

IRISH HUMAN RIGHTS AND EQUALITY COMMISSION

Who We Are and
What We Do



Coimisiún na hÉireann um Chearta
an Duine agus Comhionannas
Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission

OUR PURPOSE

The Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission is Ireland's national human rights institution and national equality body. Set up on 1 November 2014 as an independent public body, our purpose is to protect and promote human rights and equality in Ireland and build a culture of respect for human rights, equality and intercultural understanding across Irish society. Our goal is a just and inclusive Ireland where human rights and equality are fully enjoyed by everyone, everywhere.

Under our founding legislation, the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014, we must carry out our functions in a way that supports the development of a society in which:

- there is respect for, and protection of, everyone's human rights;
- there is respect for the dignity and worth of each person;
- a person's ability to achieve their potential is not limited by prejudice, discrimination, or neglect;
- everyone has a fair and equal opportunity to take part in the economic, political, social or cultural life of the State;
- people respect each other, respect equality and human rights, and understand the value of diversity within society.

The Commission protects human rights and equality generally, and as set out in the Constitution, national human rights and equality legislation, the European Convention on Human Rights, European Union law, and the many international treaties and conventions that Ireland has committed to respect, protect and fulfil.

WHAT WE DO

We have a variety of ways to protect and promote human rights and equality. These range from enforcement powers to engaging in partnerships with groups across society to enable change that will improve people's lives.

Overall Functions

Our overall functions are to:


- protect and promote human rights and equality;
- encourage the development of a culture of respect for human rights, equality, and intercultural understanding in the State;
- promote understanding and awareness of the importance of human rights and equality in the State;
- encourage good practice in intercultural relations, promote tolerance and acceptance of diversity in the State, and encourage respect for the freedom and dignity of everyone; and
- work towards the elimination of human rights abuses and discrimination.

Specific Functions

Our specific functions include:

- giving information to the public on human rights and equality;
- giving practical help, including legal assistance to people to defend their rights;
- reviewing the effectiveness of human rights and equality law, policy and practice in the State;



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- applying to the High Court, Court of Appeal or Supreme Court for permission to appear as *amicus curiae* or "friend of the court" in cases that deal with someone's equality or human rights;
 - helping public bodies to perform their functions in a way that eliminates discrimination and promotes equality of opportunity;
 - helping public bodies to perform their functions in a way that protects the human rights of staff and the public to whom the public body provides a service;
 - supporting programmes of activities and projects that promote integration of migrants and other minorities, equality (including gender equality), and respect for diversity and cultural difference;
 - carrying out research and supporting research activities;
 - providing, or helping to provide, education and training.

The Commission is Ireland's national human rights institution and is recognised as such by the United Nations. We are also Ireland's national equality body. In these contexts, our purpose is to make sure that international and European human rights law and European Union anti-discrimination and equality law are put into effect in Ireland.

The Good Friday (Belfast) Agreement requires that there be strong, independent human rights and equality bodies on both the north and south of the island of Ireland. We work with the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission and the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland to achieve a strong culture of rights across both jurisdictions.

WHO WE ARE

The Commission is headed by the Chief Commissioner and has 14 other members. The founding legislation requires that at least seven members are women and seven are men.

Chief Commissioner

Emily Logan

Members of the Commission

- Teresa Blake SC
- Frank Conaty
- Patrick Connolly
- Professor Caroline Fennell
- Heydi Foster Breslin
- Tony Geoghegan
- David Joyce
- Salome Mbugua
- Sunniva McDonagh SC
- Professor Siobhán Mullally
- Professor Ray Murphy
- Dr Fidèle Mutwarasibo
- Colm O'Dwyer SC
- Orlagh O'Farrell

All members of the Commission are selected through open competition and are appointed by the President of Ireland, Michael D. Higgins. The Commission is accountable to the Oireachtas for its statutory functions and its finances.

Director



Laurence Bond is the Director and Accounting Officer and leads the staff team.



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Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission
16-22 Green Street
Dublin 7
Ireland

Telephone: +353 1 8589601
Email: info@ihrec.ie
Web: www.ihrec.ie

For more information on our work visit
www.ihrec.ie or follow the Commission on
 [@_IHREC](https://twitter.com/_IHREC)  [@_ihrec](https://www.instagram.com/_ihrec) or [linkedin](https://www.linkedin.com/company/ihrec)