other two dimensions persists when income and housing tenure are controlled.
- Lone parents are disadvantaged on the housing quality and neighbourhood environment but not on the over-crowding measure by virtue of their smaller size. Poorer local environment is accounted for by concentration in Local Authority rental sector. However, lone parents experience greater housing deprivation than households with two or more adults and children, within the same housing sector, region and income level.
- Non-EU nationals were more likely to experience over-crowding compared to Irish nationals with the same characteristics (including income, housing sector and area), and were more likely to experience housing deprivation holding income and region constant (though not housing sector).
- Young people aged 18-29 were also disadvantaged across all three dimensions, particularly over-crowding, and again these effects were not explained by income or housing sector. Those in the 30-39 category experienced higher environmental deprivation and over-crowding but not housing deprivation.
- Tenants in receipt of RS were more likely to experience housing deprivation and over-crowding than others with the same characteristics (e.g. age, nationality, gender, household composition). Moreover these differences persisted when income was held constant, though only statistically significant at the 10 per cent level due to small numbers for analysis.

- Non-Irish nationals are substantially over-represented among the homeless. Excluding cases where nationality cannot be discerned, they make up 13 per cent of the normally resident Irish population, but account for 25 per cent of usually resident homeless people.
- The most at-risk ethnic and cultural groups are Irish Travellers and Black people, composing 9 per cent and 11 per cent of the homeless respectively.
- Three major religious communities – Protestants, Muslims and Orthodox Christians – are more at risk. Muslims are particularly over-represented, constituting almost 6 per cent of the homeless but only 1 per cent of the total population.
- A staggering 60 per cent of homeless families are headed by lone mothers, a group which comprises only 16 per cent of family units in the State.
- Age is also associated with homelessness, as young people and especially young males are over-represented among the homeless population.

In relation to **experience**:

- Age is strongly and negatively associated with housing discrimination, the youngest group (18-34) are six times more likely to report housing discrimination compared to the oldest group (65 years old or older).
- Black people are 3.5 times as likely to be discriminated against as White Irish people. Similarly, people of 'other ethnicity' are 1.7 times more likely to be discriminated against as the White Irish group.
- Regarding this ground, the most disadvantaged group emerged to be the Travellers which are nine times as likely as the White Irish to experience discrimination.
- People with a disability are twice as likely to report discrimination in accessing housing – this is true controlling for status in employment as well as housing tenure.
- Compared with couples with no children, lone parents were more than twice as likely to experience discrimination, while single childless were 1.5 times more likely to report housing discrimination.
- Individuals with lower secondary education or lower are twice as likely to report discrimination as individuals with a higher level of education. Concerning employment status, unemployed, students, and especially inactive people report higher levels of discrimination compared with employed people. Finally, housing tenure emerged to be strongly associated with discrimination. Local Authority renters and private renters are respectively 4 and 4.6 times as likely to report discrimination as homeowners.

The [Disability and Discrimination in Ireland, IHREC & ESRI, 2018](#) identifies issues of situation and experience in relation to the disability ground.

In relation to **situation**:

- Previous research has shown that disability increases the risk of poverty as people with disabilities have a lower rate of participation in the labour market than those without disabilities.
- Participation in the labour market for people with disabilities remains lower than participation rates for the general population: for those aged 15 and over, 22 per cent of people with a disability were at work compared with more than half (53 per cent) of the overall population.

- Controlling for a range of characteristics, he showed that people with a chronic illness or disability are more likely to have a lower hourly wage compared to those without a disability.
- People with disabilities are overrepresented among homeless people and are more likely to experience bad housing conditions. People with disabilities are over 1.6 times more likely to live in poor housing or neighbourhood conditions (e.g. leaking roof, damp walls, no central heating, crime/vandalism in the area, etc.).
- There is a need to improve access to social housing for people with disabilities and to provide grants for modifications to homes to improve access or other supports/devices.
- The 2016 Census signals that educational attainment amongst people who have a disability is lower than the general population. For example amongst those aged 15 to 50 years with a disability, 13.7 per cent have completed no higher than primary level education, compared to 4.2 per cent of the general population.

In relation to **experience**:

- People with disabilities experience discrimination 'more regularly' than people without disabilities. On average, 15 per cent of people with disabilities experience discrimination compared to 11 per cent of those without a disability. People with blindness or serious visual impairment and psychological/emotional disabilities are the most likely to experience discrimination.
- The data also reveal that people with disabilities were more likely to say that the discrimination had a 'serious' or 'very serious' effect on their well-being. In 2014, 18 per cent of people with disabilities who reported experiencing discrimination said it had a 'very serious' effect on them, compared to 10 per cent of those without a disability.
- Work-related discrimination includes discrimination in looking for work or in the workplace and this was examined for those aged 18 to 64 who were exposed to this kind of discrimination (i.e. who were active in the labour market in that they had been at work or had been looking for work in the previous two years). The odds of experiencing discrimination were about twice as high for people with disabilities compared to those without disabilities.
- Discrimination in public services covered the domains of education, health, transport and other public services. This was where we found the largest gap between people with and without disabilities, with the odds of discrimination being about three times higher among those with disabilities. The largest gap between people with and without disabilities is found when people are accessing public services such as health, education and transport.
- People with disabilities are more than twice as likely to report discrimination related to housing.

The 2017 research report [Who Experiences Discrimination in Ireland, IHREC & ESRI, 2017](#) identifies issues of situation and experience across the identified groups.

In relation to **situation**:

- Discrimination in recruitment may mean certain groups are systematically assigned lower quality jobs or remain unemployed.

- Discrimination in the workplace may lead to lower pay and promotions, lower job satisfaction and a higher risk of redundancy.
- In private services, discrimination in being assigned poorer housing or failing to get a bank loan or mortgage may affect living conditions.
- Unfair treatment can have damaging effects on self-esteem, well-being and health.

In relation to **experience**:

- Women report higher discrimination in the workplace. Nearly 7 per cent of women (6.7 per cent), compared to 4.1 per cent of men, felt that they had been discriminated against at work. Rates of perceived discrimination in private services are significantly higher for women (5.2 per cent) than they are for men (4.2 per cent).
- Older working-age respondents, report significantly higher levels of discrimination while looking for work; 12 per cent of those aged between 45 and 64 years said they experienced discrimination in job searching compared to 5.2 per cent of 18–24-year-olds and 5.9 per cent of 25–44-year-olds.
- Younger age groups report higher rates of discrimination in private services, with significant differences between those aged 18–24 years (7.6 per cent) and all older age groups (between 2.8 per cent and 5.5 per cent).
- Rates of discrimination in seeking work were significantly higher among Black/Other ethnic groups (16.5 per cent) compared to Asian and White Irish (7.5 per cent) and White Non-Irish (5.4 per cent). Nearly 10 per cent of the Black/Other ethnicity group report discrimination in public services, compared to 3.2 and 3.6 per cent of White Irish and White Non-Irish groups respectively. It is in the use of private services that the gap in reported discrimination between Black/Other ethnicities and White Irish/White Non-Irish is widest (between 13 and 14 percentage points); 18.5 per cent of Black/Other and 15.7 per cent of Asian ethnic groups report private service-related discrimination, compared to 4.1 per cent of White Irish and 5.6 per cent of White Non-Irish ethnic groups.
- Travellers report very high rates of discrimination in seeking work, where they are ten times more likely than White Irish to experience discrimination. Travellers are over 22 times as likely to say they experience discrimination in Ireland in private services (shops, pubs, restaurants, banks and housing) than White Irish in 2014. This difference is relevant to all private services, but particularly shops, pubs and restaurants, where Travellers are 38 times more likely to report discrimination than White Irish, even after controlling for education, employment status and housing tenure.
- Compared to Catholics, members of minority religions report somewhat higher discrimination rates in the workplace and in public and private services. 11.3 per cent of those whose religion is categorised as 'Other' said they experienced discrimination at work, compared to 4.8 per cent, 5.3 per cent and 6 per cent of those who were Catholic, Church of Ireland or No Religion. 6.4 per cent of those whose religion is other, compared to 3.1 per cent and 1.7 per cent of those whose religion is Catholic or Church of Ireland, report discrimination in public services. As was the case in public services, those whose religion is 'other' report higher rates of discrimination in using private services (10 per cent) compared to Catholic (4.2%).

- Those with a disability were more than twice as likely to report discrimination while looking for work, compared to those with no disability (15.5 per cent versus 6.7 per cent). Just over 7 per cent of respondents with a disability reported experiencing discrimination when using public services, compared to 2.8 per cent of those with no disability. Those with a disability reported more discrimination accessing private services (7.3 per cent) than those with no disability (4.3 per cent).
- Family status does appear to affect rates of discrimination among those looking for work, particularly for lone parents. More than 12 per cent of lone parents who were never married report discrimination while searching for work and this is significantly different to those who are single with no children (6.3 per cent) and those who are cohabiting with children (5.5 per cent) and without children (3.9 per cent).
- Never-married lone parents reported the highest rate of discrimination in private services (10.3 per cent), significantly higher than those who were single or formerly married without children (4.9 per cent), married without children and married or cohabiting with children (3.3 per cent, 3.8 per cent and 6.1 per cent respectively). This group was also significantly different to the group of formerly married lone parents, of whom 5.6 per cent reported private service-related discrimination.
- In terms of family status, those who were formerly married and are without children (4.7 %) lone parents who never married (5.9%) report significantly higher levels of discrimination in public services compared to those who are single and childless, cohabiting and childless, or married with children.

The 2017 [Report of the Joint Committee on Social Protection on the Position of Lone Parents](#) identifies issues of situation for lone parents.

In relation to **situation**:

- Unemployment has remained consistently higher for lone parents than for parents in couples. Of lone parents, 14.4 per cent were unemployed compared with 11.8 per cent of couples. Only 42.5 per cent of lone parents were in employment, compared with 69.3 per cent for heads of two-parent families.
- Lone parents undertake a higher proportion of part-time work when compared to parents in couples. With lone parents having a proportion above 50% part-time work consistently since 2006.
- One parent families have the highest consistent poverty of 26.2% rate of any group in Irish society. Lone parents suffer higher rates of deprivation at 57.9% compared to 25.5% in the general population. Children in one-parent families are three times as likely (26.2%) to live in 'consistent poverty' than families with two adults with one to three children (7.7%).
- Childcare costs in Ireland are among the highest in the OECD (reference). Lone parents, as the sole carers of their children, are more strongly affected by these costs.
- Homelessness disproportionately affects single parent families. 65% of homeless families are lone-parent families while lone-parent families make up only 26% of all families. Domestic violence is also a cause of homelessness in lone parent families.

D. International and National Submissions

The 2021 IHREC report [Ireland and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights](#) identifies issues of situation, experience and identity for a range of groups.

In relation to **situation**:

Poverty

- The consistent poverty rate was 5% in 2020, the 'at risk of poverty' rate was 13.2% and 15.6% of the population experienced enforced deprivation.
- Over 33% of people who are unable to work due to illness or disability are at risk of poverty,

Employment

- The most commonly reported barrier to social inclusion is belonging to a jobless household. Those most at risk of experiencing poverty in 2020 were those unable to work due to disability or illness (33.7%), and the unemployed (32%).
- Commission-based research found that women, lone parents, young people, migrants, ethnic minorities including Travellers, and disabled persons experience significant barriers in meeting their right to decent work.
- Women had lower rates of employment in 2019 (68 per cent) than men (79 per cent). Gender pay and pension gaps stand at approximately 14%, and 38%, respectively.
- Non-EU migrants report lower employment and high unemployment when compared to Irish-born, and EU-East migrants report lower occupational attainment than Irish-born.
- In employment, 17% of Traveller women and 13% of Traveller men have paid jobs compared to 68% of Irish women and 80% of men generally.
- Ireland continues to have amongst the lowest employment rates for disabled persons in the EU (32.2% compared to 50.6% in the EU in 2017).
- Regarding security and stability of work, one-third (33 per cent) of younger workers (18-24) had a temporary contract, compared to 6 per cent of 25-64 year olds in 2019.

Housing and homelessness

- Commission findings demonstrate persistent housing discrimination and disadvantage among particular groups in Ireland, including lone parents and their children, minority ethnic groups including Travellers, migrants and disabled people - all of whom experience multiple barriers in meeting their right to adequate housing.
- Less than 25 per cent of lone parents reported home ownership, compared with 70 per cent of total population.
- Disabled people report high levels of discrimination in access to housing. 29 per cent of persons living with a disability experience housing quality issues, when compared to those without a disability (21 per cent).
- Almost 3,000 disabled people live in congregated settings, where many experience institutional living conditions. More than 1,300 disabled people under the age of 65 are inappropriately housed in nursing homes for older people because they cannot access supports to enable them to live in the community.
- The Commission remains deeply concerned over the inadequacy and shortage of culturally appropriate Traveller accommodation in Ireland. The persistent State

failure to provide Traveller accommodation fundamentally undermines Traveller's culture and identity. IHREC/ESRI found that Travellers were nine times more likely to experience housing discrimination than the general population.

- Homeowners are less likely to experience housing quality problems (17 per cent) when compared to those who rent privately (30 per cent) and those who live in Local Authority housing (35 per cent). Commission-funded research, found that 38% of those living in local authority housing experience housing deprivation and 28% of local authority houses are overcrowded.
- As of September 2021, there were 8,475 homeless people in Ireland. People with disabilities are significantly over-represented among the homeless population, with more than one-in-four homeless people having a disability.

Direct Provision

- The long-term impact of the Direct Provision system on the rights of individuals seeking international protection, particularly on the right to family life, private life, and health, is well researched.

Care

- Ireland ranks among the world's most expensive countries for childcare. The Commission has repeatedly raised concerns over systemic shortcomings in childcare infrastructure.
- Women are significantly over-represented amongst employees who avail of reduced hours in order to facilitate the combination of care and paid work, contributing to gender inequality in the labour market.

In relation to **experience**:

- Commission-funded research has shown that racist attitudes can be found across Irish society and across all social classes, and that Travellers and Black people experience particularly high rates of labour market discrimination, both when seeking work and in the workplace. Twenty per cent of ethnic minority workers reported discrimination in the workplace, almost three times the average rate of discrimination (7 per cent).

In relation to **identity**:

- The Commission has repeatedly highlighted the considerable shortfalls in equality data in Ireland.

The 2017 [Submission to the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women on Ireland's combined sixth and seventh periodic reports, IHREC, 2017](#) Local Economic and Community Plan identifies issues of situation in relation to the socio-economic status ground.

In relation to **situation**:

- Women experience a pay gap of 14% and a pension gap of 38%.
- Gender segregation, horizontal and vertical in the labour market:
 - Women are prevalent in minimum wage jobs, and are concentrated in low paid and part-time jobs.
 - Predominance of women in care work.

- Women experience barriers to promotion and women are concentrated at middle management in the civil service.
- Women with a disability are less likely than men with a disability to be active in the labour market, and more likely to work on a part-time basis. 81.2% of Traveller women are unemployed.
- Lack of representation in public and political life, particularly in relation to Traveller and migrant women, and with barriers to female political participation of childcare, cash, confidence, culture and candidate selection.

In relation to **experience**:

- Discrimination at work. Pregnancy related discrimination, with job offers rescinded, reduced hours, negative impact on performance rating, and lack of promotion. Trans women typically experience high levels of discrimination in employment for expressing trans identity and in transitioning.
- Gender stereotyping, assumption of traditional gender roles, excluding women from certain professions, limited access to promotions, and enabling lower and unequal pay, and encompassing multiple forms for Traveller, Roma, and migrant women.
- Experience of gender-based violence (rape, sexual assault, sexual abuse, sexual harassment, and domestic violence), limited availability of support services for victims of domestic violence and growing number of homeless women and children due to domestic violence.

In relation to **identity**:

- Intersectional issues for specific groups of women including Traveller women, women with disabilities, rural women, women living in direct provision, and trans women.

The 2019 [Report on Ireland and the Convention on Racial Discrimination, Submission to the United Nations Committee on Racial Discrimination on Ireland's Combined Fifth to Ninth Periodic Report, IHREC, 2019](#) identifies issues of situation in relation to Black and minority ethnic people.

In relation to **situation**:

- In 2016, the unemployment rate for Travellers was 80.2%, compared to 12.9% for the general population. Census 2016 also highlighted that only 10.1% of Traveller women and 12.6% of Traveller men list their principal economic status as 'at work'.
- In recent research, 17% of Roma respondents were in employment.
- Difficulties in obtaining recognition of qualifications acquired abroad can give rise to situations of under-employment and over-qualification.
- The consistent poverty rate disproportionately affects children from Traveller, Roma, and refugee backgrounds.
- The consistent poverty rate in 2017 for people who do not identify as being an Irish citizen or national is significantly higher than the general population (12.7% compared to 8.2% respectively).
- The Habitual Residence Condition is applied to all applicants for benefits regardless of their nationality, but is not neutral in its application and can have a discriminatory impact on migrant, Traveller, and Roma families.

- There is evidence of discrimination against Black and minority ethnic groups in housing and a disproportionately high number of families of migrant origin are at risk of and are experiencing family homelessness.
- Travellers face high levels of discrimination, overcrowding, and higher risks of homelessness, with persistent discrimination and inertia towards the provision of accommodation to the Traveller community.
- The Roma community experience discrimination in accessing accommodation, severe overcrowding, poor quality accommodation, a lack of security of tenure, homelessness, and lack of access to social housing and rent supplement.
- Political under-representation in absence of Travellers and non-Irish citizens as elected members and candidates.

In relation to **experience**:

- Labour market discrimination in Ireland is a consistent issue with Travellers, Roma, and people of African descent experiencing significant barriers to accessing employment.
- In recent research conducted with 481 Travellers, 20% of respondents reported their previous experience of hiding their identity during a recruitment process, such as changing their address.
- In recent research, 79% of Roma respondents felt that they had been discriminated against in getting a job.

In relation to **identity**:

- Language difference with lack of interpreter services and the need for professionalised and regulated interpreting services.
- Lack of: access to culturally appropriate housing provision for Travellers; and support to Travellers in preserving and developing their identity and culture, including nomadism and horse ownership.
- Lack of cultural competency in public services and the need for cultural competency training.

E. Online Validation Meeting with Civil Society Organisations

An online validation meeting was facilitated with a range of civil society organisations to discuss and review a draft of the assessment of equality and human rights issues. It specifically addressed the questions of:

- Are the equality and human rights issues we have identified relevant and of priority for the group(s) that your organisation represents?
- Are these issues correctly formulated?
- Are there any important gaps in regard to the equality and human rights issues for the identified group(s) that that your organisation represents?

A number of changes were proposed to the assessment and these were all accepted by the working group in the assessment of equality and human rights issues set out above.