



AN TÚDARÁS PÓILÍNEACHTA POLICING AUTHORITY

Implementing the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty

Framework and Implementation Plan (2023 to 2024)

December 2023

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1. Introduction

This framework and implementation plan establishes the Policing Authority's ambition and approach to implementing the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty (the Duty), and the steps we will take in this regard across all our functional areas. Implementation of the Duty will enable us to take a more planned and systematic approach to equality and human rights in our work.

1.1 The Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty

The Duty or Section 42 of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014 requires public bodies to have regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, promote equality of opportunity, and protect human rights of service-users, policy beneficiaries, employees, and members, across all their functional areas.

The Duty requires a public body, having regard to its functions, purpose, size and the resources available to it, to:

- 1) **Assess** - set out in its strategic plan an assessment of the human rights and equality issues it believes to be relevant to the functions and purpose of the body;
- 2) **Address** - set out in its strategic plan the policies, plans and actions in place or proposed to be put in place to address those issues; and
- 3) **Report** - report on developments and achievements in its annual report.

The groups identified for the Duty are covered by the grounds of:

- 1) Gender (including gender identity and sex characteristics);
- 2) Civil status;
- 3) Family status (including lone parents and carers);
- 4) Age;
- 5) Disability;
- 6) Sexual orientation;
- 7) Race (including nationality, skin colour, and ethnicity);
- 8) Religion;
- 9) Membership of the Traveller community; and
- 10) Socio-economic status (at risk of or experiencing poverty and exclusion).

The groups identified also includes those at the intersections of these grounds and as such an intersectional approach (i.e. looking at the combined/crossover impacts) is required to fully address the full range of relevant equality and human rights issues.

1.2 The Policing Authority

The main function of the Policing Authority is to oversee the performance of the Garda Síochána in the provision of policing services. We do this in a number of ways, including by:

- Approving the three year Garda Síochána Strategy Statement.
- Setting annual Policing Priorities and performance targets for the Garda Síochána.
- Approving the Annual Policing Plan.
- Once set and approved, overseeing and monitoring progress by the Garda Síochána on the Strategy Statement, performance targets and policing plan.
- Selection and appointment of personnel in the Garda Síochána, including:
 - Nominating persons for appointment by the Government to the positions of Garda Commissioner and Deputy Garda Commissioner;
 - Undertaking selection competitions for appointments to the senior ranks of Assistant Commissioner, Chief Superintendent and Superintendent;
 - Making appointments to these senior ranks and equivalent senior Garda staff positions; and
 - Approving the complement of Garda staff.
- Holding monthly meetings with the Garda Commissioner including meetings in public at least four times each year, which are live streamed and are available to broadcast by the media, as required by statute.
- Building independent sources of evidence to assess performance through engagement with a broad range of stakeholders.
- Reviewing arrangements and mechanisms within the Garda Síochána for: Corporate governance; Recruitment, training and development; Performance measurement and accountability; and Management and deployment of resources.
- Reporting and providing advice to the Minister for Justice arising from the Policing Authority's functions and on request.

2. Equality and Human Rights Values Statement

2.1 Introduction

The Policing Authority has identified 'Human Rights' as one of its values, and defines this as:

“We will work to ensure that the policing service delivered by the Garda Síochána vindicates the human rights of all that come into contact with it. We will promote equality, diversity, human rights and inclusion in our own organisation, in policing and in wider society”.

With the Duty, equality and human rights become objectives rather than values. Thus, this Policing Authority value serves as a gateway for the preparation of an Equality and Human Rights Values Statement.

This Equality and Human Rights Values Statement identifies and defines the values that motivate our ambitions for equality and human rights and, specifically, in implementing the Duty. Values are considered important to the implementation of the Duty.

The Duty, according to Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission, ‘can assist an organisation to define, and give expression to, equality and human rights values related to its purpose, and to key public sector values. Explicit equality and human rights values, such as non-discrimination or dignity for service users, can motivate and guide public bodies to assess and address equality and human rights issues relevant to their functions.’

The Equality and Human Rights Values Statement establishes the implications of these values for our priorities and processes. As such, for each value, we set out a:

- **Statement of outcome** – the implications of the value for the change we seek to contribute to as an organisation; and
- **Statement of process** – the implications of the value for the way we work in pursuing this change.

These statements serve as benchmarks for checking and ensuring an ongoing alignment of our plans, initiatives, and policies with these values.

2.2 Our Equality and Human Rights Values



Dignity is about respect and valuing the inherent human worth of all people. It involves treating people equally and fairly, seeing the person rather than the labels imposed on people, ensuring people have a sense of belonging, and being open-minded.

Statement of Outcome: The Policing Authority strives to establish and achieve a standard in our interactions with people, in the workplace and our public-facing work, that respects and values people in their diversity, in particular those from the ten identified groups, and seeks to ensure a level playing field of fairness and equal treatment.

The Policing Authority promotes interactions with people by, and outcomes from the work of, the Garda Síochána, which respects and values people in all their diversity alongside fairness and equal treatment.

Statement of Process: The Policing Authority models, and works proactively towards: a workplace culture that values people in their diversity, underpins a sense of belonging, and enables them to feel safe to be open about their identity; and workplace systems that are proactive in underpinning fairness and equal treatment, and capable of and effective in addressing any undermining of dignity.

Participation is about listening, consultation, deliberation, and representation. It involves accessing peoples' ideas and perspectives, enabling people to have a meaningful input into and influence on decision-making processes, and empowering people in having an effective say in decisions that impact on them.

Statement of Outcome: The Policing Authority strives to establish mechanisms, systems, and structures for communication, dialogue, deliberation, and representation that: include and empower people from the ten identified groups; involve a process of co-production in their development and operation; and are based on a knowledge of the landscape of groups and organisations involved.

The Policing Authority promotes the creation and effective functioning of mechanisms, systems, and structures, within the Garda Síochána, to enable dialogue, partnership, and inclusive decision-making with people from the ten identified groups.

Statement of Process: The Policing Authority models, and works proactively towards: effective participation in dialogue and decision-making processes by people from across the ten identified groups; outreaching to seldom heard voices; ensuring people feel safe to make their points; recognising and addressing power relations and imbalances; and empowering people by involving them in agenda setting, giving feedback on outcomes from their participation, transmitting their ideas and perspectives to the relevant quarters, and ensuring people know what is available to enable their participation.

Inclusion is about diversity, accessibility, and outcomes. It involves recognising diversity, and accommodating and facilitating the practical implications of diversity; and securing a presence for and enabling achievement of outcomes by the diversity of people.

Statement of Outcome: The Policing Authority strives to facilitate recruitment, retention, and career progression for people from across the ten identified groups within its staff.

The Policing Authority seeks to enable positive outcomes for the people it engages with in its public-facing work, with a focus on those who are from the ten identified groups

The Policing Authority promotes the presence of people from across the identified groups at all levels within the Garda Síochána, such that it is representative of community it serves including in public facing roles.

Statement of Process: The Policing Authority models, and works proactively towards: implementing positive actions to improve outcomes for people from across the ten identified groups; and responding appropriately to the practical implications of this diversity by ensuring accessible buildings, flexible and adaptive systems of recruitment, work organisation, communication and public engagement, and staff recognition for and understanding of diversity.

3. Assessment of Equality and Human Rights Issues

3.1 Introduction

The Duty 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 identified for the Duty.

An evidence base was developed in undertaking this assessment. There are significant equality data gaps noted in assembling this assessment, across all groups and their intersections. The assessment was further strengthened through a validation meeting with relevant civil society organisations.

The three equality and human rights values we have identified to frame our work in implementing the Duty - Dignity; Participation; and Inclusion - serve to group the equality and human rights issues identified in this assessment.

The equality and human rights issues identified below relate to all of the identified groups and the intersections between them, unless otherwise indicated. In some instances, specific examples are given for particular groups to further illustrate the issues. The specific inequalities that result from racism, classism, ableism, homophobia, transphobia, sectarianism, sexism, and ageism, direct and indirect, are reflected in the assessment of issues.

The equality and human rights issues identified below are relevant to each of the functions of the Policing Authority, unless otherwise stated.

3.2 Assessment of equality and human rights issues

DIGNITY

The equality and human rights issues to be taken into account by the Authority relating to Dignity, are:

- ❖ Discrimination and less favourable treatment, both individual and systemic
- ❖ Harassment and sexual harassment, bullying and abusive treatment
- ❖ False assumptions, prejudice, bias, and stereotyping, in the workplace, in service provision and in the public domain, across all grounds
- ❖ Violence, hate crime, and hate speech
- ❖ Human rights imperative inadequately addressed in policing
- ❖ Unwelcoming environments in work, service provision and in the exercise of public functions
- ❖ Lack of effective redress for incidents of discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment, bullying, and abusive behaviour

PARTICIPATION

The equality and human rights issues to be taken into account by the Policing Authority relating to Participation are:

- ❖ Risk of inadequate consultation
- ❖ Risk of inadequate representation
- ❖ Risk of inadequate engagement
- ❖ Possible barriers to participation in decision-making and consultation processes
- ❖ Risk of lack of autonomy in making one's own decisions

INCLUSION

The equality and human rights issues to be taken into account by the Policing Authority relating to Inclusion are:

- ❖ Access barriers in the labour force across the identified groups
- ❖ Progress barriers in the workplace
- ❖ Poverty
- ❖ Failure to adapt for and to be flexible in taking account of the practical implications of diversity and the specific needs that arise
- ❖ Lack of knowledge, understanding and response to the practical implications of intersectionality across the identified groups, and lack of training to enable understanding of diversity and how to respond to its practical implications.
- ❖ Invisibility for diversity in data systems
- ❖ Digital inequality and exclusion
- ❖ Lack of positive action to address accumulated disadvantage across the identified groups.

4. Enabling Implementation

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| <p>Leadership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Leadership is a key element for the effective implementation of the Duty. This leadership will come from the Policing Authority, the CEO, and the Senior Management Team. ✓ The CEO will report to the Policing Authority on a regular basis on the progress made in implementing the Duty and in addressing the equality and human rights issues relevant to our functions. | <p>Driver</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The core Human-Rights team will continue to serve as the key driver for the ongoing implementation of the Duty. The team is cross-organisational, and reflective of the matrix approach of the Policing Authority in its composition. It will meet on a quarterly basis. |
| <p>Communication</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ We will build staff familiarisation with the Duty and our ambitions for the Duty. ✓ We will keep staff up-to-date on our implementation of the Duty and the progress made on foot of this. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • all-staff emails including a focus on this work. • marking and celebration of achievements in implementing the Duty and giving expression to our equality and human rights values. ✓ We will embed the public sector equality and human rights duty within our organisational culture. | <p>Capacity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ We will provide training on the Duty, in particular on implementing the ‘Address’ step of the duty to staff responsible for the development or review of plans, initiatives, or policies which involve implementation of the Duty. ✓ We will include a focus on the Duty and our ambitions for the Duty in all induction training for new staff. |

5. Implementation

The ‘Address’ step of the Duty will be implemented which includes the development and review of our plans, initiatives, and policies will be implemented through specific actions as follows:

Key moments of focus for implementing the ‘Address’ step of the Duty are the development or review of:

- Business plans
- Internal policies
- The Policing Priorities, including in the public consultation in the development of these, the presentation of these priorities to the Garda Síochána, and the review of the policing plan.
- Submissions made by the Policing Authority, such as those to the Garda Síochána, Oireachtas Committees, and to the Department of Justice.

5.1 Specific Actions 2022

The Executive initiated the following actions as part of its implementation of the Duty in 2022:

| Action | Status |
|---|--|
| Continue to enrol staff in the Human Rights and Policing Law in Ireland course, run between University of Limerick and the Garda Síochána | Ongoing |
| Completion of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Public Duty One Learning Course by staff | Ongoing |
| All staff meeting on the Duty and our assessment and implementation framework | Completed |
| Improve accessibility of the website to conform with European Union Web Accessibility Directive | Ongoing |
| Update and modify the Authority style guide to align with the 'Customer Communications Toolkit for the Public Service –A Universal Design Approach' | Paused and will be resumed in alignment with the establishment of the Policing Community Safety Authority (PCSA) |

5.2 Planned Actions for 2023-2024

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| Business Plan & Oversight |
| Report regularly to Policing Authority and Senior Management Team. |
| Accessibility |
| Website Audit to ensure compliance with the European Union Web Accessibility Directive. Training sessions for staff in web and digital accessibility (this will ensure public-facing documents and material are accessible, such as the Policing Authority's Newsletter, Tweets and End-of-Year infographic review, as well as the new website for the PCSA are compliant with the Directive going forward). |
| Refresher Training Course |
| A refresher course on Human Rights and its relevance to the work of the Policing Authority to be provided to staff. |
| LGBTQIA+ |
| Raise awareness of and encourage staff to use pronouns in their e-mail signatures. |
| Organise LGBTQIA+ awareness training for staff. |
| Create a glossary of LGBTQIA+ terms and definitions. |
| Discrimination |
| Undertake a staff survey on discrimination. |
| Facilitate training workshops on unconscious bias, racism, trans issues, and diversity. |
| Maintain a contact list on prominent display for various organisations like Civil Service Employee Assistance Service , LGBTQIA+ Ireland, Samaritans etc. |
| Submissions |

All submissions, such as to the Garda Síochána, Oireachtas and Department of Justice, to be considered under our and the Garda Síochána's Section 42 obligations.

6. Reporting

We will include a report on the implementation of the Duty and progress achieved on foot of this in each Annual Report.