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

DETE Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy

2024-2026

June 2024

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

WRC
An Coimisiún um Chaidreamh san Áit Oibre
Workplace Relations Commission

THE LABOUR COURT
An Chúirt Oibreachais

cro COMPANIES REGISTRATION OFFICE
AN OIFIG UM CHLÁRÚ CUIDEACHTAÍ

RFS CLÁRLANN NA GCARA-CHUMANN
REGISTRY OF FRIENDLY SOCIETIES

RBO

Oifig Maoine
Intleachtúla na hÉireann
Intellectual Property
Office of Ireland

Foreword

As a Department, our diversity of backgrounds, opinions, abilities and experiences brings a richness to our work that strengthens our capability to serve the public and deliver to the best of our potential.

Our diversity, benefiting from the talents and lived experiences of colleagues of all backgrounds, expands our horizons and brings new insights into how we do our work and serve the people of Ireland.

Everyone has the right to be respected in their workplace, to be treated fairly and equally, and to benefit from equitable levels of support.

Every one of us has a role to play in creating a welcoming, supportive and inclusive culture that facilitates, supports and seeks out contributions from all colleagues and where each individual feels valued and respected in their workplace.

This Strategy sets out our collective commitment to create a welcoming, inclusive organisation. The actions in this Strategy are based on working towards four key goals:

- Developing a positive culture of support and inclusion
- Ensuring staff at all levels are skilled to work in diverse teams
- Providing equality of opportunity for all staff; and
- Ensuring equality in access to services for all our customers

I want to thank our ED&I Advisory Group and Working Group for their ideas, insights and commitment in developing this Strategy, which reflects engagement across our Department and Offices over 2023 and 2024.

I also want to thank all our colleagues who have laid the groundwork for this Strategy through a range of initiatives and actions over many years, by representing and advocating for the core values of inclusion, fairness and respect in our workplace and when dealing with our stakeholders.

I look forward to working with all colleagues on embedding the principles of equality, diversity and inclusion in everything we do and building a sustainable positive culture for the future.

Best wishes

Declan Hughes, Secretary General

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Why does ED&I matter to us?

Developing an inclusive workplace culture plays a key role in attracting, retaining, and developing talent, as well as supporting better collaboration, innovation, and a Department that more accurately reflects the society that we are here to serve.

An inclusive workplace where diversity is openly valued creates a ‘safe space’ where individuals are more likely to share views and opinions, contribute ideas, and request the support or assistance they may need to empower them to succeed.

The promotion of ED&I in our workplace is a basic principle of good people development. When staff feel included in the organisation, and the workplace supports this sense of belonging, staff are empowered to achieve their full potential.

At the same time, it is essential that when we provide services to the public, these same key principles are observed.

Our Statement of Strategy and this ED&I Strategy place equality and diversity at the heart of our approach to delivering on our mission and strategic priorities.

Our *values* as a Department also help to bring this ED&I Strategy to life; we are committed to fostering a culture of accountability, efficiency, innovation and value for money, which is rooted in a public service ethos of independence, equality, integrity, impartiality, openness, fairness, dignity and respect. As Civil Servants, we espouse the highest standards of professionalism, honesty, objectivity and quality, which are central to fulfilling our roles in serving Government, the democratic system and the public.

As a Department for the past number of years, at a staff and organisational level, we have been building on our approach to ED&I through different initiatives and projects.

We operate 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, including the Comprehensive Employment Strategy for People with Disabilities. Under the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014, our Department has a duty to eliminate discrimination, promote equality, and protect the human rights of staff and the people availing of our services.

In 2023 the Department of Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform published a new Strategy for *Public Service Transformation to 2030,* which

recognised that the quality of our public services will be best served by staff who are empowered and supported to work to their full potential.

As a Department, we are committed to meeting specific targets within the various national strategies. Our ED&I Statement 2022 set out how we would ensure our statutory equality duties are met. However, this ED&I Strategy takes the next step in setting out how we plan to go beyond those duties and become a more inclusive workplace.

Colleagues from across the Department and our Offices are instrumental in our progress to date. In recognition of our collective efforts, we achieved the Irish Centre for Diversity 'Silver' *Investors in Diversity* mark.

While this was a welcome milestone on our ED&I journey, there is more we can achieve, and we have a clear view of where we can act to improve.

For the purposes of this Strategy, we are using the following definitions:

Equality means making sure that people, or groups of people, are not treated less favourably than others. Under law, there are nine grounds for discrimination, known as the *protected grounds*. These are:

- Age
- Civil Status
- Disability
- Family Status
- Gender
- Membership of the Traveller Community
- Race (colour, nationality or ethnic or national origins)
- Religion
- Sexual Orientation

In this Strategy, we use the word 'equality' to encompass the prevention of discrimination, *and* the promotion of fairness in access to opportunities and services.

Diversity means recognising that everyone is different in a range of visible and non-visible ways, and that the recognition and respect of that difference is a rich and valuable contributor to creativity, problem-solving and innovation in any organisation.

Inclusion means going beyond the 'tolerance' of difference, towards an environment where everyone feels valued and empowered to contribute and develop to their full potential.

“Having an ED&I Strategy really shows me that the management of DETE are committed to making a safe inclusive workplace for all staff members. There is a real need for the Civil Service to be a reflection of society and having this Strategy in place will help the Department to continue to grow as a diverse and inclusive workplace.”

Jamie Cosgrove, Retail and Locally Traded Enterprise Unit, and co-chair of the DETE Pride in Enterprise Network

“Reasonable Accommodation in the workplace gives me the opportunity to work on par with my peers. I find my work colleagues very helpful, and I think the WRC is a very inclusive place to work”.

Karen Kealy, Information and Customer Service Unit, WRC

“Embracing diversity can provide us with vantage points and insights to improve our service to a diverse society – we can better anticipate and serve the needs of that society if we include a representative array of viewpoints and experience within our own organisation. Recognising particular strengths and accommodating different needs in our recruitment and personnel policies not only embeds a supportive culture in the organisation, it also allows us to access a source of talent which otherwise would remain untapped”.

Bernie Byrne, Finance and Administration Unit, Labour Court

“I'd encourage anyone with a disability, if you feel comfortable doing so, to disclose it, as it opens you up to many more opportunities”.

Conor Cahill, Offshore Wind Strategy Unit

Vision

The Vision of this Strategy is to continue to foster a culture of inclusion, fairness and respect for all staff and customers of the Department.

We want to ensure that everyone feels welcomed in this Department, that staff are empowered to achieve to their full potential, and that access to services, opportunities, and career development is available on an equal footing to all.

To achieve this, we are focused developing a welcoming, supportive and inclusive workplace culture where diversity is understood, valued, and where colleagues are equipped with the skills and supports to realise their potential.

Goals

The actions in this Strategy are based on working towards four key goals:

- A positive culture of support and inclusion
- Staff who are skilled to work in diverse teams
- Equality of opportunity for all staff
- Equality in access to services for our customers

Our ED&I Journey so far

2018

The ‘Disability Consultative Committee’ is established to provide a focus for disability inclusion in the policy work, schemes and initiatives of the Department.

Balance for Better Business' initiative launched by then Taoiseach, Leo Varadkar T.D., to improve gender balance in senior leadership in Ireland. Balance for Better Business has been supported by DETE since 2021.

2019

Staff in the Department establish the first LGBTQIA+ 'Pride in Enterprise' network, and DETE marches in the Dublin 'Pride' march for the first time behind the Civil Service banner, accompanied by the Secretary General.

LCDU places new focus on ED&I learning and awareness, with short courses focused on a range of issues including autism awareness, mental health awareness, women’s health, transgender equality, and disability awareness.

2020

DETE takes an inclusive approach to managing the challenges of COVID-19, creating a staff-wide COVID-19 Departmental Working Group, bringing staff at all levels together to manage the organisational response to the crisis.

DETE renews its participation in the WAM (Willing Able Mentoring) programme, supporting graduates with disabilities. Since 2007, 11 graduates have completed placements in DETE through this programme.

2021

Building an inclusive and supportive workplace' set out as one of the core goals of the new DETE People Strategy.

DETE participates in the 'OWL' (Oireachtas Work and Learn) programme for the first time, supporting young adults with an intellectual disability into employment.

DETE launches ConnEcTEd Teams programme with the aim of identifying and promoting behaviours that support effective and inclusive blended working for teams.

2022

Engaged the Irish Centre for Diversity (ICfD) to fully assess our ED&I approach and plan our next steps.

Surveyed all staff on our ED&I environment with the help of the ICfD.

All DETE Management Board members undertook 'Inclusive Leadership' training.

Published the first report into DETE's Gender Pay Gap.

DETE's first official Blended Working policy published, providing new flexible working options for c.95% of staff.

2023

Developed and published DETE's first ED&I Statement in consultation with all staff.

DETE Blended Working Policy reviewed and retained.

In-depth research conducted to understand drivers behind our Gender Pay Gap and female career progression in DETE.

DETE renews a partnership with the Dublin North East Inner City (NEIC) TY work experience programme.

DETE is awarded 'Investors in Diversity' Silver accreditation from the Irish Centre for Diversity.

Two staff working groups brought together to start development of this ED&I Strategy. All members of the ED&I Working Group undertook 'Inclusive Leadership' training in support of developing this Strategy.

How we Developed this Strategy

Understanding where we can act

While many organisations will focus on recruitment in their ED&I Strategies, in the Civil Service the vast majority of our recruitment happens through the Public Appointments Service (PAS).

Therefore, our focus is on the working environment, developing the skills of our managers, staff retention and progression, and the experience of our customers.

Understanding Best Practices

The goals and actions in this Strategy are informed by best practice approaches and research undertaken by the OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development), the CIPD (Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development), and the Irish Centre for Diversity, among others.

The HR team also participates in an inter-Departmental ED&I network, with a view to understanding how other Civil Service Departments approach ED&I.

Staff Participation

In June 2023 the HR team set up a ‘Working Group’ for this Strategy (see Appendix), made up of staff members who will be responsible for delivering the Strategy’s actions: those leading on Corporate Service areas as well as managers who have significant frontline customer-facing teams.

At the same time, all staff were invited to join an ‘Advisory Group’ for the Strategy. Around 30 staff members signed up to take part.

Starting last September, the goals and actions in this Strategy were developed by these two groups, supported by the HR Strategy team.

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Insights from Irish Centre for Diversity consultation[1]

- ✓ Most staff in DETE understand that ED&I is everyone's responsibility
- ✓ Most staff feel valued and respected by their colleagues
- ✓ The Department has a broad suite of policies to support good ED&I practices
- ✓ The majority of staff have a high level of trust in their line manager

- Many staff are unaware of some of our key policies and procedures, including Bullying and Harassment
- Only a third of staff feel they can describe how the Department tries to eliminate discrimination
- Some staff feel they are treated differently compared to others because of factors including age, disability, gender, being a carer, race, and pregnancy/maternity

Snapshot of our Department[2]

Total staff number
1000

New Entrants
144

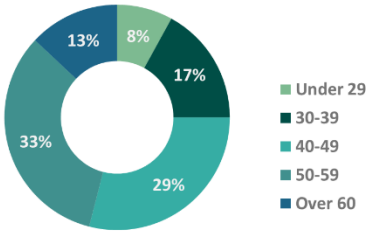
Exit rate
8.80%

Percentage of male/female staff in senior management

Percentage of staff eligible to apply for blended working
95%

Staff time in post

Age Profile



Percentage of staff with a disability
7%

[1] Consultation took place across 2022 through a survey carried out by the Irish Centre for Diversity
[2] Data taken from Q4 2023 HR Data Dashboard

How this Strategy will be Implemented

Key Principles

Making sure that all staff feel the benefit of this Strategy will involve everyone in the Department.

It is the Working Group's task to make sure that everyone sees their role in this Strategy and is given the opportunity and the tools they need to participate.

In delivering this Strategy, the Working Group will:

- **Consult** regularly with staff
- **Listen** with an open mind: all staff should feel there is an atmosphere where they can voice their opinion
- **Learn**: as well as providing training, we will continue to educate ourselves on ED&I issues to inform how we deliver this Strategy.

Organisation Culture and Values

'Organisation culture' is about the behaviour, attitudes, habits, emotions and values of staff. Culture is reflected in what people do and how they do it, and also in how people feel and how they think.

In 2024, our Organisation Culture Team will benchmark and assess the Department's culture and develop a new high-level Departmental Corporate Culture Strategy.

A strong culture helps create belonging and connection, and boosts motivation, which is crucial for productivity, talent development and retention.

The goals of the Organisational Culture team tie in with this Strategy; its work is approached through a lens of inclusivity and engagement, which are central to overall vision of this Strategy.

The Working Group will work closely with the Organisation Culture Team to stay co-ordinated on goals and will be active participants in the new Connected Steering Group.

Who will deliver the actions?

The business teams in our **Working Group** will deliver the actions in this Strategy and report each year on progress.

Our staff **Advisory Group** will act as a sounding board for more complex actions and will be asked to provide feedback and discuss progress from a staff perspective. Membership of this group is open to all, please contact EDI@enterprise.gov.ie if you would like to join.

The **HR Strategy Team** will co-ordinate the Strategy and these two groups, and also provide regular communication and updates to staff.

Measuring progress

In 2023, based on an assessment of our work to date, the Department was awarded 'Investors in Diversity' *Silver* (Starting Out) standard by the Irish Centre for Diversity (ICfD).

This award is based on a broad assessment of our policies, procedures, and practices, as well as an in-depth staff survey to gauge understanding and experiences of ED&I issues.

We plan to continue working with the ICfD to allow us to measure our progress from this benchmark.

The Working Group will also present an annual report on overall progress, using the measurement criteria outlined under each goal.

Goal 1: A Positive Culture of Support and Inclusion

Why is this important?

As a foundation, we as a Department have a legal duty to prevent discrimination, promote equality and protect the human rights of staff in our workplace. Beyond that, we understand that our staff are our greatest asset when it comes to delivering on our agenda.

Attracting and retaining a highly skilled workforce and supporting everyone to achieve to their full potential means creating a welcoming, inclusive environment that champions diversity and sees it as a positive characteristic.

What will it look like?

- ✓ A positive attitude to diversity across the Department
- ✓ The Department as a ‘safe space’ where staff are confident to discuss needs and accommodations with colleagues and managers
- ✓ Values of inclusion modelled from the top
- ✓ Staff with full awareness of ED&I policies and procedures
- ✓ Elimination of bullying and harassment

Action Plan

AS A STARTING POINT, WE WILL:

- Agree the role of Management Board and Heads of Offices in sponsoring the values in this Strategy
- Deliver regular communications on ED&I policies and procedures
- Introduce an ED&I module into the induction programme, to bring the Strategy and key policies to the attention of new staff
- Present and explain key policies to all staff through Divisional Days
- Use our new Exit Interview procedure to understand where any exits are related to our ED&I environment
- Launch a communications campaign to showcase diversity in DETE through personal stories
- Launch a programme of corporate events with broad inclusivity across different staff groups in the Department. Ensure these events are planned in line with the principles of accessibility and inclusion.

BY DECEMBER 2026 WE WILL:

- Put in place guidelines and supports for ‘Employee Resource Groups’ or staff-led ED&I-related networks
- Put ED&I volunteer ‘champions’ in place with clear role guidelines, acting as local points of contact for ED&I issues and communication
- Workshop mechanisms to informally resolve incidences of potential discrimination
- Support informal networking opportunities for staff to encourage connection, development, and informal mentoring relationships

Measuring progress

- Future Irish Centre for Diversity surveys showing increased awareness of policies and procedures, and positive sentiment towards ED&I in the Department
- Results of forthcoming Civil Service Engagement Survey

Goal 2: Staff who are Skilled to Work in Diverse Teams

Why is this important?

Inclusion is first and foremost a task for all staff. However, to develop high-performing teams, we know we need to support managers in particular with the tools and skills to bring out everyone's potential.

We recognise that managers are key influencers when it comes to the culture and values of our Department and need to have the awareness, understanding and skills to support all team members to be their full selves in the workplace.

What will it look like?

- ✓ Staff and those in management roles equipped to participate in and lead diverse teams
- ✓ Staff skilled in understanding diverse needs
- ✓ Staff and those in management roles confident to deal with conflict
- ✓ Training and learning opportunities regularly embedded in existing events

Action Plan

AS A STARTING POINT, WE WILL:

- Develop an ‘ED&I Skills Model’ for staff and for manager training, aligned with three levels of manager training: induction, ‘new’ managers, and ‘leadership’ level

BY DECEMBER 2026 WE WILL:

- Implement manager training in line with the ‘ED&I Skills Model’
- Explore the full range of new technologies and toolkits to help create a more inclusive and supportive workplace
- Move our focus away from ‘standalone’ or ‘one-off’ training, and concentrate on embedding ongoing ED&I training/awareness elements into existing staff learning/engagement initiatives such as Senior Management Forum, Divisional Days, induction training, interviewer training, etc.

Measuring progress

- Completion of training programmes
- Future surveys showing increased manager awareness and competency around policies and procedures, manager trust and respect, and increased awareness of training opportunities
- Track delivery of ‘embedded’ training/learning opportunities to ensure all Divisions of the Department are covered

Goal 3: Equality of Opportunity for all Staff

Why is this important?

We believe that with the right tools and supports, any staff member can be empowered to succeed to their full potential in our workplace.

This includes responsive, modern supports for staff with disabilities, fair and transparent promotion practices, and accessible training and development offerings.

Flexible working arrangements can also support the participation of staff who may have additional needs or caring responsibilities outside of the workplace, leading to a positive benefit for individuals as well as for the organisation.

What will it look like?

- ✓ Workplace supports and accommodations for those with disabilities and additional needs
- ✓ Continued provision of flexible working arrangements in line with business needs
- ✓ Maintenance of fair and transparent recruitment and promotion processes
- ✓ Lifecycle policy supports in the workplace
- ✓ Accessible training and development opportunities

Action Plan

AS A STARTING POINT, WE WILL:

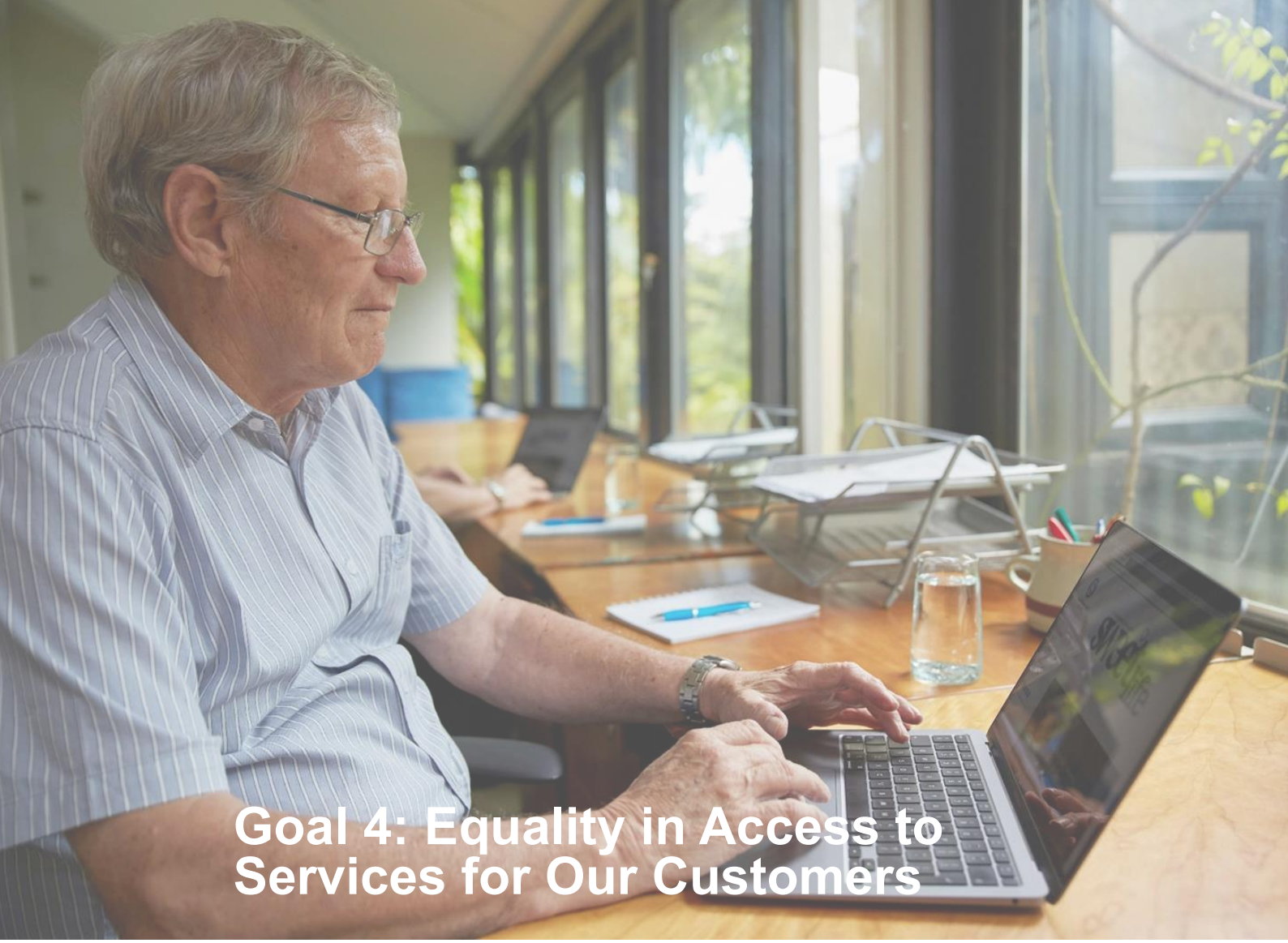
- Carry out a research project on ‘lifecycle’ career development in DETE and identify any issues or policy gaps
- Participate in pilot ‘Career Returners Programme’ for the Civil Service
- Take ED&I principles into account in reviews of our Blended Working Policy
- Participate regularly in external programmes to support equality of career opportunity for people with disabilities (e.g. WAM (Willing, Able Mentoring programme), OWL (Oireachtas Work and Learn programme).

BY DECEMBER 2026 WE WILL:

- Update and create ‘lifecycle’ support policies such as Menopause; Maternity, Paternity and Adoptive Leave, Retirement etc.
- Promote uptake of parental leave entitlements and work-life balance arrangements among male staff
- Develop the role of assistive technologies to support staff with disabilities or additional needs
- Develop options for flexible career opportunities at senior management grades
- Review the accessibility of our training programmes

Measuring progress

- Track closing of any policy ‘gaps’
- Biennial reviews of internal promotions to ensure fairness and identify any potential issues
- Review of participation in mentoring opportunities
- Track uptake of flexible working patterns at senior grades
- Track changes in Gender Pay Gap



Goal 4: Equality in Access to Services for Our Customers

Why is this important?

It is an essential principle to ensure there is a culture of respect for the human rights and equality of the people to whom we provide services.

Our Customer Charter and Customer Service Action Plan 2022-2024 is a public statement which sets out the standards and level of service you can expect when dealing with our Department. Our Customer Action Plan outlines our strategic goals and the organisational structures that we have put in place to achieve them.

The plan details how we will strive to ensure that our customers are provided with professional, efficient and courteous customer services, in line with the guiding principles of quality customer service that have been adopted across the Public Service. Under our Charter we are committed to ensuring that all customers are treated equally and in accordance with relevant legislation.

What will it look like?

- ✓ All customers treated with fairness and respect
- ✓ All customers able to access our services and information
- ✓ Frontline staff with an up to date understanding of relevant legislation, policies and procedures

Action Plan

AS A STARTING POINT, WE WILL:

- Work with frontline service teams to develop tailored training plans for staff
- Continue to regularly monitor our public offices to ensure that they comply with occupational and safety standards, and that there are suitable facilities in place for all customers
- Continue to ensure that all information provided by the Department is clear, timely, accurate and accessible to all our customers
- Become a ‘JAM Card friendly’ organisation in 2024
- Maintain our Customer Charter in line with the principles of ED&I and the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty

BY DECEMBER 2026 WE WILL:

- Implement tailored training plans for frontline staff
- Review and improve the accessibility of our public-facing information

Measuring progress

- Track frontline teams’ completion of training modules
- Track monitoring of accessibility of public-facing information and any changes made
- Monitor customer feedback provided via the Customer Service area of our website
- Feedback via Civil Service customer satisfaction surveys

Who is doing what?

For clarity, the list below shows which business teams are responsible for the actions outlined in this Strategy.

Leadership Team/Management Board/Heads of Offices

- Agree the role of Management Board and Heads of Offices in sponsoring the values of this Strategy

HR Strategy and Operations

- Deliver regular communications on ED&I policies and procedures
- Workshop mechanisms to informally resolve incidences of potential discrimination
- Put in place guidelines and supports for 'Employee Resource Groups' or staff-led ED&I-related networks
- Use our new Exit Interview procedure to understand where any exits are related to our ED&I environment
- Develop options for flexible career opportunities at senior management grades
- Update and create 'lifecycle' support policies such as Menopause; Maternity, Paternity and Adoptive Leave, etc.
- Take ED&I principles into account in reviews of our Blended Working Policy
- Review and analyse 'lifecycle' career development in DETE and identify any issues or policy gaps
- Promote uptake of parental leave entitlements and work-life balance arrangements among male staff
- Participate in pilot 'Career Returners Programme' for the Civil Service
- Participate regularly in external programme to support equity of career opportunity for people with disabilities (e.g. WAM, OWL)
- Deliver the JAM Card project
- Carry out and publish reviews of internal promotions to ensure fairness and identify any potential issues.

Learning and Development

- Together with frontline service teams, development and implement tailored training plans for staff

- Develop and implement an ‘ED&I Skills Model’ for manager training, aligned with three levels of manager training: induction, ‘new’ managers, and ‘leadership’ level
- Introduce an ED&I module into the induction programme, to bring the Strategy and key policies to the attention of new staff
- Move focus away from ‘standalone’ or ‘one-off’ training, and concentrate on embedding ongoing ED&I training/awareness elements into existing staff learning/engagement initiatives such as Senior Management Forum, Divisional Days, induction training, interviewer training, etc.
- Review the accessibility of our training programmes
- Support networking opportunities for staff to encourage connection, development and the establishment of informal mentoring relationships.

Organisational Culture

- Through our Connected Steering Group celebrate diversity in DETE through dedicated events each year
- Develop a Culture and Values Strategy for the Department
- Launch a programme of corporate events with broad inclusivity across different staff groups in the Department. Ensure these events are planned in line with the principles of accessibility and inclusion.

Frontline/Customer Service Team Managers

- Work with HR/Learning & Development on learning plans for teams based on needs/issues identified
- Support staff to follow through on training.

Communications and Customer Service

- Launch a communications campaign to showcase diversity in DETE through personal stories
- Maintain our Customer Charter in line with ED&I principles.
- Monitor customer feedback and share results of Civil Service customer satisfaction surveys

ICT

- Ensure accessibility of information communicated to the public via our websites.
- Work with HR/Learning and Development on provisions to ensure training delivery is accessible.

Appendix
Membership of ED&I Working Group

Harry Lester (Chair)	Head of Corporate Services
Tracey Murphy	Head of HR
Claudine Forrest	Head of Learning and Development
John O'Grady	Head of ICT
Patrick Ryan	Head of Network Infrastructure Management
Cian McHale	Disability Liaison Officer
Cathy Madden	Head of Communications
Bernie Byrne	Labour Court – Finance and Administration
Derval Monahan	WRC Corporate Strategy
John Maher	Head of Management and Business Support Unit
David Hennessy	Head Services Officer
Maureen O'Sullivan	Companies Registrar
James Kelly	Controller of Intellectual Property
Emily deGrae	Head of Employment Permits
Federica de Blasio	ESCED representative
Breda O'Brien	Head of Organisation Culture and Engagement team
Emily Odlum	Head of HR Strategy and Policies team
Aiste Vekrike	HR Strategy and Policies team