

**National Gallery of Ireland**  
**Implementing the Public Sector**  
**Equality and Human Rights Duty:**

**Assessment of Equality and Human**  
**Rights Issues and Evidence Book**

**August 2025**

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# 1. Introduction

The National Gallery of Ireland (the Gallery) has undertaken the assessment of equality and human rights issues set out in this document to fulfil its obligations under Section 42 of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014: the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty (the Duty).

The overarching Duty, set out in Section 42(1) requires public bodies to have regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, promote equality of opportunity and equal treatment, and protect human rights, for their employees, service users and policy beneficiaries, across all of their functions.

Section 42(2) of the Act, the strategic Duty, requires public bodies to undertake targeted actions, plans and programs, and includes specific statutory obligations that a public body must undertake in giving effect to the overarching Duty and the strategic Duty.

The first of these obligations is to undertake an assessment of the equality and human rights facing **the identified groups** for the Duty, which are relevant to the Gallery's functions and purpose.

The identified groups for the Duty are:

- Those groups protected under the nine grounds in equality legislation: gender (including gender expression, gender identity and sex characteristics), age, family status (including lone parents and those caring for a family member), civil status, disability (broadly defined to include all impairment groups), sexual orientation, race (encompassing ethnic origin, nationality, and skin colour), religion, and the Traveller community.
- The ground of socio-economic status, encompassing people at risk of or experiencing poverty and exclusion.
- Rights holders under the various human rights instruments relevant to the functions of the public body.

This is an assessment of the equality and human rights issues facing the identified groups under the Duty, which have relevance for the functions of our organisation. It is not an assessment of the performance of the National Gallery of Ireland in regard to its work and its response to equality and human rights concerns.

The core functions of the National Gallery of Ireland are:

- To care for, interpret, develop and showcase art, in a national gallery for everyone;

- Developing and caring for our living collection, and undertaking and facilitating research, for public benefit;
- Delivery of an education programme (across age groups); and
- Corporate governance functions, including recruitment and employment of staff.

The purpose of this assessment is to ensure an evidence-based approach to inform our ongoing work to implement the Duty. **Please refer to the National Gallery of Ireland Duty Implementation Plan for more detail on this process.**

The assessment of equality and human rights issues is set out in two parts:

- section 3. sets out the equality and human rights issues as assessed from the available evidence base, which assessment will be made publicly available, in accordance with Section 42(2) of the Act;
- section 4. provides the evidence base from which the equality and human rights issues are drawn. Section 3.

This assessment will be periodically updated by the Gallery, to ensure that the most up-to-date data and information is informing our ongoing work to address equality and human rights concerns across our function areas.

## 2. Assessment Frame

The Gallery takes a values-led approach to framing and benchmarking its work to implement the Duty. Four inter-connected values, rooted in and giving expression to our corporate values in particular that of ‘openness’, guide our commitment to equality and human rights and establish our ambition for implementing the Duty: **Dignity, Inclusivity, Accessibility, and Engagement**. The equality and human rights issues identified as relevant to our core functions, are organised around these four values.

These values are defined in the Gallery’s equality and human rights values statement, with the implications of each value established for what we seek to achieve (statement of priority) and for the way we work in pursuing our priorities (statement of process). Together, these statements benchmark our ambition for the Duty. **Please refer to the National Gallery of Ireland Duty Implementation Plan for the equality and human rights values statement.**

In conducting this assessment, the Gallery has ensured alignment with guidance issued by the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (2024) [Implementing the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty: Guidance for public bodies second edition](#).

### 3. Assessment of Equality and Human Rights Issues

The equality and human rights issues identified below relate to all of the groups covered by the Duty, unless otherwise indicated. This includes the nine grounds under equality legislation, the ground of socio-economic status, people at the intersections of these grounds, and rights holders under the human rights instruments relevant to the Gallery's functions.

In some instances, specific reference to one or more groups is included to provide further insight, where available data indicate a distinct experience in relation to the issue, or where a group experiences significant or persistent inequality, discrimination or human rights violations.

In addressing these issues, the Gallery acknowledges the need to respond to the forms of oppression experienced by the identified groups, including racism, classism, ableism, homophobia, transphobia, sectarianism, sexism and ageism.

#### Dignity

Dignity means respecting people's diversity and welcoming them into the organisation. It involves treating everyone fairly, avoiding bias and stereotypes, and building trust.

The equality and human rights issues to be addressed, relevant to the value of Dignity:

- **Employment-related discrimination** — both individual and institutional, direct and indirect — in recruitment processes and/or in the workplace

In particular, the data highlight:

- High levels of discrimination, in seeking employment among Travellers, other minority ethnic groups, disabled people and transgender people
- High levels of in-work discrimination affecting minority ethnic groups, women, disabled people and transgender people
- The hidden nature of indirect or institutional discrimination, where seemingly neutral policies or practices result in disadvantage or negative consequences for people from the identified groups, without reasonable justification

- **Discrimination in accessing and/or participating in public or private services** — both individual and institutional, direct and indirect

In particular, the data highlight:

- Higher rates of service access-related discrimination for Travellers, other minority ethnic groups, disabled people and young people (aged 18–25)

- The hidden nature of indirect or institutional discrimination, where seemingly neutral policies or practices results in disadvantage or negative consequences for people from the identified groups without reasonable justification
- **Identity-based harassment and sexual harassment** in the workplace and/or in accessing goods and services, creating unwelcoming, intimidating, hostile, degrading or offensive environments for the identified groups  
In particular, the data highlight:
  - High levels of sexual harassment experienced by women in the workplace; and
  - High levels of identity-based harassment against Travellers, which diminishes their employment opportunities and professional development.
- **Stereotypes and biases** — rooted in historical discrimination and based on fixed, false and generalised assumptions about the identified groups. These lead to misrepresentation, diminished potential and restricted participation  
In particular, the data highlight:
  - Gender stereotyping of women in caregiving roles; employer assumptions about the availability or commitment of women of childbearing age or with children; and bias in performance evaluation and career progression for women, all of which negatively impact employment outcomes
  - Stereotyping of disabled people and older people regarding their capabilities in employment and service provision
  - Oppressive notions of superior and inferior cultures, resulting in negative treatment for minority ethnic groups
- **Xenophobic, anti-immigrant, transphobic and homophobic rhetoric, abuse and harassment**, and high levels of hate crimes and hate speech against Travellers, other minority ethnic groups, and LGBTQ+ people in public spaces and on social media
- **Lack of knowledge, understanding and/or capacity** among employers and service providers to effectively prevent and address issues of discrimination, identity-based harassment and sexual harassment affecting employees and service users
- **Significant under-reporting** of discrimination, both direct and indirect, in employment and/or service provision by the identified groups

## Engagement

Engagement means having a voice, being heard, and knowing that your perspective matters. It involves listening to and meaningfully considering the needs, aspirations, and expectations of a diverse range of people.

The equality and human rights issues to be addressed, relevant to the value of Engagement, are:

- **Lack of spaces and opportunities** for the diverse voices, of identified groups, to be effectively articulated. In particular, the data highlight:
  - Failure by service providers and employers to ensure that the perspective and lived experience of people experiencing inequality, discrimination and social exclusion inform priorities and approaches in employment and service provision
  - Underrepresentation of people from the identified groups in decision-making positions and in the structures that shape those decisions
- **Barriers to articulating individual perspectives and preferences** among members of the identified groups. In particular, the data highlight:
  - Perceptions of organisations as alien, elitist and not being open to diversity or to change
  - Low confidence in making choices and accessing available options, and exercising rights due to, the impact of discrimination, social exclusion, internalised oppression and stigma
  - Problematic use of a ‘medical model’ lens to disability (rather than a social model), which disempowers disabled people and fails to recognise them as experts on their own situations and needs
  - Inability to articulate issues and needs due to pressure to hide one’s identity, in particular for, Travellers, LGBTQ+ people and people with hidden disabilities
- **Failure to capture the perspectives and preferences** of the identified groups in general consultations. In particular, the data highlight:
  - Failure to track the voice and establish the specific perspectives of the identified groups in general consultation processes
- **Barriers experienced by the identified groups to posing a challenge or bring forward a complaint to an organisation.** In particular the data highlight:
  - Perceptions of an organisation as hostile and not open to taking on a challenge or responding positively to a complaint
  - Lack of channels and procedures to receive and address complaints and challenges, or where these exist, failure to communicate how to access and use them

- **Lack of information available to the identified groups to enable engagement.** In particular, the data highlight:
  - Lack of information and understanding of the avenues available to engage and have a say
  - Barriers to accessing information and making informed choices — especially for individuals with literacy challenges, those facing digital inequality, and people whose first language is not English

## Accessibility

Accessibility means valuing, and responding to the specific needs that arise from diversity. It involves removing physical, digital, organisational, communication, and emotional barriers that may be experienced by different groups.

The equality and human rights issues to be addressed, relevant to the value of Accessibility, are:

- **Lack of systems and failure to make adaptations for diversity**, resulting in unmet specific needs and limited access to services and employment. In particular, the data highlight:
  - A lack of flexibility and adaptability in the design and delivery of services, programmes, and supports
  - A lack of flexibility and adaptability in job design, and in the manner in which work is managed and the workplace organised
  - Failure to provide additional supports required to enable access and participation
  - Workplace dress codes that prevent people from expressing their true selves, particularly Roma women and Muslim women
- **Lack of universal design** leading to access barriers, in public spaces, workplaces, and service environments
- **Inaccessible communication** that does not reach or engage the identified groups due to unsuitable formats, channels, content, or language used. In particular, the data highlight:
  - Lack of consideration for language diversity, including Irish Sign Language<sup>2</sup> and social/regional accents and dialects
  - Overlooking literacy barriers

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<sup>2</sup> Failure to comply with the Irish Sign Language Act 2017.

- Inaccessible IT systems and digital platforms<sup>3</sup>
- Inaccessible communication materials, including failure to use alt text
- Imagery that does not reflect or connect with diverse communities
- **Insufficient understanding of intersectionality** leading to experiences of multiple and compounding discrimination and inequality among identified groups
- **Digital inequality**, including digital constraints and digital exclusion, across the identified groups. In particular, the data highlight:
  - Digital constraints due to limited skills or digital literacy, especially among older people
  - Digital exclusion caused by lack of access to devices and/or broadband, affecting people living in poverty, direct provision accommodation, overcrowded housing (including Travellers) and disabled people.
- **Invisibility of diversity and representation in the cultural sector.** In particular, the data highlight:
  - Lack of understanding, recognition and visibility of minority cultures
  - Experiences of being subjected to dominant cultural norms
  - Cultural policies and programmes failing to address disadvantage and inequality
  - Underrepresentation of the identified groups, and lack of relevance of cultural institutions to these groups
- **Invisibility of diversity and lack of evident welcome and support** for diverse identities in the workplace and in service settings
- **Lack of equality data** on employment and service provision, hindering efforts to measure diversity and monitor outcomes for specific groups
- **Limited capacity and knowledge among employers and service providers** to identify, understand and respond to the practical implications of diversity
- **Isolation and social exclusion** experience by the identified groups, negatively affecting access and participation in employment and services. In particular, the data highlight:
  - Travellers, LGBTQ+ individuals and people with hidden disabilities feeling compelled to hide their identity in the workplace, due to fear of negative treatment
  - Migrants, particularly those whose first language is not English, undocumented migrants, and people seeking international protection and living in direct provision
  - Barriers to social inclusion for older people, particularly those living alone or in rural areas, disabled people and people living in poverty

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<sup>3</sup> Failure to comply with the EU Website Accessibility Directive (EU 2016/2102) and the EU (Accessibility of Websites and Mobile Applications of Public Sector Bodies) Regulation 2020 (S.I. No. 358/2020).

## Inclusivity

Inclusivity means delivering positive outcomes for a diverse range of people through our functions. It means being relevant to, representative of, and a resource for, the diversity of our audiences and colleagues.

The equality and human rights issues to be addressed, relevant to the value of Inclusivity, are:

- **Unemployment and under-employment across the identified groups.** In particular, the data highlight:
  - Low levels of labour market participation among young people, people with disabilities, Travellers and other minority ethnic groups, Trans people, Intersex people and lone parents
  - Lack of employment and training-related networks and connections for Travellers, to support access to employment
  - Barriers to employment for migrants with insecure immigration status
  - Underemployment of women due to caring responsibilities and being unable to take up full-time employment
  - Lack of, and barriers to accessing, placements and internships for young people and other identified groups
- **Lack of access to promotion and career opportunities** across the identified groups. In particular, the data highlight:
  - Higher rates of promotion-related discrimination in the workplace for women, older people, and people with disabilities
  - Inadequate or hostile responses to staff transitioning to their true gender at work
  - Impact of caring responsibilities on women's access to promotion and other career opportunities
- **Lack of access to and participation in cultural life as consumers,** across the identified groups. In particular, the data highlight:
  - Lack of participation of older people
  - Gendered participation patterns among children, and differences between Irish and migrant children
  - Discouragement from participation due to lack of outreach, expectations of inaccessibility and discrimination, and lack of recognition and visibility for minority cultures
  - Perceptions of cultural institutions as elitist and non-inclusive among people with disadvantaged socio-economic status

- Specific barriers for migrants, particularly those whose first language is not English, undocumented migrants, and people seeking international protection and living in direct provision
- Lack of adequate and appropriate mediation to support engagement and understanding for groups experiencing inequality and disadvantage;
- Financial cost as a barrier
- Adults from lower income groups, and their children, being less likely to engage in structured cultural activities, such as attending an art gallery
- **Lack of access to and participation in cultural life as producers**, across the identified groups. In particular the data highlight:
  - Lack of presence for the identified groups as cultural producers
  - Lack of support to bring their work into public spaces
  - Lack of understanding and appreciation of diverse norms and forms of expression in organisational engagement with cultural producers
- **Lack of access to and engagement with the living collection of cultural institutions** including issues related to historical discrimination, affecting the identified groups
- **Lack of research and knowledge development** concerning the representation of identified groups and their participation as consumers and producers in cultural life
- **Lack of understanding and/or valuing of cultural and ethnic diversity, including by cultural institutions**. In particular, the data highlight:
  - Depictions of Travellers in art that rely on settled people's representations and stereotypes about the Traveller community
  - Arts organisations and venues being less likely to 'take risks' on Black artists compared to White Irish peers, who are commonly seen as unlikely attract audiences and/or to be 'understood by White Irish audiences'
- **Poverty across the identified groups**. In particular, the data highlight:
  - Low income levels due to unemployment and concentration in part-time or precarious employment
  - Dependence of social protection supports
  - Gender and ethnic pay and pension gaps
  - The intersection of socio-economic disadvantage with identity-based inequality and discrimination – especially for lone parents, Travellers, minority ethnic groups, disabled people, older people, young people who are not in education, training or employment and transgender people
- **Inadequate response to caring responsibilities**, to allow women and men, and lone-parents, to participate equally in employment and in accessing services. In particular, the data highlight:

- The unequal sharing of caring responsibilities between women and men
- The lack of affordable and accessible childcare provision
- The absence of adequate flexible/work-life balance employment options
- The lack of provision for children and childcare in service-provision settings

## 4. Evidence Base for the Assessment

The evidence-base from which the assessment of issues is drawn, is set out in this section. This evidence base will be used in tandem with the assessment of issues, as part of our work in the Gallery to implement the Duty.

The equality and human rights issues identified in our assessment, are drawn from up-to-date Irish and international research and data on the key equality and human rights issues facing the groups identified for the Duty. The Gallery has used the following data sources to inform this assessment:

- Research conducted by national institutions, and national organisations advocating on behalf of the identified groups.
- National policy strategies targeting specific identified groups.
- Central Statistics Office data.
- Submissions by the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission, to the international UN human rights monitoring framework.
- EU-level research which includes Irish data.

The evidence base for the assessment is set out according to the ten grounds identified for the Duty, specifically, identifying data and information on the situation, experience, and identity of the identified groups for the Duty across these ten grounds, where:

- **Situation:** refers to disadvantage in the level and quality of resources the identified groups can access. Such resources include: access to employment and good working conditions and to public services and goods.
- **Experience:** refers to the quality of the group's engagement with wider society (in particular, as employees and service users) and negative experiences/treatment in that regard, including: discrimination, identity-based harassment, stereotyping, racism, sexism, ageism, homophobia, and transphobia.
- **Identity:** refers to diversity and, specifically, whereby any lack of recognition for, or failure to accommodate this diversity will result in failure to address people's needs that arise from this diversity.

## Gender (including transgender people and those transitioning to their true gender)

### Situation

- CSO data finds the following in regard to the situation of men and women in Ireland<sup>4</sup>:

Employment and decision-making:

- There were large variations in employment rates between women with and without children. The presence of children had a much smaller effect on the employment participation rate for men, than for women.
- Men are more likely than women to hold the senior positions in organisations.
- Men significantly outnumbered women in all national and regional decision-making structures in Ireland in 2018/2019.

Income

- Women in Ireland have a higher risk of poverty (16.5%) than men (14.7%) after considering social transfers and pensions.
  - Men are slightly more likely to have pension than women. In 2019 60.7% of men and 58.7% of women had a pension.
  - Males had higher earned incomes than females across all levels of education attained.
- The gender pay gap is approximately 14%.<sup>5</sup> The gender pension gap is currently 38%, a number of contributory factors are: women being overrepresented in precarious and part-time work and women are less likely to have occupational or private pensions than men or, if they have them, generally at lower rates.<sup>6</sup>
  - Gendered allocation of unpaid work (caring, housework and other work in the home) is a key component to gender inequality for women, in employment, pay and poverty and lifetime income.<sup>7</sup>
  - Children's participation in arts and culture is highly gendered, with girls much more likely to participate than boys from as young as three years of age.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> CSO [Women and Men in Ireland](#) 2019.

<sup>5</sup> Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (December 2021) [Ireland and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights: Submission to the UN Committee](#) on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights for the List of Issues on Ireland's Fourth Periodic Report.

<sup>6</sup> IHREC (2017). [Submission to the Citizens Assembly on: How we respond to the challenges and opportunities of an ageing population](#)

<sup>7</sup> Russell, H., Grotti, R., McGinnity, F., and Privalko, I. (July 2019) [Caring and Unpaid Work in Ireland](#), ESRI.

<sup>8</sup> Smyth, E., (2016) [Arts and Cultural Participation among Children and Young People: findings from the Growing up in Ireland Study](#). The Arts Council and the ESRI.

## Experience

- Women are almost twice as likely as men to say they felt they were discriminated against in the workplace (7% vs 4%) and discrimination in the workplace may lead to lower pay and promotions, lower job satisfaction and a higher risk of redundancy.<sup>9</sup>
- CSO data from 2019 indicates that while similar numbers of males and females experienced discrimination while *looking for work*, women are twice as likely as men to report that they had experienced in-work discrimination in the previous two years (7.3% vs 4.6%). For women who experienced in-work discrimination, the types of discrimination/relevant issues were (in order of prominence): harassment or bullying (34.3%), work conditions (19.4%) and promotion (17.2%). For men who experienced in-work discrimination, the types of discrimination experienced were (in order of prominence): harassment or bullying (30.4%); *promotion* (21.6%)<sup>10</sup>.
- Women who hold more than one marginalised identity (for example, a disabled woman, a Traveller woman) often experience intersecting and compounding forms of discrimination and/or inequality and disadvantage, for example, Irish research found that non-Irish national female workers experience “a double earnings penalty” on the basis of their gender and their ethnicity, earning an average of 11% less than non-Irish national males and 30% less than Irish-born males.<sup>11</sup>
- An Irish survey<sup>12</sup> on sexual harassment<sup>13</sup> in the workplace found: high incidence of sexual harassment in the workplace, with the perpetrator most likely to be a male colleague or manager (7 out of 10 (72%) of the survey responses were from women). The key findings were:  
Level and type of sexual harassment experienced:
  - 54% experienced unwelcome jokes of a sexual nature.
  - 41% experienced unwelcome verbal sexual advances, and 23% received unwanted messages with sexual content, and 17% exposed to pornographic material at work.
  - 37% experienced unwanted touching, 37% received unwelcome comments about their body or clothes, and 34% were asked unwelcome questions about their sex
  - 2% reported serious sexual assault or rape.

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<sup>9</sup> McGinnity, F., Grotti, R., Kenny, O., and Russell, H. (2017) [Who Experiences Discrimination in Ireland: Evidence from the QNHS Equality Modules](#). ESRI and IHREC.

<sup>10</sup> Central Statistics Office: [Equality and Discrimination](#). CSO release July 2019

<sup>11</sup> Laurence, J., Kelly, E., McGinnity, F., & Curristan, S. (2023). Wages and working conditions of non-Irish nationals in Ireland. Economic and Social Research Institute.

<sup>12</sup> Irish Congress of Trade Unions (November 2019) Survey with 1,300 union members on their experience of sexual harassment and sexual assault in the workplace. 72% of the survey respondents were women.

<sup>13</sup> The Employment Equality Acts place a legal onus on employers to prevent sexual harassment in the workplace and to deal effectively with incidents of sexual harassment.

### **Perpetrator and location:**

- 81% of harassers were men; 54% of harassers were colleagues- 31% involved managers; 55% of incidents occurred at work; 20% of incidents happened at work-related social events; 14% occurred via phone, email, or social media.

### **Impact of sexual harassment in the workplace on victims:**

- 41% avoided certain work situations as a result of the harassment; 30% felt less confident at work; 18% felt it had a negative impact on their performance at work; 26% reported that the harassment had a negative impact on their mental health; 10% reported that there was a negative impact on their physical health; 16% wanted to leave their job as a result but unable due to financial or other factors; and 6% said the harassment had caused them to change their role within the company or leave their job with that employer.

### **Reporting of sexual harassment incidents to employer:**

- 81% of those who had experienced sexual harassment did not report it to their employer. Of those who did report the incident(s) only one in four felt it was taken seriously and dealt with satisfactorily.
- Employees with a disability and minority ethnic employees may face additional barriers in reporting workplace harassment and in getting the supports they need.
- Reasons victims did not report incidents were as follows: would have a negative impact on their working relationship and/or career (32%); would not be believed or taken seriously (28%); 12% feared that they would be blamed; 26% did not believe person responsible would be punished; 26% were too embarrassed to report the incident; 10% did not report as the perpetrator was part of the reporting process; and 5% were unaware that they could report or knew how to report the harassment.
- Other barriers to reporting and reasons for underreporting identified were:
  - insufficient or inaction** by trade unions and employers; **lack of awareness**- employees may not be fully aware of what constitutes sexual harassment or how to report it; **inadequate policies**- some workplaces may lack comprehensive policies or procedures for dealing with harassment; **cultural norms**- workplace cultures that tolerate or trivialise harassment; **lack of training**- managers and staff are not often adequately trained to deal with sexual harassment when it occurs; and **support systems**- inadequate support for victims, such as counselling or legal assistance.

- Domestic violence can have a significantly negative impact on women’s participation, in employment. A UK employment-focused study<sup>14</sup> found the following:
  - 1 in 5 victims of domestic violence had to take time off work because of the impact of the abuse, and 80% reported that the impact of domestic abuse had affected their work performance.
  - Over 40% said their abusive partner has deliberately tried to prevent them from going to work for reasons such as physical injury or restraint (71.9%), threats (67.8%), car keys or money for public transport being hidden or stolen by their abuser (26.5%), refusal or failure to look after children (27.7%).
  - 13% of those who experienced domestic violence reported that the violence continued in the workplace, primarily through: harassing or abusive emails or phone calls; partner turning up at the workplace or stalking them outside the workplace. In addition, the safety of other employees affected, caused conflict and tension with a quarter reporting that their co-workers were harmed or threatened.
  - Fewer than 1 in 3 victims disclosed their situation with anyone at work: the main reasons cited were “shame” and “privacy”: 2% lost their jobs as a direct result of the abuse, often in cases where a manager was unaware or unsympathetic.
- An EU-wide survey<sup>15</sup> on issues facing transgender and non-binary people found the following in regard to **Irish respondents**:
  - 50% had experienced discrimination when seeking employment and 20% had experienced discrimination in the workplace, in the previous twelve months,
  - 18–23% said they had experiencing discrimination in accessing public goods/services in the previous 12 months;
  - 13% had experienced hate-motivated violence, and 31% had experienced hate-motivated harassment, in the previous 12 months, and
  - 63% felt that discrimination on the basis of gender identity is widespread in Ireland.
- A national study on the mental health and wellbeing of LGBTI people, found the following in regard to **transgender** respondents<sup>16</sup>:
  - 9.4% of transgender participants reported leaving employment due to negative treatment about their gender identity, from colleagues.

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<sup>14</sup> TUC (2014). [Domestic Violence and the Workplace](#): a TUC Survey Report.

<sup>15</sup> FRA (2014). [Being Trans in the European Union Comparative analysis of EU LGBT survey data](#). European Agency for Fundamental Rights.

<sup>16</sup> GLEN, BeLonGTo. (2016). The [LGBTIreland Report: national study of the mental health and wellbeing of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex people in Ireland](#), GLEN, BeLonGTo, TCD and the HSE, 2016.

- Negative experiences and bullying related to their gender identity, was higher for transgender and intersex people (than for lesbian, gay and bisexual respondents): 24% and 36% respectively.

## Identity

- Issues of intersectionality which can give rise to experiences of multiple and compounding discrimination and inequality, are evident for women with diverse identities involving more than one protected characteristic, including for: Traveller women; migrant women; Black, Asian and other minority ethnic women; disabled women; lesbian women; transgender women; older and young women; and women parenting alone.
- In one Irish study, transgender people said they would feel unsafe or very unsafe to express their gender identity publicly.<sup>17</sup>
- Since 2015, people over 18 have a legal right to self-declare their own gender identity.

## Family Status

### Situation

- Lone parents are more than twice as likely to be at risk of poverty compared to two-parent households: 23% vs 9.1%; and 56% of homeless families are one-parent families.<sup>18</sup>
- CSO data for 2024 indicates that 15.7% of people in Ireland are living people living in enforced deprivation.<sup>19</sup> The group most likely to experience enforced deprivation in 2024 is lone parent households (with children under 18) (46.3%).<sup>20</sup>
- 61% of unpaid carers in Ireland are women, with 30.5% providing 29 hours or more of unpaid help each week in 2016; the presence of children (in the family) has a much smaller effect on the employment rate for men compared to women; and nearly all (94%) of those who were looking after home or family were women.<sup>21</sup>
- Data<sup>22</sup> on unpaid 'caring' (defined as childcare, care of older adults or those with a disability, and housework) found that:

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<sup>17</sup> GLEN and BeLonGTo (2016). LGBTI Ireland report- national study of the mental health and wellbeing of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex people in Ireland.

<sup>18</sup> One Family. [Facts and Figures: Lone Parents in Ireland](#).

<sup>19</sup> See here for definition of 'enforced deprivation'

[https://www.cso.ie/en/media/csoie/releasespublications/documents/ep/silcenforceddeprivation/2023/factsheets/0168401\\_SILC\\_Factsheet\\_update\\_v2.pdf](https://www.cso.ie/en/media/csoie/releasespublications/documents/ep/silcenforceddeprivation/2023/factsheets/0168401_SILC_Factsheet_update_v2.pdf)

<sup>20</sup> CSO 2024. [Survey on Income and Living Conditions](#) (SILC) 2024.

<sup>21</sup> CSO [Women and Men in Ireland](#) 2019.

<sup>22</sup> Russell, H., Grotti, R., McGinnity, F., and Privalko, I. (2019). [Caring and Unpaid Work in Ireland](#). The Economic and Social Research Institute and the Irish Human rights and Equality Commission.

- 55% of those regularly providing care are in employment: 45% in the case of women and 72% in the case of men.
  - The gendered allocation of unpaid work (caring, housework and other work in the home) is a key component to gender inequality for women, in employment, pay, poverty and lifetime income. Caring responsibilities are a key component of gender inequality in the labour market, in terms of access to employment, hours of work, promotion prospects, wages and working conditions.
  - Supports for caring are comparatively low; combining paid work and caring remains challenging; and policies to encourage men to take on caring responsibilities are underdeveloped.
  - Employer policies are crucial in allowing individuals to combine work and care; previous research has shown that men's access to flexible working arrangements is low.
- A 2019 report on the employment and living conditions of one parent families in Ireland found the following<sup>23</sup>:
    - The rate of in-work poverty (being in employment yet at risk of poverty) is almost 5 times higher among one parent households compared to other households with children.
    - Lone parents are much more likely to be employed on temporary contracts and in precarious employment, than adults in two-parent families: while 60.7% of lone parents are employed, they are more likely to be employed on a temporary contract; and 54% of Working Family Payment (WFP) recipients are lone parents, indicating financial struggles, despite being in employment.<sup>24</sup>
    - Availability and affordability of childcare in Ireland (compared to other EU countries) is continually cited as the main barrier to employment for lone parents who want to take up or increase their working hours.

## Experience

- Gender stereotypes in regard to women's caring role, contribute to gender inequality, with women assuming the greater responsibility for caring for children and other family members.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> St. Vincent De Paul (2019) [Working, Parenting, and Struggling](#) :an analysis of the employment and living conditions of one parent families in Ireland.

<sup>24</sup> One Family. [Facts and Figures: Lone Parents in Ireland.](#)

<sup>25</sup> IHREC (2017) [Submission to the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women on Ireland's combined sixth and seventh periodic reports.](#)

- Women experience pregnancy-related workplace discrimination with job offers rescinded, reduced hours, negative impact on performance rating, and lack of promotion.<sup>26</sup>
- More than 12% of lone parents report discrimination while searching for work compared to (6.3%) of those who are single with no children and (3.9%) who are cohabiting with children. Never married lone parents more likely to experience discrimination in public and private services than than single childless adults.<sup>27</sup>
- Lone parents may experience bias from employers, including assumptions about their availability and reliability. Many employers fail to provide flexible work arrangements, making it difficult for lone parents to balance work and childcare.<sup>28</sup>

## Identity

- Over 86% of lone parent households are headed by a female.<sup>29</sup>
- 16.5% of women in receipt of the one-parent family payment are under 25 years old and 50% are aged 25 to 34.<sup>30</sup>
- Accessible, affordable and high-quality childcare is central to enable those with children, in particular lone parents, to achieve their full potential and for the wellbeing of families.

## Age

### Situation

#### Young people:

- Figures for 2019 show that unemployment rates are higher for young people (20-24 years) than for those above this age, and higher for males in this age group, than for females: 14.5% of males aged 20-24 were unemployed vs 8% of females aged 20-24.<sup>31</sup>
- 7.5% of 0-17 year-olds in Ireland live in consistent poverty, 15% are at risk of poverty, and 20% experience material deprivation.<sup>32</sup>
- Digital exclusion: Young people living in poverty can experience exclusion where they cannot afford digital devices/ broadband access.<sup>33</sup> Young people who are classified as

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<sup>26</sup> IHREC (2017) [Submission to the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women on Ireland's combined sixth and seventh periodic reports](#)

<sup>27</sup> McGinnity, F., Grotti, R., Kenny, O., and Russell, H. (2017) [Who Experiences Discrimination in Ireland: Evidence from the QNHS Equality Modules](#). ESRI and IHREC.

<sup>28</sup> One Family. [Facts and Figures: Lone Parents in Ireland](#).

<sup>29</sup> Census 2016

<sup>30</sup> CSO [Women and Men in Ireland](#) 2019.

<sup>31</sup> CSO [Women and Men in Ireland](#) 2019.

<sup>32</sup> Central Statistics Office: [Survey on Income and Living Conditions](#) (SILC). 2022.

<sup>33</sup> Paul Partnership 2021 [Exploring the meaning and experience of digital exclusion among at-risk groups in Limerick](#)

neither in employment or education and training (NEET) are far less likely to own digital devices.

- Children's early exposure to art and culture activities is important in ensuring their later participation in the arts: children's participation in arts and culture needs to be part of a quality preschool experience, to ensure broad exposure across all social groups, and to challenge gender stereotyping from an early age.<sup>34</sup>
- COVID-19 had a negative impact on children and young people's participation: 69% of youth work services noted a decline in young people's participation in youth services and programmes during this period.<sup>35</sup>
- Reductions to welfare payments to young unemployed persons under 25 years of age (by the previous government) have not been restored, which, in the context of increases in the cost of living, is creating additional financial barriers and concerns for young people.<sup>36</sup>

### **Older people:**

- 2022 CSO data indicates that 19% of people aged 65+ in Ireland is at risk of poverty (up significantly from 11.9% in 2021).<sup>37</sup>
- Older people often face income inadequacy, with many relying solely on the state pension. Women, in particular, face significant income inequality due to lower lifetime earnings and lower pension contributions.<sup>38</sup>
- Older women (60-64) have a much lower employment participation rate than older men: 47.5% vs 63%. For persons aged 65 and over, the female participation rate was just 6.7% compared to a male rate of 16.4%.<sup>39</sup>
- In 2014 the age at which the State pensions are, in practice, paid was increased from 65 to 66, and will increase to 67 in 2021 and 68 in 2028. The law does not adequately protect workers from compulsory retirement at an age before they are entitled to receive a State pension<sup>40</sup>.
- A survey on lifelong learning participation,<sup>41</sup> found the following in regard to participation for older people:

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<sup>34</sup> Smyth, E., (2016) [Arts and Cultural Participation among Children and Young People: findings from the Growing up in Ireland Study](#). The Arts Council and the ESRI.

<sup>35</sup> National Youth Council of Ireland (2023). Pre-Budget Submission.

<sup>36</sup> National Youth Council of Ireland (2023). Pre-Budget Submission.

<sup>37</sup> Central Statistics Office: [Survey on Income and Living Conditions](#) (SILC). 2022.

<sup>38</sup> Age Action Ireland (2022): [Reframing Ageing: the State of Ageing in Ireland 2022](#).

<sup>39</sup> CSO [Women and Men in Ireland](#) 2019.

<sup>40</sup> IHREC (2017). [Submission to the Citizens Assembly on: How we respond to the challenges and opportunities of an ageing population](#).

<sup>41</sup> Aontas (2023) [Lifelong Learning Participation in Ireland](#): a focus on marginalised and vulnerable groups.

- As age increases, people’s participation rate in lifelong learning decreases.
- 25% cited that they “feel too old” to participate in learning.
- Having reduced access to digital skills, devices, and digital literacy places older adults at a significant disadvantage when it comes to course access, retention, and completion.
- Access to information (in particular online) and to accessible public transport are barriers to older people’s access to goods and services.<sup>42</sup>
- Digital exclusion: A significant proportion of older people are digitally excluded, with one in four aged 60-74 and over half aged 75 or older not using the internet. 41% of ‘older households’ do not have internet access. Many have below-basic digital skills, limiting their access to services and information that are increasingly moving online. Older people therefore, are particularly vulnerable to digital exclusion which can exacerbate their social isolation and impact on their ability to access services.<sup>43</sup>
- 2016 data indicate that 61% of people aged 55-65 had low literacy and 63% had low numeracy.<sup>44</sup>
- The COVID pandemic reduced social contact, in particular for younger and older people: this is not fully recovered post-COVID.<sup>45</sup>
- Research indicates a sudden decline in cultural participation from the age of 60: motivational, time and geographical barriers being the most frequent barriers preventing people from participating.<sup>46</sup>

## Experience

### Young people:

- The 18-25 age group is more likely to report discrimination in accessing services (particularly shops/pubs/restaurants) than those aged 65+.<sup>47</sup>
- CSO data from 2019<sup>48</sup> indicates the following:

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<sup>42</sup> IHREC (2017). [Submission to the Citizens Assembly on: How we respond to the challenges and opportunities of an ageing population.](#)

<sup>43</sup> Paul Partnership 2021 [Exploring the meaning and experience of digital exclusion among at-risk groups in Limerick](#)

<sup>44</sup> Age Action Ireland (2022): [Reframing Ageing: the State of Ageing in Ireland 2022.](#)

<sup>45</sup> Roantree, S. et al (September 2024) [Poverty, Income Inequality and Living Standards in Ireland, Fourth Annual Report.](#) ESRI.

<sup>46</sup> [Report on Policies and Good Practices in the Public Arts](#) and in Cultural Institutions to promote better access to and wider participation in culture.2012.

<sup>47</sup> McGinnity, F., Grotti, R., Kenny, O., and Russell, H. ( 2017) [Who Experiences Discrimination in Ireland: Evidence from the QNHS Equality Modules.](#) ESRI and IHREC.

<sup>48</sup> Central Statistics Office: [Equality and Discrimination.](#) CSO release July 2019

- 4% of people aged 18-24 reported that they had experienced age-related discrimination in the workplace, in the previous two years, and 4.9% had experienced such discrimination while looking for work.
- Self-assessments of wellbeing, among Irish young people, found the following<sup>49</sup>:
  - 50% of 18-29 year-olds reported a 'low' level of mental wellbeing,
  - 57% of women aged 18-29 reported a 'low' level of mental wellbeing, and
  - 62% of 18-29 year-olds with a disability reported a 'low' level of mental wellbeing.

### **Older people:**

- 12% of older workers (45-64 years) report that they have experienced discrimination while looking for work and they are much more likely to indicate such discrimination than younger workers (5%).<sup>50</sup>
- Women tend to live longer than men, and, therefore, older women than men live alone. Living alone can lead to social exclusion and isolation, particularly for women living in rural areas<sup>51</sup>.
- Ageism is a pernicious barrier to older people's full participation in society and in regard to how older people are viewed by other age groups. Ageist media representations of older people as frail, dependent, and lacking agency, perpetuate ageist attitudes.<sup>52</sup>

### **Identity**

- The diversity of young people and older people needs to be considered in terms of the specific needs that arise from this diversity, including for: those with a minority ethnic identity; those with a disability; and LGBT young people and older people.

### **Young people**

- Children and young people experience a number of key developmental transitions in their journey from childhood to adulthood which give rise to diverse needs and requirements.

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<sup>49</sup> National Youth Council of Ireland (2024). [State of our Nation: A report into the lives of Irish 18-29 year-olds](#).

<sup>50</sup> McGinnity, F., Grotti, R., Kenny, O., and Russell, H. (2017) [Who Experiences Discrimination in Ireland: Evidence from the QNHS Equality Modules](#). ESRI and IHREC.

<sup>51</sup> IHREC (2017). [Submission to the Citizens Assembly on: How we respond to the challenges and opportunities of an ageing population](#).

<sup>52</sup> Age Action Ireland (2022): [Reframing Ageing: the State of Ageing in Ireland 2022](#).

## Older people:

- Later life can and should be a time of active citizenship, for continued contribution and participation in local community affairs and a time for involvement with family, neighbours and the wider community.<sup>53</sup>

## Disability

### Situation

- Research<sup>54</sup> on the employment experiences of disabled people in Ireland, found the following:
  - Only 29% of working age people who had early-onset disability, were in employment.
  - In terms of the main types of disability, people with hearing disability and those with learning disability are most likely to be in employment. People with mobility and dexterity disability, pain disability and emotional, psychological and mental health disabilities were least likely to be in employment.
  - The level of difficulty connected with the disability is significantly associated both with being in employment and with interest in employment. Of those with a moderate level of difficulty, 43% were in employment, compared to 22% of those with a lot of difficulty and 16% of those who cannot do certain things.
  - Being in employment is associated with level of education attained. More than half of people with a disability who had third-level education were in employment compared to just 22% of those with less than second-level education.
  - Almost half (47%) of the unemployed people with a disability would be interested in taking up employment if the circumstances were right.
  - People whose disability first affected them while at school are more likely to be in employment than those who were not affected until later in life.
  - Barriers to participation in employment were: lack of reasonable accommodation to address specific needs (e.g. aids/ technology; flexible work arrangements etc.); fear of losing needed social protection benefits; for some disabled people, the main barrier was getting first job; some had to leave employment because of the impact of disability/lack of accommodations.

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<sup>53</sup> Department of Health (2013). [Positive Ageing – Starts Now, National Positive Ageing Strategy](#), Department of Health.

<sup>54</sup> Watson, D., Banks, J., and Lyons, S. (2015) [Educational and Employment Experiences of People with a Disability in Ireland](#): an analysis of the National Disability Survey. ESRI.

- EU- data shows that only 51.3% of working age persons with disabilities in the European Union are employed, compared to 75.6% of persons without disabilities. The employment rate of persons with disabilities is lowest in Ireland (32.6%) and Greece.<sup>55</sup>
- 26% of employees with a disability are in low paid work.<sup>56</sup>
- CSO data for 2024 indicates that 15.7% of people in Ireland are living people living in enforced deprivation.<sup>57</sup> Of the groups most likely to experience enforced deprivation in 2024, those unable to work due to long-standing health problems, were the second highest category (38%).<sup>58</sup>
- The ‘cost of disability’ refers to the extra expenses a disabled person has, associated with their impairment/illness (housing, transport, medical, and other costs). Households with disabled members have a lower standard of living than those without disabled members. In income terms, this equates to a cost of disability of 59% of disposable income. The estimated lower standard of living for households with disabilities is strongly related to the severity of disability, with the cost for those with severe limitations reaching 93% of disposable income.<sup>59</sup>
- Neurodivergent people experience specific barriers in the workplace which require flexible approaches by employers, these include: distressing sensory work environments (noisy, fluorescent lighting etc.); lack of provision for breaks and quiet; rigid / inflexible work practices (for example- expectation of working long hours, requirement that all workers carry out their work in the same way where the same results could be achieved with different approaches); sudden changes to workload/work practices without discussion with the employee.<sup>60</sup>
- Autistic people are significantly underemployed and 80% of autistic people surveyed for Irish research said they had not disclosed their autism to a colleague/employer, as they felt that employers lack understanding of and knowledge about autism.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> European Disability Forum (2023). [European Human Rights Report Issue 7 The Right to Work; the Employment Situation of Persons with a Disability in Europe](#).

<sup>56</sup> Mc Ginnity et al. (2021) [Monitoring Decent Work in Ireland](#). ESRI and IHREC.

<sup>57</sup> See here for definition of ‘enforced deprivation’

[https://www.cso.ie/en/media/csoie/releasespublications/documents/ep/silcenforceddeprivation/2023/factsheets/0168401\\_SILC\\_Factsheet\\_update\\_v2.pdf](https://www.cso.ie/en/media/csoie/releasespublications/documents/ep/silcenforceddeprivation/2023/factsheets/0168401_SILC_Factsheet_update_v2.pdf)

<sup>58</sup> CSO 2024. [Survey on Income and Living Conditions](#) (SILC) 2024.

<sup>59</sup> Dooley, K. et al. (2025) [Adjusting Estimates of Poverty for the Cost of Disability](#). ESRI and IHREC.

<sup>60</sup> Irish Congress of Trade Unions (2024) [Neurodiversity Guide for Employers](#).

<sup>61</sup> As I Am (undated) [A Step by Step Guide to Becoming and Autism-friendly Employer](#)

- Digital exclusion presents barriers to disabled people accessing services: a 2017 survey found that disabled respondents were significantly less likely than those without a disability to: access the internet (66% vs. 88%), or own a mobile phone (85% vs. 96%).<sup>62</sup>
- A 2022 NDA survey on wellbeing and social inclusion found that 37% of respondents participated in social activities of a club, society or association at least once a month. However, of respondents who reported a disability, 49% reported never participating in such activities.<sup>63</sup>
- Children with special education needs are less likely to take part in structured cultural activities than their peers without special education needs.<sup>64</sup>
- Access to culture and cultural activities, for disabled people, requires attention to the range of disabilities / impairments that require specific accommodations, including: wheelchair/physical access, A handrail to aid navigation of the spaces, and mobile seating for people with mobility issues; braille and/or audio descriptions for people with visual impairments, tactile flooring with a textured surface and contrasting colours to let visitors know when they had arrived at an artwork; subtitles, headphones for enhanced sound, and audio loops for visitors with hearing impairments; Irish Sign Language facilitated tours for deaf people; plain English descriptions for people with learning and intellectual disabilities; quiet areas and warnings about exhibitions that might be a trigger for people with sensory disabilities.<sup>65</sup>
- There is a high correlation between poverty and disability. Census 2022 data<sup>67</sup> indicate:
  - People living in the most disadvantaged areas in Ireland are twice as likely to have a disability, compared to those in affluent areas
  - The disability rate for children and young people living in deprived areas is equivalent to that of older people in affluent areas.

## Experience

- “Discrimination varies significantly across equality groups and are high in multiple domains (employment, recruitment, accessing private and public services) among

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<sup>62</sup> National Disability Authority (June 2023) [Final Review of Progress on Indicators of the National Disability Inclusion Strategy](#).

<sup>63</sup> National Disability Authority (June 2023) [Final Review of Progress on Indicators of the National Disability Inclusion Strategy](#)

<sup>64</sup> Smyth, E., (2016) [Arts and Cultural Participation among Children and Young People: findings from the Growing up in Ireland Study](#). The Arts Council and the ESRI.

<sup>65</sup> [Report on Policies and Good Practices in the Public Arts](#) and in Cultural Institutions to promote better access to and wider participation in culture.2012.

<sup>66</sup> [A Shift in Perspective: an Arts and Disability Resource Pack](#). Arts and Disability Ireland (2010)

<sup>67</sup> Pobal (2024) [Disability and Deprivation](#)

minority ethnic groups (Black, Asian, and especially Irish Travellers) minority religions and those with a disability.”<sup>68</sup>, findings indicate that:

- People with a disability experience higher rates of discrimination than non-disabled people: in the workplace (8.8% v 5.1%), while seeking work (15.5% v 6.7%), in accessing private and public services (7% v 2.8%).
- CSO data from 2019<sup>69</sup> indicates that 8% of disabled people had experienced discrimination in the workplace in the previous two years, and 6% had experienced discrimination when seeking work, in the previous two years.
- People with emotional, psychological, and mental health (EPM) disabilities are particularly vulnerable to stigma and prejudice, when compared to other types of impairment, and this can cause them to limit their interaction with people and services: 39% of people with EPM disabilities (rising to 51% of younger people with EPM disabilities) avoided participating in activities, due to negative attitudes of others, compared to 22% of those with mobility impairments.<sup>70</sup>

## Identity

- Approximately 13.5% of the population identify as having a disability<sup>71</sup>. Most disabilities are acquired when people are of working age, rather than being present from birth.<sup>72</sup>
- Many disabled people advocate for disability to be viewed through a ‘social model’ lens rather than a ‘medical model’ lens (which is more pervasive in society). The social model focuses on societal barriers (social, economic, cultural and political) that ‘disable’ people and hinder their ability to lead independent, self-determined lives. The medical model on the other hand, views the disability/impairment as a ‘problem’ to be fixed, with the focus being on the person’s disability as the issue, rather than on addressing the attitudinal, structural and systems barriers that prevent disabled people’s full participation in society.
- Disabled working age people reported that they require the following accommodations in order to fully participate in employment: flexible work arrangements such as reduced

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<sup>68</sup> McGinnity, F., Grotti, R., Kenny, O., and Russell, H. (2017) [Who Experiences Discrimination in Ireland: Evidence from the QNHS Equality Modules](#). ESRI and IHREC.

<sup>69</sup> Central Statistics Office: [Equality and Discrimination](#). CSO release July 2019

<sup>70</sup> Watson and Maitre (2014) [Understanding Emotional, Psychological and Mental Health disability in Ireland: factors facilitating Social Inclusion](#). ESRI.

<sup>71</sup> Census 2016

<sup>72</sup> Banks, J. et al. (October 2018). [Disability and Discrimination in Ireland: Evidence from the QNHS Equality Modules 2004, 2010, 2014](#). The ESRI and the IHREC.

hours (46%); modified job tasks (29%); accessibility modifications (32%); and a wage subsidy (24%)<sup>73</sup>.

## Race (encompassing skin colour, ethnic origin, and nationality) and Religion<sup>74</sup>

### Situation

- A national needs assessment of the Roma community in Ireland found the following<sup>75</sup>:
  - Only 16.7% of working age Roma were in employment. Respondents expressed a strong desire to find work and talked about the stress of not having work or income,
  - 71% of Roma reported that they have difficulty reading English. In 84% of households respondents received help reading and writing in English.
  - 38% of Roma adults in had never been to school (this was particularly marked for women with 41% of women having never been to school Vs 22% of men). This means that many Roma adults will have literacy issues in their mother tongue as well as a lack of knowledge of English. Translating written material to their native languages, therefore, will not reach all Roma.
- UK-based research indicates very low levels of minority ethnic diversity in the workforce and governance structures of museums and galleries.<sup>76</sup>
- Black artists experience the following barriers in accessing arts funding, including in Ireland: applications (for arts funding) undermined by the difficulties Black artists routinely faced in finding work opportunities, and in securing venues or support from organisations to display or promote their work. Arts organisations and venues were more likely to ‘take risks’ on White Irish peers who were seen as promising, while Black artists were commonly seen as unlikely to draw audiences and to be understood by White Irish audiences. Other barriers included: a significant challenge in accessing artist networks; a lack of representation across many genres, and relatively fewer supports and opportunities for minority artists in Ireland compared to other European countries.<sup>77</sup>
- There are “significant differences” in engagement in cultural activities, between Irish and immigrant children: children from immigrant backgrounds being are less likely to go on

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<sup>73</sup> Watson, D., Banks, J., and Lyons, S. (2015) [Educational and Employment Experiences of People with a Disability in Ireland](#): an analysis of the National Disability Survey. ESRI.

<sup>74</sup> We include Religion in conjunction with data on the Race ground as the data indicate that religious discrimination is mainly targeted at minority ethnic groups who are members of minority religions.

<sup>75</sup> Pavee Point & Department of Justice and Equality (2018). [Roma in Ireland: A national needs assessment](#).

<sup>76</sup> Davies. M. et al. (2015) Diversity in the Workforce and Governance of Art’s Council England’s Major Museums.

<sup>77</sup> Michaels, L. and Reynolds, D. (2023) [Open Up: Addressing the Barriers faces by Black and Black-Irish Artists’ access to Funding and Opportunities](#). The Arts Council.

educational/cultural outings than their Irish-born peers. Language barriers emerge as a potential explanation for this pattern, with lower levels of engagement among those families whose native language is not English, and especially where mothers report difficulties in reading material in English.<sup>78</sup>

## Experience

- “discrimination varies significantly across equality groups and is high in multiple domains (employment, recruitment, accessing private and public services) among minority ethnic groups (Black, Asian, and especially Irish Travellers) minority religions and those with a disability.”<sup>79</sup>, findings indicate the following:
  - The highest rates of in-work discrimination (across the protected equality grounds) are reported by Black people (14%), followed by those with a minority religion (11%) and people with Asian ethnicity (10%). The highest rates of reported discrimination while looking for employment, are reported by Black people (16.5%). 7.5% of Asian people reported discrimination when seeking work and 10% of people with a minority religion reported discrimination when seeking work;
  - Members of minority religions were 1.7 times more likely to report higher discrimination rates in the workplace and public/private services, than Catholics; Those with no religion were 1.7 times more likely to experience discrimination in public services and those with a minority religion are 1.8 times more likely to experience discrimination in accessing public services; and
  - Black respondents are three times more likely to report discrimination in public services and almost five times more likely in private services (shops, pubs, restaurants, banks and housing). The highest rates of discrimination in accessing services (across the protected equality grounds) are reported by Black people (18.5%), followed by Asian people (15.7%).
- Research on ethnicity and nationality in the Irish labour market<sup>80</sup> found the following:
  - Despite having the same education, experience, and labour market skills, some minority ethnic groups have poorer outcomes in the labour market, due to discrimination.

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<sup>78</sup> Smyth, E., (2016) [Arts and Cultural Participation among Children and Young People: findings from the Growing up in Ireland Study](#). The Arts Council and the ESRI.

<sup>79</sup> McGinnity, F., Grotti, R., Kenny, O., and Russell, H. (2017) [Who Experiences Discrimination in Ireland: Evidence from the QNHS Equality Modules. ESRI and IHREC.](#)

<sup>80</sup> McGinnity, F., Grotti, R., Groarke, S., and Coughlan, S. (2018). [Ethnicity and Nationality in the Irish Labour Market](#). ESRI and IHREC.

- 20% of Black non-Irish nationals, compared to 6% of white Irish, report discrimination when seeking work.
- CSO data from 2019<sup>81</sup> indicate the following:
  - Non-Irish nationals were twice as likely to have experienced discrimination in the workplace, and when seeking work, in the previous two years, compared to Irish nationals (9% vs 5%) and (8% vs 4%).
  - People with an Asian, Black ethnicity were more than three times more likely to have experienced discrimination in the workplace, and more than twice as likely to experience discrimination when seeking work, than those with a white ethnicity (17% vs 5%) and (11% vs 4.5%).
  - Of people in Ireland who have experienced in-work discrimination in the previous two years, the race ground is the third most common ground cited (22.6%) for this type of discrimination.
- Research on attitudes to ethnic diversity in Ireland, found the following<sup>82</sup>
  - Attitudes to some migrants are much more negative than others: 58% of Irish-born people report they would allow many or some immigrants from members of the same ethnic group as most Irish people to come to Ireland, the equivalent figures for Muslim Roma migrants are 41% and 25% respectively.
  - Just under half of adults born in Ireland believe that some cultures are superior to others, and 45% believe that some races/ethnic groups were born harder working. 17% believe that some races/ethnic groups were born less intelligent.
  - The finding suggest that social contact for the most part promotes less negative attitudes to immigration and immigrants, suggesting that enhancing opportunities for meaningful and positive interactions between the Irish-born population and immigrants will reduce anti-migrant sentiment. Such interaction would also have positive implications for the social integration of migrants and their children.
- The rise of far-right influence and resultant xenophobic, anti-immigrant, transphobic, homophobic rhetoric, abuse and harassment, is a prescient call “for museums to demonstrate their relevance by critically engaging in the political, social, and cultural realities of society today”, including a focus on allyship.<sup>83</sup>
- Garda figures on reported hate crime incidents for 2023, indicates that 77% of all reported hate incidents reported related to abuse/violence targeting the

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<sup>81</sup> Central Statistics Office: [Equality and Discrimination](#). CSO release July 2019

<sup>82</sup> McGinnity, F., Grotti, R., Russell, H., and Fahey, E. (March 2018). [Attitudes to Diversity in Ireland](#)

<sup>83</sup> Ng, Wendy, et al. (2017). [Activating Diversity and Inclusion: A Blueprint for Museum Educators as Allies and Change Makers](#). Journal of Museum Education.

race/ethnicity/nationality/ minority religion of the victim.<sup>84</sup> The Garda figures represent only a fraction of incidents: the INAR public reporting system for incidents of racism found that only 20% of victims reported the incident(s) to the Gardaí.<sup>85</sup>

## Identity

- People from minority ethnic groups and those with a minority religion, may require consideration of specific needs arising from their cultural, language, ethnic and/or religious diversity, to ensure they can fully participate in employment and education. Such needs may include: language and interpretation needs; food considerations; consideration of workplace leave etc. to observe religious days of importance / to attend family and community events relevant to their ethnicity and/or religious faith.
- Census 2022 data indicate the percentage of migrants who do not speak English 'well or at all' is as follows: Brazilian (28%), Chinese (24%)<sup>86</sup>
- A range of reports and research reiterate that staff in frontline state services are not often adequately trained to understand and respond to the needs of service users arising from cultural and ethnic diversity, including an absence of training for staff on anti-racist practice.<sup>87</sup>
- The imperative to include the ability to access the cultural heritage and cultural expressions of others, in addition to our own.<sup>88</sup>
- There is an absence of equality data disaggregated by ethnicity/nationality, across key public services, to allow public services to ensure evidence based planning, delivery and review of key services and their impact for different nationalities and minority ethnic groups.

## Sexual Orientation

### Situation

- A national study on the mental health and wellbeing of LGBTI people, found the following<sup>89</sup>:

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<sup>84</sup> An Garda Síochana. [Hate Crime Statistics 2023](#).

<sup>85</sup> Irish Network Against Racism. [iReport 2022](#).

<sup>86</sup> CSO [Census 2022](#)

<sup>87</sup> Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (October 2019).

[Ireland and the Convention on Racial Discrimination, Submission to the United Nations Committee on Racial Discrimination on Ireland's Combined Fifth to Ninth Periodic Report](#), Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission.

<sup>88</sup> Portolés J. B. (2025), How Cultural Rights can Enable Practices of Care, Contribution to the 7th Global Report on Local Democracy and Decentralization ([GOLD VII](#)).

<sup>89</sup> GLEN, BeLonGTo. (2016). The [LGBTIreland Report: national study of the mental health and wellbeing of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex people in Ireland](#), GLEN, BeLonGTo, TCD and the HSE, 2016.

- A lifetime history of self-harm was reported by 34% of participants in the study, with 55% of those aged 14-18 years having self-harmed.
- 46.8% of respondents indicated some level of depression, with over 20% recording either severe (7.1%) or extremely severe depression (12.9%).
- The youngest age group (14-18 years) had the highest scores on all scales, with severe or extremely severe depression (35%), anxiety (43%), and stress (24%) rates.
- Of those aged 14-18, over two-thirds (69.4%) had seriously thought of ending their own life, with over two thirds having considered ending their own life within the past year.

## Experience

- CSO data from 2019<sup>90</sup> indicates that LGBTQ+ people were almost twice as likely as non-LGBTI people, to have experienced discrimination in the workplace and when seeking work, in the previous two years: (11% vs 6%) and (8% vs 5%).
- Garda figures on reported hate crime incidents for 2023, found that 15.6% of all reported incidents related to abuse/violence targeting the sexual orientation of the victim.<sup>91</sup>
- LGBTI people in employment note the following issues in regard to their experiences in the workplace: 20% had witnessed LGBTI bullying at work and 17% reported negative experiences and bullying, in work, related to their LGBTI identity; invisibility of sexual orientation and gender identity mean it is often overlooked as an issue for focus by employers and employment policies may not fully articulate a zero-tolerance approach to homophobia and transphobia; a lack of education amongst staff and management around the language and behaviours that constitute homophobia; and stereotypes, biases towards and misconceptions about LGBTI people and there can be a culture of acceptance of homophobia by way of 'jokes', name-calling etc.<sup>92</sup>
- A 2017 survey of LGBTI+ young people (aged 13 to 24) identified that their main issue of concern, to be addressed for the community, was "lack of understanding and acceptance" (47%) and "Bullying and homophobia" (25%).<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> Central Statistics Office: [Equality and Discrimination](#). CSO release July 2019

<sup>91</sup> An Garda Síochána [Hate Crime Statistics 2023](#)

<sup>92</sup> GLEN and BeLonGTo (2016) [LGBTIreland Report: national study of the mental health and wellbeing of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex people in Ireland](#), GLEN, BeLonGTo, TCD, HSE.

<sup>93</sup> GCN and BeLonGTo (2017). The Issues Facing Ireland's LGBT+ Young People.

## Identity

- Over half of the LGBTI+ participants (53%) in an Irish survey reporting feeling unsafe or very unsafe showing affection in public, and 16% reporting they would not do it.<sup>94</sup>
- 68% of LGBTI+ students felt that they were not taught anything positive about LGBTI+ identities.<sup>95</sup>

## Traveller Community

### Situation

- Census 2022 data indicate a very high unemployment rate for Travellers (61%) and in regard to their education status: 4.7% of Travellers had completed third level education, compared to 48% of the general population (just 312 Travellers had a third-level qualification.); and 40% of Travellers had ceased full time education by the age of 16 or younger.
- An identified barrier to Travellers pathways into employment is a lack of family and community networks and connectors to get a foothold into employment. Such networks and connectors are more readily available to non-Travellers.<sup>96</sup>
- Travellers are at high risk of digital exclusion because a combination of factors: low literacy rates among Traveller adults; lack of access to internet (only 24% of Traveller households had access to the internet compared to 82% of non-Traveller households)<sup>97</sup>; and higher levels of poverty and material deprivation for Travellers, compared to non-Travellers, can reduce access to devices and broadband.
- The impact of the State's assimilation policy is that Traveller language, norms and crafts are 'dying out', and young Travellers in particular have limited awareness and understanding of their culture and history. The impact in practice cannot be underestimated, with Travellers identifying that the loss of their cultural way of living is a root cause of Traveller mental ill-health.<sup>98</sup>
- Travellers identify the following issues in regard to their cultural identity and heritage: stereotyping and negative attitudes and the erosion of Traveller culture, including through legislation (Trespass laws, market trading legislation, and Control of Horses Act)

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<sup>94</sup> GLEN and BeLonGTo (2016). The [LBGTireland Report: national study of the mental health and wellbeing of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex people in Ireland](#).

<sup>95</sup> BeLonG To (2019) The 2019 [School Climate Study](#).

<sup>96</sup> Mullen, R., Kelly, B., and Crowley, N. (2021) [Mincéir Misl'ér a Tom Tober – Travellers in the Mainstream Labour Market: Situation, Experience and Identity](#). St Stephens Green Trust, Dublin.

<sup>97</sup> Grotti, R. et al (June 2018) [Discrimination and Inequality in Housing in Ireland](#). ESRI and IHREC.

<sup>98</sup> Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (2024) [Ireland and the UN Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights](#): submission on Ireland's fourth periodic report.

having a negative impact in terms of Traveller language, norms, and crafts are dying out; Travellers, particularly younger Travellers have limited awareness and understanding of their own culture and heritage.<sup>99</sup>

- Travellers report a lack of understanding about, and visibility of their culture and heritage. There is stereotyping of, and negative views about, the community, which leads to negative and inaccurate opinions about Traveller culture among the wider population.<sup>100</sup>

## Experience

- “Discrimination varies significantly across equality groups and is high in multiple domains (employment, recruitment, accessing private and public services) among minority ethnic groups (Black, Asian, and especially Irish Travellers) minority religions and those with a disability.”<sup>101</sup>
- Compared to non-Travellers: Travellers almost 10 times more likely to report discrimination when seeking employment; and are 38 times more likely to report discrimination in accessing shops, pubs, restaurants<sup>102</sup>.
- A 2019 EU survey<sup>103</sup> found the following in regard to Travellers in Ireland:
  - 38% of Irish Travellers had experienced discrimination while job-seeking, in the six months, and
  - 52% had experienced hate-motivated harassment, and 7% had experienced hate-motivated violence in the previous 12 months.
- Research on the situation and experience of the Traveller community<sup>104</sup> found that, even after taking educational disadvantage into account, the odds of not being in employment are over eight times higher for Travellers than non-Travellers. This indicates that “Travellers face further barriers in the labour market when it comes to employment”: discrimination being one such key barrier.
- A report on the employment pathway experiences of Travellers<sup>105</sup> found that Travellers often feel compelled to hide their ethnic identity in the workplace, due to fears of racism,

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<sup>99</sup> Values Lab (2024). [Report on the outcome of the local consultation process with Traveller and Roma organisations](#), community groups, and individuals to inform the development of the successor strategy to the National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy.

<sup>100</sup> Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth. The National Traveller and Roma Integration Strategy II (2024-2028)

<sup>101</sup> McGinnity, F., Grotti, R., Kenny, O., and Russell, H. (2017) [Who Experiences Discrimination in Ireland: Evidence from the QNHS Equality Modules. ESRI and IHREC. Page 44](#)

<sup>102</sup> McGinnity, F., Grotti, R., Kenny, O., and Russell, H. (2017) [Who Experiences Discrimination in Ireland: Evidence from the QNHS Equality Modules. ESRI and IHREC](#)

<sup>103</sup> EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (2020). [Roma and Travellers in Six Countries](#)

<sup>104</sup> Watson D., Kenny O., & McGinnity F. (2017). [A Social Portrait of Travellers in Ireland](#), ESRI.

<sup>105</sup> Mullen, R., Kelly, B., and Crowley, N. (2021) [Mincéir Misl’er a Tom Tober – Travellers in the Mainstream Labour Market: Situation, Experience and Identity](#). St Stephens Green Trust, Dublin.

discrimination and social exclusion; and Travellers reported experiencing identity-based harassment by other colleagues in the workplace as well as more subtle forms of racism such as microaggressions.

- The suicide rate among Travellers is 6 times higher than among non-Travellers and accounts for approximately 11% of all Traveller deaths. There is a particularly high suicide rate among young Travellers, in particular young men.<sup>106</sup>

## Identity

- In 2017, the Irish government officially recognised Travellers as a distinct ethnic group, with specific customs and traditions. However, there is a lack of support, in Irish society, for recognition of Traveller culture and identity.<sup>107</sup>
- Family and kinship holds particular importance and centrality in Traveller culture.<sup>108</sup>
- “Traveller art encompasses a legacy of music, storytelling, embroidery, tin-smithing, and other crafts rooted in everyday life” yet Traveller art “often centres on settled people’s representations : their misappropriations of artefacts, histories, and identities, institutional racism, reinforced stereotypes through museums and cultural institutions, locking our stories out of reach”<sup>109</sup>

## Poverty (Socio-Economic Status)

### Situation

- Groups protected under the nine grounds in equality legislation, because of their vulnerability to discrimination and inequality, are more likely to live in or be at risk of poverty (see above for specific details in regard to different grounds). This is particularly the case for: older women, lone parents, disabled people, Travellers and other minority ethnic groups; and transgender people. The negative treatment they experience relating to their identity often results in, or is compounded by, their experiences of poverty, socio-economic disadvantage, and social exclusion.
- CSO data for 2024 indicates that 15.7% of people in Ireland are living people living in enforced deprivation.<sup>110</sup> The groups most likely to experience enforced deprivation in 2024 were those living in single-adult households with children under 18 (46.3%); unable

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<sup>106</sup> Travellers and suicide: [Facts and Figures](#). Pavee Point Traveller and Roma Centre.

<sup>107</sup> [The National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy 2017-2021](#). Department of Justice and Equality.

<sup>108</sup> [The National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy 2017-2021](#). Department of Justice and Equality.

<sup>109</sup> McDonagh R. (2025) A Traveller Provocation. For the Bafushia exhibition of Traveller art, Hugh Lane Gallery.

<sup>110</sup> See here for definition of ‘enforced deprivation’

[https://www.cso.ie/en/media/csoie/releasespublications/documents/ep/silcenforceddeprivation/2023/factsheets/0168401\\_SILC\\_Factsheet\\_-update\\_v2.pdf](https://www.cso.ie/en/media/csoie/releasespublications/documents/ep/silcenforceddeprivation/2023/factsheets/0168401_SILC_Factsheet_-update_v2.pdf)

to work due to long-standing health problems (38.5%); unemployed (37.8%); and those living in rented or rent-free accommodation (31.5%).<sup>111</sup>

- 2022 data indicate that rates of income poverty are particularly high for households with children aged 0-5 years: 25% of these households are below the income poverty line. The data also indicate that people who are materially deprived have fewer social contacts (with the exception of the youngest age group).<sup>112</sup>
- There are particular digital literacy challenges faced by unemployed/ inactive, economically disadvantaged individuals, as this group simultaneously lacks access to digital literacy learning opportunities at home (due to the high cost of technology) and the workplace (due to extended absence from the labour market).<sup>113</sup>
- The denial of access to culture/ cultural activities can result in fewer possibilities for people to develop the social and cultural connections that are important for the maintenance of satisfactory levels of coexistence in conditions of equality. Access and participation barriers can be: financial (e.g. entrance fees, public transport tickets), and geographical (for people living in rural areas and/or who do not have access to/ unable to afford public transport); attitudinal (the institutional atmosphere), and in perceptions (e.g. the perception of cultural institutions as exclusivist, the refusal of some forms of cultural expression. research shows that the higher an individual's social class, household income and education level, the more likely they are to visit museums and galleries.<sup>114</sup>
- Adults with lower levels of educational achievement and from lower income groups, and their children, are less likely to engage in structured cultural activities, such as attending an art gallery, than middle-class or highly educated adults.<sup>115</sup>
- Lack of attention to those who are disadvantaged, in cultural policies and programmes, and lack of accessible facilities, adequate mediation and outreach.<sup>116</sup>

## Experience

- CSO data for 2019<sup>117</sup> indicate:

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<sup>111</sup> CSO 2024. [Survey on Income and Living Conditions](#) (SILC) 2024.

<sup>112</sup> Roantree, S. et al (September 2024) [Poverty, Income Inequality and Living Standards in Ireland, Fourth Annual Report](#). ESRI.

<sup>113</sup> SOLAS (May 2021) Adult Literacy for Life: detailed consultation report to develop the adult literacy, numeracy and digital strategy.

<sup>114</sup> [Report on Policies and Good Practices in the Public Arts](#) and in Cultural Institutions to promote better access to and wider participation in culture.2012.

<sup>115</sup> Smyth, E., (2016) [Arts and Cultural Participation among Children and Young People: findings from the Growing up in Ireland Study](#). The Arts Council and the ESRI.

<sup>116</sup> Portolés J. B. (2025), How Cultural Rights can Enable Practices of Care, Contribution to the 7th Global Report on Local Democracy and Decentralization ([GOLD VII](#)).

<sup>117</sup> Central Statistics Office: [Equality and Discrimination](#). CSO release July 2019

- 18% of people in Ireland (aged 18+) felt they had been discriminated against when accessing employment/services, in the previous two years,
- The highest rates of discrimination were reported by people who identify as LGBTI+ (33.2%), followed by persons from non-white ethnic backgrounds (33.1%), unemployed (30.2%) and non-Irish nationals (26.7%),
- 1 in 5 (20%) of unemployed persons experienced discrimination while looking for work in the previous two years, and
- Irrespective of their knowledge of their rights, just 3% of persons who experienced discrimination made an official complaint (such as to the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission, Workplace Relations Commission) or took legal action.
- Many of those in the prison system have a history of social exclusion, including high levels of family, educational and health disadvantage, and poor prospects in the labour market. Discrimination against individuals with a criminal conviction is a key barrier to their ability to access employment: 81% of respondents in one study said their conviction had negatively impacted on their ability to access employment.<sup>118</sup>
- The absence of a socio-economic ground, as a basis for discrimination, in equality legislation impacts on people's ability to challenge socio-economic discrimination in accessing employment and goods and services.<sup>119</sup>

## Identity

- Issues of intersectionality which can give rise to experiences of multiple and compounding discrimination and inequality, are evident for people living in/at risk of poverty with diverse identities involving more than one protected characteristic, including: Travellers and other minority ethnic groups; young people; refugees and those seeking asylum; disabled people; women; transgender people; lone parents; and older people.

## 5. Validation Meeting

Three online validation meetings were facilitated with civil society organisations to review a draft of the assessment of equality and human rights issues on 10 June 2025, 18 July 2025, and 6 August 2025. A pre-meeting to brief the civil society representatives on the Duty was facilitated on 3 June 2025. The review meetings addressed questions of:

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<sup>118</sup> IPRT [Submission to the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth on the Review of the Equality Acts](#), December 8, 2021.

<sup>119</sup> [Ireland and the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women, Submission to the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women on Ireland's Combined Sixth and Seventh Periodic Reports](#), Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission, January 2017.

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

The amendments proposed at the validation meeting were fed back to those participating and agreed, and then considered by the working group and adopted.