Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Strategy

Comhionannas, Éagsúlacht agus Cuimsiú

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

An Roinn Dlí agus Cirt
Department of Justice

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Foreword by the Minister

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion is first and foremost a matter of **fairness**; everyone has the right to be respected in their place of work and to have equal opportunities to thrive and excel. Working to create this environment is simply the right thing to do. But we also know that this makes for a more dynamic and innovative workplace, where new ideas and new ways of thinking can flourish.

This is why I am delighted to present the Department's first Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Strategy.

I believe this work on the EDI strategy will be central to our mission of working for a **safe, fair** and **inclusive** Ireland.

The COVID-19 pandemic has marked a very challenging time in Ireland and around the world. With our environment changing rapidly, and the needs and expectations of the people we serve becoming more dynamic and complex, equality, diversity and inclusion can be powerful levers to better understand and meet these needs.

Fostering and increasing equality, diversity and inclusion in our organisation is not only the right thing to do, but also improves service delivery and ensures properly informed decision making by benefiting from the talents and lived experiences of people of all backgrounds.

This Strategy is the practical expression of our collective commitment to create a welcoming, inclusive organisation. It will help us to take a planned and systematic approach to realising our EDI ambition ensuring that we also deliver on the statutory commitments embodied in equality and human rights legislation and national strategies. Importantly, it is aligned and integrated with our Department's vision, mission and values.

I would like to thank and commend all those involved in the development of the EDI strategy, particularly the EDI and Public Sector Duty (PSD) Committee who oversaw the work as well as all internal and external stakeholders who engaged with this process in a range of ways to inform and challenge our thinking and encourage our ambition.

Helen McEntee

Helen McEntee T.D.
Minister for Justice

Introduction by the Secretary General

The principles and the practicalities of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion are laced through all our work in the Department of Justice so they matter to everyone in our Department. There are human rights standards and legal requirements with which we must comply, but our ambitions, as set out in this - our first EDI strategy - go much further.

We all want to work in a positive and inclusive work environment where our contribution is valued and our personal differences and circumstances are cherished and respected.

One of the main reasons our work has meaning and purpose is because it has so much public impact. How we respond to the needs of the public must be informed by a deep understanding of the diversity of human circumstances and experiences. Achieving, nurturing and valuing a wider diversity in our own workforce will add hugely to our ability to produce more effective policies and services for the public.

Every one of us has a role to play in creating an inclusive culture and making the Department of Justice a truly great place to work. We can all sometimes say things, however inadvertently, that hurt or exclude our colleagues or make them feel different or 'othered'.

We need to talk about this more to build our own understanding - through networks, team meetings, and in one-to-one conversations.

This is an ambitious Strategy and invites all of us, at every level of the organisation – from national policy-makers to frontline service providers – to embrace, promote and embed principles of EDI in our policies and everyday practice. Doing this involves an ongoing commitment, a continuous process of critically reflective practice with the aim of ensuring that all our colleagues and customers feel included, valued and respected.

To this end we have prioritised three areas of focus for strategic impact:

- achieve better policy outcomes and improve the accessibility and quality of our services;

- support the development of a skilled and diverse workforce;

- build and embed a workplace culture which facilitates, supports & seeks out contributions from all.

As an organisation, we are at the start of this journey and I look forward to working with all of you over the next few years to make EDI a consistent and actively lived value and a positive action - within our teams and in how we do all our work.

I am very grateful to everyone who played a part in the development of this Strategy. In particular, I would like to acknowledge the invaluable leadership of the EDI/PSD Committee and the courage and commitment of colleagues who participated so openly in the survey and internal focus group, as well as contributions from external partners including non-governmental organisations representing a range of diverse groups who were very generous and honest with their feedback.

Given the wide impact of our work on so many people, we have a real responsibility to lead in this area and there are enormous benefits to be gained from building a sustainable positive culture based on inclusion and human rights. How we implement this Strategy will help shape the country we all live in and support our vision of a safe, fair, inclusive Ireland.

**Oonagh McPhillips**
Secretary General

Alignment
Statement of Strategy 2021 - 2023

The Department of Justice Statement of Strategy 2021 - 2023 was launched in 2021 and involved extensive consultation and engagement with bodies and partners across the wider justice sector; other government Departments, the Oireachtas Committee on Justice and several Non-Governmental Organisations as well as a public submission process on the Department's website and social media platforms.

In addition, we have identified a number of actions in our annual Justice Plan for 2021 including:

- Lead on implementation of the diversity measures identified under Action 16.

- Support and monitoring diversity initiatives as core part of governance of agencies.

Both our Statement of Strategy and this EDI Strategy place equality and diversity at the heart of our purpose and approach to delivering on our mission and strategic priorities.
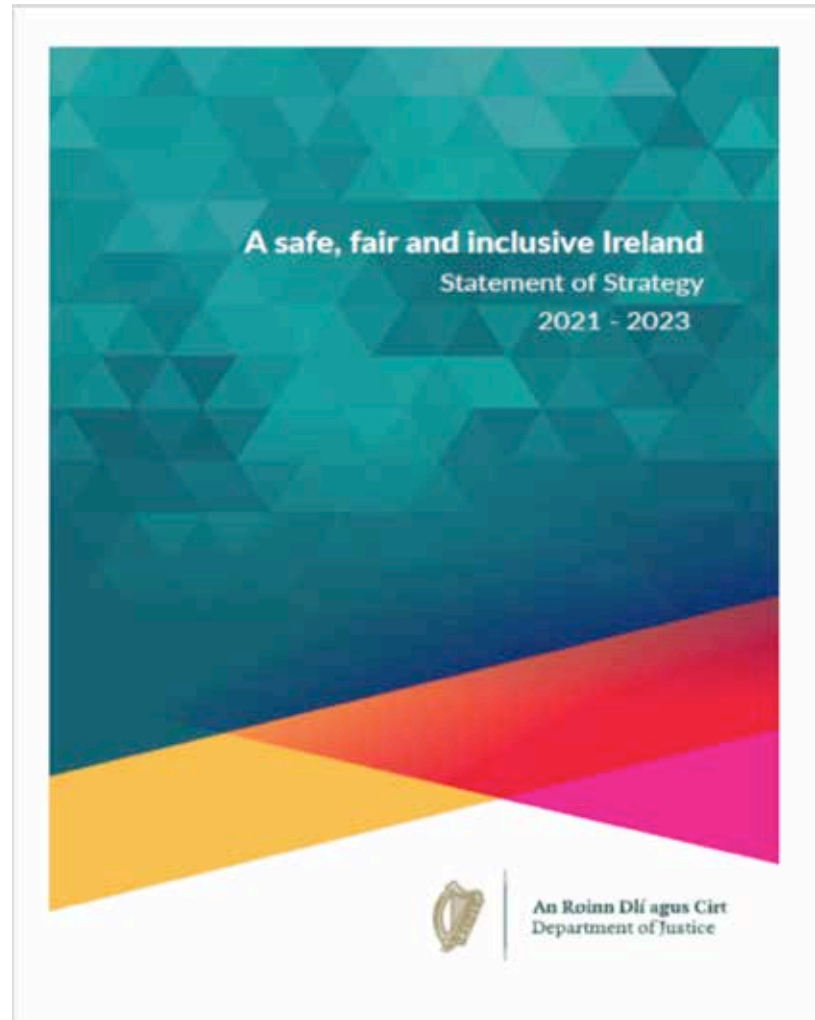
Our Mission

Working for a safe, fair and inclusive Ireland.

Our Values

A consultation process with staff and senior management resulted in a refreshed set of values which were formally launched in 2021. Our values will also help bring this EDI Strategy to life and make it a real positive for everyone in the organisation and conversely a proactive approach to EDI can also help give expression to our core values.

The Case for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Our Department is responsible for public policy in respect of the security of the State and public safety, including the prevention and detection of crime, the administration of justice, the management of immigration and international protection processes, the provision of important regulatory services and ongoing reform of civil and criminal law.

Our Department plays a central role in underpinning and sustaining a democratic and just society, and the manner in which we do so reflects our deep commitment to human rights and equality.

Our operating context is constantly changing. Increasing population diversity is evident and significant societal developments in recent years include changes in how values, beliefs and cultural practices are expressed in relation to areas such as family, sexual orientation, disability, age and ethnicity and gender roles. We recognise that there are multiple forms of discrimination that exist that really do block people from either reaching their true potential or accessing equal opportunity. We also understand that people can be disadvantaged across a number of different grounds and that this intersectionality can lead to multiple discrimination.

In addition, an increasingly important aspect of our organisational culture and values is creating opportunities to listen to the people most impacted by our work and problem solve with them. Diversity and inclusion is a way of thinking and an approach to delivering

better results. Through diversity and inclusion, we gain the varied perspectives needed to tackle complex issues and to come up with innovative solutions. Meaningful, authentic collaboration gives us valuable insight and leads to better informed and sustainable outcomes.

The Department recognises that our workforce is diverse and is committed to ensuring that existing employees feel safe and free to express their diversity within the workplace.

Openly promoting and demonstrating our commitment to EDI will also help us attract the top talent we want in our workplace and providing an inclusive environment will ensure we retain this talent. A key outcome of EDI is engagement. When our people feel like their voice is heard, they are more likely to feel empowered to perform their best work.

This new EDI strategy will support our core work and both demonstrate our values and help us achieve our strategic goals.

Building Trust and Confidence: Our ability to deliver will improve

The Department is responsible for leading the strategic direction of the criminal justice system with the objective of protecting the public, upholding human rights and procedural fairness, and maintaining public safety, confidence and trust.

There is a strong link between a diverse workforce and inclusive culture, and

public trust and confidence in the Justice system.

As population diversity increases, support for integration and cohesion is more crucial. The Department also has a key role to play in fostering integration by involving new communities in our work.

Protecting communities and supporting victims is at the core of what we do in the Department of Justice. Some crimes have a disproportionate impact on particular groups or communities.

Crimes are also becoming more complex and we increasingly live our lives online. Reports of certain crimes, including domestic abuse and hate crime, have increased in Ireland. International crime is also a growing challenge. Modern slavery, for example, often involves vulnerable victims being trafficked into the country.

It is essential that we understand how best to support all victims and witnesses through the justice process.

Some communities have low levels of trust in the Justice System and disproportionality in representation and sentencing may be contributing factors for this distrust. We will continue working on a whole of Government basis to tackle the root causes which can allow criminality take hold in disadvantaged communities including breaking the link between criminal gangs and vulnerable young people they try to recruit.

It is important that the Department and the Justice sector as a whole

increasingly reflects all of the communities we serve, and is mindful of the wider issues which shape identity, including socioeconomic status, as we develop policies and services.

Driving our capacity to deliver and perform

Increased diversity provides us with an opportunity to improve our own performance but also accrue a better understanding of the people we serve.

Demand for our immigration services continues to increase while equality and inclusivity remain core guiding principles for our Department as we work with colleagues across Government to provide responses to some of the largest global migration challenges.

In line with our commitments in our Justice Plan we are continuously looking to progress our digitalisation strategy, and move from paper-based and labour intensive processes to efficient, robust and customer–centric frontline immigration services, in line with our Digital First policy.

One of our Department's core goals includes widening access, and identifying and removing barriers to the justice system so it meets the needs of the public, society and business.

Widening access to justice means many things. It means that all our citizens can readily access the legal system and services when they need it. It means ensuring that those who need to access justice feel comfortable in engaging with our justice system – those who need recourse to the Family Courts, for example, and victims of Domestic, Sexual and Gender Based Violence. It means having a better understanding of how to identify and support people with learning disabilities, autism and mental health issues.

But it also means ensuring that our justice system and the people working within it better represent the diversity in the Ireland of today.

A real understanding of our diverse customers and service users is fundamental to delivering meaningful value and change in this space.

Innovation: New perspectives provide new ideas

Diversity is central to innovation. It brings forth new and better ways of doing things, helps us harness the benefit of technology and improve the efficiency and quality of our services.

Innovation features heavily in our current strategic direction, and it

underpins our desire to better serve the public across all of our work and services. While we now have a dedicated team working on our innovation strategy, it is important that we all feel empowered and able to innovate in our own teams.

Placing EDI at the centre of how we work will develop our capability to interact with and better understand all our diverse customers and this in turn will help ensure that the user is at the heart of every service we develop across the justice sector.

Innovation is fundamentally about people – using our creativity, skills and knowledge collectively to develop better ways of working and delivering services to better meet the needs of our customers and the public.

As we accelerate innovation by moving towards more blended and agile ways of working, re-designing our services, incorporating a focus on sustainability, digital solutions and reducing our carbon footprint, our commitment to EDI and our values will play a key role in ensuring we continue to deliver on our mandate to work for a safe, fair and inclusive Ireland.

Our Commitment to Equality, Diversity & Human Rights

Public Service Reform - Our Public Service (OPS) 2020

Launch of Equality Diversity and Inclusion Vision Statement and Maturity Model Resources

An Garda Síochána and our Department are sponsors of Action 16 under the Our Public Service (OPS) 2020 – to promote equality, diversity and inclusion in the public service.

Key products from the work of the Action Team are a Vision Statement, which the Department and other Public Service bodies have signed up to, along with a Maturity Model, designed to assist organisations to reflect and assess on how they are doing across a number of important areas.

- To be innovative, the Public Service will seek out and learn from multiple perspectives.

- To be responsive to the public as a whole, the Public Service will strive to reflect the diversity of the communities it serves.

The commitment to EDI continues in the latest Civil Service Renewal 2030 Strategy - 'Building on our Strengths'. One of the key actions under Theme 3: Workforce, Workplace and Organisation of the Future highlights that *"Nurturing a workforce for the future involves bringing equality and inclusivity to the fore of our organisational design. We will build an inclusive workforce in order to better reflect the diversity of modern Irish society."*

it provides services; and protect the human rights of employees and service users.

Since completing the first Public Sector Duty Assessments in 2018, the Department has been through transformation and a transfer of functions. In 2020, the Department established an EDI and Public Sector Duty (PSD) Committee with senior representation from across the organisation. This Committee reviewed the PSD assessments and decided that in order to bring a focus and coherence across the Department to the equality and human rights agenda the starting point should be to develop an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) strategy.

The Public Sector Duty is equally relevant to the experience of our staff. In line with our values we are committed to creating an environment where we promote positive engagement, critical analysis, open and honest communication, embracing diverse perspectives while striving to be inclusive in all that we do.

Action 16 Vision Statement

The Public Service recognises the fundamental importance of achieving a diverse and inclusive work environment that protects and fulfills the human rights of its staff. A proactive approach to equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) can also help give expression to core public service values:

- To be equitable and fair, the Public Service will attract and develop a diverse workforce and ensure that each individual feels valued and respected in their workplace.

Public Sector Human Rights and Equality Statement

Our approach to EDI is grounded in, but not limited to, our responsibilities under equality legislation, as set out in the Equality Commission Act 2014. Section 42 of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act, 2014 introduced a statutory provision, referred to as the "Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty". The Duty requires public bodies to eliminate discrimination; provide equality of opportunity and treatment for employees and persons to whom

This EDI strategy is therefore intended to help provide a clear and accessible framework for the Department to fulfil its obligations and ambitions related to the Public Sector Human Rights and Equality Duty.
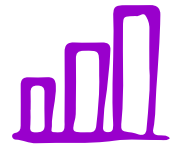
ASSESS
Identify issues
Consulation
Evidence

ADDRESS
Analyse
Prioritise
Mainstream

REPORT
Review
Monitor
Prioritise

EDI Maturity Model

As part of the process to refresh our PSD assessments, the Department agreed to pilot the Action 16 OPS 2020 Maturity Model as a self-assessment tool.

Assess

Piloting the Maturity Model involved a targeted survey to engage the EDI Committee, representatives on the various national policy committees and our EDI related networks on their perceptions of where the Department is in relation to EDI matters.

This perceptions study was also complemented by an evidenced based exercise that involved an analysis of relevant policies, procedures and available diversity data.

Undertaking the Maturity Model diagnostic as well as our engagement with staff and external stakeholders has provided us with valuable insights and strengthened our comprehension and assessment of issues related to equality, diversity and human rights in the Department.

Address and Report

The Maturity Model self-assessment analysis in particular helped to build an understanding of our EDI baseline position and highlighted gaps as well as opportunities for the Department to take on a leading role and make the most impact.

Analysis of the feedback and reflection on key gaps and themes from the Maturity Model diagnostic, has played a significant role in defining the strategic outcomes and underpinning actions we plan to address through this EDI strategy.
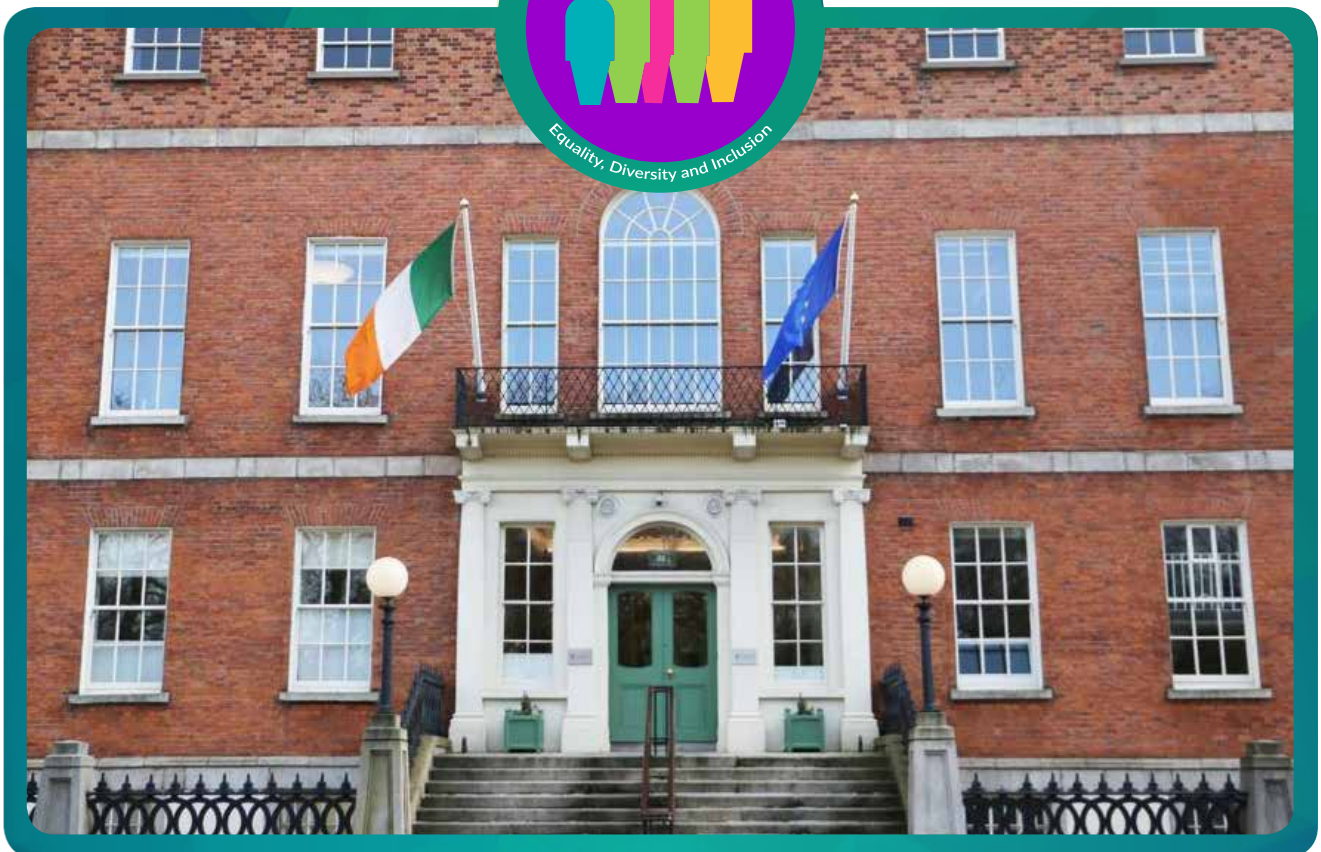
The Department's recently published Statement of Strategy 2021-2023 also included a statement on how we intend to fulfil our obligations under Section 42 of the IHREC Act 2014. It states that we will:

- Carry out a fresh assessment of the human rights and equality issues relevant to the functions and purpose of the Department and the policies, plans and actions to be taken to address those issues. We will publish this assessment on our website;

- Promote and foster our human rights and equality duty as part of the training cycle;

- Drive change and continuous improvement in key areas by continuing to implement international human rights norms;

- Report on progress in our Annual Report and, where appropriate, require bodies under the aegis of the Department to measure progress in their own annual reports.

In accordance with our Public Sector Duty (PSD), the Department has also included a requirement in all our grant agreements that Grantees are obliged to have regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, promote equality and protect the human rights of staff and persons to whom services are provided.

The Equal Status Acts 2000-2018 ('the Acts') prohibit discrimination in the provision of goods and services, accommodation and education on the basis of the following nine grounds.

Our EDI strategy also takes account of disadvantaged socio-economic status as an additional consideration.

National Policies

The Irish public sector operates within a legislative framework that recognises the importance of diversity and inclusion in the workforce and work environment. This includes policies that promote the rights and inclusion of groups across the equality grounds. Some strategies include specified targets; for example, an increase from 3% to 6% of people with disabilities in the workforce (Comprehensive Employment Strategy for People with Disabilities) and 1% of the workforce to comprise of ethnic minorities (Migrant Integration Strategy, National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy 2017-2021). The Department is committed to meeting specific targets within the various national strategies.

A whole of government approach is required to address systemic issues such as social inclusion, equality and diversity. It also requires a collaborative approach across government and civil society. To this end, the Department of Justice is making a strong commitment to lead in areas where we have a direct/ leading responsibility and to collaborate effectively across all areas.

Approach

In 2020, the EDI & PSD Committee held two workshops to develop draft strategic outcomes. Each outcome statement was underpinned by a number of provisional actions which ensued from the Maturity Model self–assessment exercise. The draft actions also formed the basis for the internal consultation and external engagement process.

Internal Consultation

The internal consultation process on the EDI Strategy included;

An online survey which was issued to all Department staff in July 2021 and sought views on:

- Whether the proposed actions are the right ones to achieve our desired outcomes. If people disagreed with a proposed action they could comment why.
- How you would prioritise the actions (Strongly Agree, Somewhat Agree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Somewhat Disagree etc.)
- If there were any gaps.

In addition to the survey, the EDI Committee took additional steps to ensure that the consultation process was accessible to as many staff as possible by hosting an internal Focus Group which took place on 21 July 2021. The focus group provided an opportunity for people with an interest in EDI, particular personal perspectives on EDI, or a lived experience to share their insights in more detail and help shape the strategy. Finally, colleagues were also given the option of providing written submissions directly to the EDI Mail In address for those who could not attend the focus group or who wished to submit additional information or thoughts privately.

External Engagement

The consultation with Civil Society organisations was held on 14 October 2021 and involved two round table discussions with participation from 14 organisations with an expertise in human rights and equality issues and representing groups across the nine protected grounds as well as socio-economic status. In addition, consultations were also held with other public sector organisations. For each of the EDI strategy outcome statements, participants provided feedback on what the Department was doing well, what the Department should do more of, as well as specific input on the draft actions.

The feedback from both processes has played a significant role in informing and strengthening the development of our EDI strategy.

Our EDI Ambition -
Desired Outcomes and Actions

What do we want to achieve?

Better policy outcomes and improved accessibility of all services for our diverse range of service users

Why is this important?

Taking action on equality and diversity helps us to retain the public's trust and confidence in our ability to shape policies and services that meet the needs of a diverse population. This will enable us to:

- Fulfil our mission
- Protect peoples' human rights and equality
- Meet our statutory and public sector duty commitments

How will we achieve it?

Policy

1. Proactively engage with a diverse range of stakeholders to inform the drafting of policy and legislation including piloting a collaborative process to design and proof selected policy and legislation
2. Proof/audit the preparation of policy and legislation to take account of their impacts on EDI

Service Quality

3. Identify & implement innovations in how we design and deliver services to improve accessibility for service users
4. Align with Universal Design Principles and adopt the Customer Communications toolkit for the public service to make all our information and communications more accessible including making information available in multiple languages

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Why I feel the strategy is important?

"I feel the EDI strategy is important for all functions in the Department, however, ISD has a unique responsibility due to the profile of our customers. This responsibility creates the need to have a strategy taking account the requirements of our diverse range of customers. An articulate and inclusive strategy can also highlight the need to focus on our colleagues and team members who may need the support such a strategy will also bring."

David Delaney, Chief International Protection Officer, Civil, ISD - International Protection Office

Our EDI Ambition -
Desired Outcomes and Actions

What do we want to achieve?

A diverse organisation with a skilled workforce which is reflective of the diversity within our population / country

Why is this important?

Being an inclusive employer with a diverse workforce that reflects all of Irish society:

- Brings a wealth of perspectives and ideas to deliver the best outcomes for all citizens
- Stimulates and supports positive staff - service user relationships that in turn contributes to enhanced staff morale and engagement

How will we achieve it?

5. Use a data driven approach (staff census) to understand the diversity profile of the Department
6. Proactively collaborate with PAS and other key stakeholders on recruitment & retention initiatives that support our EDI agenda
7. Develop and implement internships & mentoring programmes focusing on underrepresented groups
8. Embed EDI related training into ongoing training programmes & inductions at all stages of the employee's career - from new starters to senior levels
9. Identify and provide specialised training to staff/teams such as access officer, DLO (Disability Liaison Officer), policy, legislation & customer facing teams

Why is this Strategy important to you?

"It's so important, as it provides us with greater opportunities to acquire talent from different backgrounds that reflects our society and shows our commitment to providing equal opportunities to all. By having a robust strategy in place this will help guide us, to continue to build and develop our reputation as an employer of choice; enriching our values and supporting our behaviours and most importantly demonstrates that we recognise and value everyone connected with us as we are such a diverse Department which is evident by the services we provide which touch so many parts of our communities and society as a whole and we should reflect this internally."

Head of Human Resources

Our EDI Ambition -
Desired Outcomes and Actions

What do we want to achieve?

A workplace culture that supports and values contributions from all our colleagues and customers and strives to eliminate all forms of discrimination.

Why is this important?

There is a compelling moral and business case that a diverse and inclusive workplace that values human dignity and diversity creates a better work environment for all staff and also enhances:

- Employee satisfaction and well being
- Creativity
- Problem solving abilities
- Performance

All of which makes organisations more resilient, effective and attractive workplaces

How will we achieve it?

10. Appoint EDI champions that are representative of all ages/grades/genders/diversities
11. Actively demonstrate our commitment to EDI by living our Values (Open, Collaborative, Professional) through our behaviours and challenging any behaviours that undermine the right of employees to be diverse and to express a diverse identity within the workplace
12. Encourage and support staff networks and celebrate EDI related initiatives/ multicultural events
13. Promote communication campaigns, championing & telling stories about diversity and inclusion
14. Ensure Blended Working helps promote a more diverse, flexible and inclusive work place culture
15. Participate in networks of expertise to facilitate best practice in EDI within the Department

"Ultimately, every individual in the Department is responsible and accountable for their own behaviour. When it comes down to it, we are the system no matter what level we work at. Each one of us has a role to play in achieving a culture of equality, diversity and inclusion."

(Written submission to EDI mailbox)

Implementation and Monitoring

• We have set out a vision to create a working environment in which all people are treated fairly and respectfully, have equality of opportunities and resources, and can contribute fully to the success of our Department.

• The Department aspires that this Strategy becomes a 'living' document, laying new foundations to drive the equality, diversity and inclusion agenda forward. This document outlines a set of desired outcomes and priority actions to guide us towards the realisation of this vision with a more detailed statement of activities indicating who is taking a lead.

• With regard to practical implementation of the Actions underpinning this strategy, these will be fully integrated into our usual business plans including adding appropriate indicators and monitored along with our other organisational goals and strategic priorities. This will ensure there is a consistent review of progress and a process to report on how we are living up to our EDI goals.

• The Department's EDI and PSD Committee will monitor the implementation of this EDI Strategy over the course of its life time. The monitoring process will also involve establishing a mechanism to engage with colleagues with lived experience to ensure we are our living up to the aspirations communicated in this Strategy. There will also be ongoing engagement with relevant external groups and stakeholders. In addition, the Department is committed to undertaking an independent evaluation mid-way through implementation to ensure that we are on track and meeting our commitments.

• The Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty and our Values (Open, Collaborative, Professional) will also provide important frameworks for the implementation of our EDI Strategy. We will continue to put in place the infrastructure, resources and leadership to deliver the goals set out in this strategy. However, this Strategy alone is not enough. All members of staff must play their part in developing the Department of Justice as an equal, diverse and inclusive place to work.

Activities to bring EDI to Life
EDI Outcome 1:

Achieve better policy outcomes and improve the accessibility and quality of our services

ACTIONS	ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION	LED BY:
POLICY 1. Proactively engage with a diverse range of stakeholders to inform the drafting of policy and legislation including piloting a collaborative process to design and proof selected policy and legislation.	In Q1 2022, a Policy and Legislation project will be identified and a collaborative process involving strategic partnerships with diverse stakeholders will be piloted as part of the design and proofing process. A stakeholder database and calendar of structured consultations has been developed. EDI issues will be integrated into ongoing engagements to ensure the Department is engaging with a diverse range of stakeholders in a coordinated manner and continues to build the relationships, tools and skills needed to consult in a meaningful way. Public consultation surveys will also include questions on diversity characteristics to ensure the Department is reaching a diverse range of stakeholders and to inform where more targeted consultation may be required.	**Legislation, Policy** **Transparency**
2. Proof/audit the preparation of policy and legislation to take account of their impacts on EDI	The Policy and Legislation pilot projects identified in 2022 will inform and support the development of a process to proof/audit our work for EDI impacts. The proof/audit process will be designed to ensure we are compliant with our Public Sector Duty (PSD) under Section 42 of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act, 2014 and we build technical capacity within the Department to mainstream PSD and EDI assessments into the design and proofing of policy and legislation. In addition over the life of this Strategy, the Department will pilot an approach to an Equality budgeting project to promote awareness, build capacity in data development and reporting for the Estimates process.	**Legislation, Policy**

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy

EDI Outcome 1:

Achieve better policy outcomes and improve the accessibility and quality of our services

ACTIONS	ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION	LED BY:
SERVICE QUALITY 3. Identify & implement innovations in how we design and deliver services to improve accessibility for service users	Our Digital First and modernisation agendas underpin all of our strategic goals and will also support our EDI objectives. New innovations will place the needs of our diverse customers at the centre. For example, building on the new customer-focused website for our immigration services, a pilot centralised customer service helpdesk was launched for immigration in April 2021. This provided a significantly enhanced service to customers of the registration area. Processes and content for this service were co-created and tested with customer groups. This pilot will be extended across immigration in 2022. The Department of Justice has recently begun creating instruction videos for immigration customers in a range of languages. These videos are narrated by native speakers of those languages and support people in navigating the immigration process. This approach will be continued next year. Internally, the Department recently established an Access Team to help both staff and customers with accessibility issues. The team, drawn from various functions within the Department, is chaired by our Access Officer. The concept of an Access Team is seen as best practice in the area of accessibility as it provides a practical forum for the resolution of practical issues. But it will also provide a resource for staff to raise any access related queries or issues.	**Change, Technology and Innovation**
4. Align with Universal Design Principles and adopt the Customer communications toolkit for the public service to make all our information and communications more accessible including making information available in multiple languages	We are committed to ensuring our services are designed and delivered in a fair and inclusive way, taking into account human centred and universal design principles. This will continue to be done through a range of initiatives, including through the Department's recently established Service Design & Customer Insights team. The Department's Customer Service Action Plan and Customer Charter are currently being redeveloped, with a particular focus on public engagement of all kinds. The Service Design team have been working on mechanisms to measure service quality and to enhance future service offerings. This will also feed into the setting of customer service standards, which will include standards around accessibility and equality. These will be measured and monitored through the Customer Service Action Plan and Charter, which will launch in Q1 2022. The Service Design team will launch a service design handbook in 2022, which will give people across the Department the tools to ensure they take an inclusive and human centred approach with any service or policy offerings they are creating. One particular initiative which will be rolled out in 2022 is the introduction of JAM cards which allow people with additional needs to indicate that they need "Just A Minute" when dealing with staff. All Customer Service materials are to be available in plain English and translation of key information into multiple languages will be rolled out over the course of this Strategy.	**Change, Technology and Innovation**

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy

Activities to bring EDI to Life
EDI Outcome 2:
Support the development of a skilled and diverse workforce

ACTIONS	ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION	LED BY:
SERVICE QUALITY 5. Use a data driven approach (staff census) to understand the diversity profile of the Department	The Department will engage with Public Appointment Service (PAS) to obtain workforce data from their Equality Monitoring Dashboard which is collating GDPR compliant data on gender, disability and ethnicity. The PAS data including EDI metrics will be published in June 2022 and will serve as a baseline for the Department to build its own staff census and equality monitoring dashboard to understand our diversity profile. The Department will build on the lessons from An Garda Síochána's work on diversity data as part of Action 16 and use the toolkits on Human Rights Principles in Diversity Data and a How-to Guide for Survey Design to inform our work.	**Corporate**
6. Proactively collaborate with Public Appointment Service (PAS) and other key stakeholders on recruitment & retention initiatives that support our EDI agenda	The Department has identified a number of areas of collaboration with PAS. For example, PAS is developing an alternative pathways programme which will enable underrepresented groups transition from well structured internships to later stages of the assessment process. The Department will also have information from the PAS review of its recruitment and assessment process and will examine the barriers and challenges underrepresented groups face.	**Corporate**
7. Develop and implement internships & mentoring programmes focusing on underrepresented groups	As a starting point, the Department will continue to collaborate with 'Ahead', on their Willing Able Mentoring programme (WAM) which aims to promote access to the labour market for graduates with disabilities and to build the capacity of employers to integrate disability into the mainstream workplace. The Department will also continue to facilitate Transition Year placements in partnership with the North East Inner City Placement Scheme. In 2022, we plan to commence a one-year work experience internship for members of the Traveller and Roma Community. This programme was designed in tandem with representatives from community groups to maximise participation and long term benefits with clear pathways to a career in the Civil Service. The above programmes will be reviewed after one year to ascertain their potential to scale up and to inform the development of new initiatives. The Working to Change Strategy aims to create a whole-systems approach to increasing employment options for people with past convictions that recognises their skills and capabilities leading to active citizenship, safer communities, fewer victims and supporting a route to desistance. The Department of Justice is supporting the development of this strategy in particular through taking a co-creative and inclusive approach, which has already engaged with people currently in prison and people with past convictions, including those in protected status groups. Implementation of the strategy over 2022 and 2023 will continue with this inclusive approach.	**Corporate**

EDI Outcome 2:
Support the development of a skilled and diverse workforce

ACTIONS	ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION	LED BY:
8. Embed EDI related training into ongoing training programmes & inductions at all stages of an employee's career -from new starters to senior levels	Training on a range of EDI related areas such as disability awareness, intercultural relations, and managing inclusivity will be rolled out and embedded in ongoing training programmes & inductions. Staff in customer facing roles will also receive training on communication barriers and hidden disabilities through the JAM card initiative. In addition, the Department's L&D unit is currently altering its requests process to ensure managers proactively consider accessibility needs in all business requests for training. Accessibility and seamless interfacing with assistive technology will be a priority in these training initiatives. In Q1 2022, work will commence to include a short module on the Department's ED&I strategy in our induction Programme. The module will provide an overview of the Department's key work and projects, highlighting opportunities for involvement across this work.	Corporate Corporate
9. Identify and provide specialised training to staff/teams such as access officer, DLO (Disability Liaison Officer), policy, legislation & customer facing teams	Training and Development is currently made available through the following offerings. 1. One Learning central civil service offers over 30 courses from basic IT to resilience courses. A specific EDI offering is due to go live in 2022. 2. Refund of fees programme - funding for post qualification studies/professional courses including EDI programmes. 3. Specialised, role specific courses e.g. certificate and post graduate diplomas in Asylum and Migration Law, Employment Law, the Administration of Justice and Public Policy. The Learning and Development unit will support teams to identify specialist EDI related training and broader process improvement training which will enhance and promote more inclusive practices in the services we deliver. In addition, the policy and legislation pilot projects related to Outcome 1 will also serve as valuable practical technical capacity building programmes.	Corporate

Activities to bring EDI to Life
EDI Outcome 3:
Build and embed a workplace culture which facilitates, supports and encourages contributions from all

ACTIONS	ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION	LED BY:
10. Appoint EDI champions that are representative of all ages/ grades/genders/ diversities	As a starting point, the EDI Committee members, members of staff networks, our Access team and the representatives on the various EDI related national strategies will serve as EDI champions. As the Strategy is rolled out other champions will be appointed.	Corporate
11. Actively demonstrate our commitment to EDI by living our Values (Open, Collaborative, Professional) through our behaviours and challenging any behaviours that undermine the right of employees to be diverse and to express a diverse identity within the workplace	EDI will continue to be integrated into the materials and programme of activities to rollout the Values such as the AP/HEO Managers sessions. An extensive Train the Trainer programme will be provided in 2022 to enable selected staff across each function to continue to bring the values to life across the Department.	Corporate
12. Encourage and support staff networks and celebrate EDI related initiatives/ multicultural events	The Department will engage with existing networks to identify needs and to establish an environment that supports and encourages additional networks to develop and flourish. Links will also be made with wider/interdepartmental networks focused on fostering workforce equality, diversity, inclusion and well-being as part of the Civil Service Renewal 2030 Strategy.	Corporate

EDI Outcome 3:

Build and embed a workplace culture which facilitates, supports and encourages contributions from all

ACTIONS	ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION	LED BY:
13. Promote communication campaigns, championing & telling stories about diversity and inclusion	A calendar of EDI related events to communicate, tell stories and raise awareness will be developed and implemented.	Transparency
14. Ensure Blended Working helps promote a more diverse, flexible and inclusive work place culture	The Department's Blended Working Policy will be developed and rolled out in 2022. The Policy will be designed to minimise any unintended negative consequences. For example, the impact of blended working in terms of equality between men and women will be taken into account as it has the potential to reinforce inequality around promotion, with men more likely to be present in the office. The Department's Blended Working Policy Principles have been developed to take account of any potential negative impacts.	Corporate
15. Participate in networks of expertise to facilitate best practice in EDI within the Department	The Department will build on its leadership role as co-sponsor of Action 16 under the OPS 2020 Framework and continue to facilitate best practice and to promote EDI within our own organisation and across the public service.	Corporate