

Equality News

Spring 2006

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- Implementing Equality for Carers
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THE EQUALITY AUTHORITY
AN tÚDARÁS COMHIONANNAIS

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The contributions to Equality News are welcome and appreciated. The opinions of contributors do not necessarily reflect the position of the Equality Authority. We welcome your feedback on any article in Equality News. Please send information to Patrick O'Leary (contact details on back page).

This Edition



**By Patrick O'Leary,
Equality Authority**

In this issue, John Redican, Chief Executive of the Irish Advocacy Network argues that misconceptions and stereotypes are unwittingly promoted and reinforced through the language commonly used in connection with mental ill-health, contributing to stigma and discrimination. People with poor mental health are perceived to be 'different' or abnormal. These societal misconceptions prevent people with mental health problems from participating in society or in the workplace. In this regard the obligations imposed by the Employment Equality Acts are important. He recommends abandoning the language of disability and difference and embracing the notion of diversity and inclusion.

Equality in accessing housing is an issue where house prices have increased by 251% between 1996 and 2002, and private rent inflation jumped from 3% per annum between 1990 and 1996 to 14.6% in 2000/2001. Dr Michelle Norris of UCD suggests that equality proofing action in the housing field is long overdue. Data and research on access to mortgage credit, the experiences of recipients of the rent supplement and the letting priorities in social rented accommodation need to focus in such an exercise. Accommodation is an area that has been identified as a priority in the new Strategic Plan of the Equality Authority. The Race Directive provides an important new context in this regard because it identifies housing as a protected area.

Chila van der Bas, Commissioner at the Dutch Equal Treatment Commission describes the work of EQUINET. This is the European Network of Equality Bodies, which seeks to develop the co-operation between specialised equality bodies in Europe and to facilitate an effective exchange of experiences and expertise between them. Among its goals, are the levelling up of anti-discrimination legislation across Europe and the inclusion of an equality focus in EU policies and progress.

Emily Logan the Ombudsman for Children, whose office promotes the rights and welfare of children, focuses attention on equality for children in her article. Her office has previously made a submission to the All-Party Oireachtas Committee on the Constitution calling for express rights for children to be included in the Constitution, and an amendment to the Constitution to reflect this. She expresses her disappointment that the recommendations of the Oireachtas Committee do not include provisions for the rights of the child.

An equality competent organisation is about the ability of an organisation that defines and achieves equality objectives for staff and customers from across the nine grounds. Patrick Lynch, Head of Equality and Diversity in the Health Service Executive (HSE) in this issue describes ways in which equality is being progressed within the work of the HSE. Karen Downes of Siemens

provides a private sector perspective and indicates that as an organisation they are currently embarking on an equality review and action plan. She highlights that managing diversity is crucial for the organisation. In relation to the workplace, it is about creating an environment in which everyone can achieve his or her full potential, while a diverse customer base also necessitates that varied needs are met.

Eoin Collins of Gay and Lesbian Equality Network (GLEN), states that it is now timely to revisit the Equality Authority's 2002 publication 'Implementing Equality for Lesbians, Gays and Bisexuals'. He highlights the positive steps undertaken by An Garda Síochána to make the police service more responsive to the reality of anti-gay violence. There are also a growing number of companies who have explicitly included the sexual orientation ground in their equal opportunity policies so as to attract lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB) workers. However the lack of legal recognition given to lesbian, gay and bisexual couples remains a significant problem and a priority focus in the work of GLEN.

Retrograde Step for Children's Rights



**By Emily Logan,
Ombudsman for
Children**

After almost a full year of deliberation, the All-Party Oireachtas Committee on the Constitution which was reviewing the Articles of the Constitution dealing with the family published its recommendations on 24th January 2006. The Ombudsman for Children's Office had made a submission to the Committee calling for express rights for children to be included in the Constitution and recommended an amendment to the Constitution to so provide.

After the publication of the Oireachtas Committee's report, it was reported in the national media, that the Committee had recommended that children's rights be inserted into the Constitution. Unfortunately, this is not the case. The Committee's recommendation does not include express provision for the rights of the child and it falls far short of the change proposed by the Constitution Review Group in 1996 and called for by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child in 1998.

Ten years ago the Constitution Review Group – set up by the Government in 1995 to review the Constitution and make recommendation for change – concluded that the Constitution required the addition

of an express guarantee of certain rights of the child and an express requirement that in all actions concerning children, the best interests of the child must be the paramount consideration. This view followed a significant exposure of the realities of children's lives in Ireland: the Kilkenny Incest Investigation. The investigation committee recommended:

...that consideration be given by the Government to the amendment of Articles 41 and 42 of the Constitution so as to include a statement of the constitutional rights of children.

Now in 2006, post report of the Ferns Inquiry into allegations of child sexual abuse, the All-Party Oireachtas Committee has recommended that a new clause should be inserted in Article 41 dealing with the rights of children as follows:

All children, irrespective of birth, gender, race or religion, are equal before the law. In all cases where the welfare of the child so requires, regard shall be had to the best interests of that child.

This clause provides that children, amongst themselves, should be treated equally and that only where their welfare so requires, should regard be had to their best interests. This is big step back from the recommendations of the Constitutional Review Group of ten years ago.

It is difficult to understand how, ten years on, the seriousness and continuing reality of familial child abuse, inter alia, in Ireland has escaped the attention of the Committee. This current recommendation falls far short of the insertion of an express provision for the rights of the child into the Constitution, something which my office and many other organisations who are in touch with the realities of children's lives have called for.

It is unfortunate that, in its consideration of the constitutional position of children, the Oireachtas Committee concentrated on the rights of adults rather than those of children.


In 1998 the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child, in its concluding observations on Ireland's first report to it, emphasised that the recommendations of the Report of the Constitution Review Group (1996) would reinforce 'the status of the child as a full subject of rights' and should be implemented as soon as possible. It also called on the Government to take steps to ensure that the Convention is fully incorporated into

domestic law. The Government has not taken either of these steps called for eight years ago.



All Party Oireachtas Committee on the Constitution

The recommendation of the Oireachtas Committee is out of step with the international consensus on the rights of the child and the status of children as individual rights holders. In its report, the All-Party Oireachtas Committee chose not to follow the recommendations of the UN Committee. Rather, it acknowledged that it was aware that Ireland has ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child but that its provisions do not form part of Irish law. The Oireachtas Committee subsequently states that it is aware that the European Convention on Human



Rights and Fundamental Freedoms is now part of domestic law but notes that its incorporation at sub-constitutional level means that 'children's rights therefore remain inferior and subordinate to parental rights'.


This represents an admission by a group of public representatives that we are not yet ready to accept that children are equal members of Irish society. An admission that in excess of one million people under the age of 18, children, do not deserve to be treated equally. To come to this conclusion and to not propose any measures to rectify this situation, despite proposals by the Constitution Review Group ten years ago, is more than lamentable.

It is unfortunate that the Oireachtas Committee did not give more consideration to international human rights standards in its consideration and compilation of its report, unlike the Constitutional Review Group of 1996 which examined these standards in some detail.

This coming September, the UN Committee will examine Ireland's latest state submission, as required under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. As an independent organisation with a legislative mandate to promote the rights and welfare of children, my office will make an independent submission to the

UN Committee in April. We will then meet with the UN Committee in June to present our view of the degree to which the UN Committee's 1998 recommendations have been taken on board by the State and, more generally, the level of adherence and commitment to the principles of the Convention itself.

This is a matter I will raise directly with the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child in June and no doubt the UN Committee will take up this matter with the Government in Geneva later this year.





EQUINET, the European Network of Equality Bodies

**By Chila van der Bas, Commissioner at
the Dutch Equal Treatment Commission
and Chairman of EQUINET**

Introduction

In an increasingly integrated Europe, it is in the interest of all actors in society, not in the least in the interest of those who experience discrimination, that European legislation is applied in a uniform way and that the anti-discrimination laws, policies and practices of the EU Member States are approximated at the highest possible level. That is why co-operation between specialised equality bodies in Europe is important.



*Strategic Enforcement
Powers & Competences of
Equality Bodies*

In this article, based on the project plans of EQUINET, I will go into the role of EQUINET, its partners, and what EQUINET does and hopes to achieve.


What is EQUINET?

EQUINET is the European Network of Equality Bodies, chaired by the Dutch Equal Treatment Commission. It is funded by the European Commission. It seeks to develop the cooperation between specialised equality bodies in Europe and to facilitate an effective exchange of their experience and expertise with a view to enhancing the uniform application of EU anti-discrimination law and the levelling up of legal protection for those who experience discrimination. The present EQUINET project covers the period 2004-2006 and builds upon the two year Community Action Programme funded project 'Strengthening the co-operation between specialised bodies for the implementation of equal treatment legislation' (2002-2004). In this initial project seven specialised equality bodies participated (including the Irish Equality Authority and the Dutch Equal Treatment Commission) along with one international policy institute.

*Co-operation between
equality bodies in Europe
is important*

Who are the EQUINET partners?

EQUINET partners are defined by their status as independent, specialised equality



bodies, with a legal basis and a specific mandate to assist victims of discrimination and non-equal treatment, to give independent advice and to conduct independent investigation.

Many of the partners have the status of designated body under article 13 of the Racial Equality Directive, and some have this status under amended Gender Equal Treatment Directive, even if most have a wider mandate than race and include all or most discrimination grounds mentioned in the European Directives. Where there is no single equality body (Belgium, Sweden, UK) EQUINET has several partners, who share the same identity, covering different grounds. The target geographic area is the 25 EU Member States plus accession States (Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey), as well as EEA State Norway. At this moment the following countries have specialised equality bodies as full partners of EQUINET: Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, France, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

EQUINET partners share an interest in the effective implementation and further development of equality legislation and policies.

What is EQUINET doing?

In the present project period EQUINET focuses to a large extent on building and strengthening the Network of Equality Bodies EU wide and on enhancing the

EQUINET partners share an interest in the effective implementation and further development of equality legislation and policies

expertise within the network. EQUINET contributes to the effective implementation of their mandates by specialised equality bodies through exchanging legal expertise and enforcement strategies. The network is focused on building expertise on and contributing to the harmonisation and dynamic interpretation of EU equal treatment legislation. EQUINET supports the emergence of a dialogue between European Institutions and the specialised equality bodies with a view to contributing to the inclusion of an effective equality focus in EU policies and programmes.

The modus operandi of the network is threefold: working groups; training sessions for staff of specialised equality bodies; a system of information exchange and a database of information on the work of the specialised equality bodies and sources of national, European and international law and policy. An Annual General Meeting of all partners of the Network sets the agenda for the work of the network. The AGM has nominated in 2005 an Executive Board in which – amongst others – Niall Crowley, Chief Executive Officer of the Equality Authority, and this author, participate. The Migration Policy Group in Brussels act as the secretariat of EQUINET.

What EQUINET hopes to achieve

The Network enables specialised equality bodies to exchange experiences and best practices on how to function as a specialised equality body, thereby improving their performance in carrying out the mandate given to them by European and national law. European co-operation also fosters their independence. The exchange of ideas and strategies among staff members of specialised equality bodies on the implementation of anti-discrimination law increases the competence of these bodies to support those who experience discrimination. European exchange enhances the enforcement strategies of the specialised equality bodies (from support to those who experience discrimination, to prevention of discrimination). Training for staff members of specialised equality bodies will make those who participate more familiar with, among other issues, key concepts of anti-discrimination law, in this way contributing to the uniform interpretation at national levels of European anti-discrimination law, and to the levelling up of anti-discrimination law and equality policies. A dialogue between the Network and European Union institutions provides European policy debates with an input of national experiences of specialised equality bodies. In this way national and European policy debates are linked, enhancing the further development of pro-active anti-discrimination and equality law and policies.



Conclusion

Specialised equality bodies established by the EU member states are in a unique position to promote equality through awareness building, enforcement and levelling up of European and national equality laws, as well as development and implementation of policies to promote and ensure equal treatment and combat discrimination.

EQUINET is established to ensure that specialised equality bodies can benefit from each other's experiences and expertise in their efforts to improve the enforcement of equal treatment laws, and the effectiveness of equality policies and practices. The specialised equality bodies united in EQUINET can make their views heard at a European Union and, where necessary and opportune, national level.

Mental Health and Inequality

**By John Redican,
Chief Executive,
Irish Advocacy Network**

People who have mental ill-health often try to conceal their illness for fear that others may treat them unfavourably or discriminate against them. There is ample evidence that this fear is well founded. A recent report by the UK Employers' Forum on disability states: "despite gradually changing attitudes there continues to be considerable discrimination against people with mental health problems". Employment is not the only area where such discrimination occurs. Problems in accessing suitable housing or in availing of the same level of financial services as the rest of the population are a commonplace experience, while some level of social rejection is almost universal.

People who suffer from mental ill-health often try to conceal their illness for fear that others may treat them unfavourably or discriminate against them

In order to bring an end to discrimination against those who have poor mental health, we must challenge not only the acts and

beliefs which result in such treatment, but also the notion that they are "different". Mental illness, just like any other illness, is part of the human condition. Not all of us contract cancer or diabetes, for example, but there is a broad risk. The same is true for mental illness. What is different, however, is the way in which treatment for mental illness may be given. A diagnosis of mental illness is one of the few diagnosis for which treatment may be forcibly administered, and for which people may be removed from society without their consent and detained without judicial review. The long delay in implementing the 2001 Mental Health Act, which addresses these anomalies, serves to illustrate how extraordinarily difficult it can be for those with a mental illness to gain even limited protection of their most basic human rights.

The Equality Authority has proven its effectiveness in supporting casework in relation to discriminatory acts. Stereotypical beliefs and misconceptions about those who are diagnosed or labelled as mentally ill, however, cannot be easily addressed, and continue to fuel the stigma which attaches to people who suffer mental ill-health, which in turn diminishes their status as citizens. If the Equality Authority is to succeed against all forms of discrimination, then it must define for itself its role in challenging stigma, the root cause of many

acts of discrimination against those with mental health problems and a major factor in defining them as different.

Language commonly used in connection with mental ill-health, contributes to stigma, and goes largely unrecognised as a form of discrimination

Antilocution, or the way in which misconceptions and stereotypes are unwittingly promoted and reinforced through the language commonly used in connection with mental ill-health, contributes to stigma. This issue goes largely unrecognised. The language used within treatment facilities is an example. Consider the following:

- Patients have dance therapy, they have art therapy, they have group discussion therapy; they do not hold dances, go to art classes or gather for a social chat;
- Managers use strategies to get what they want; patients are manipulative;
- Staff may assert themselves; patients get aggressive;
- Nurses often daydream; patients withdraw; and


- Perhaps someone could also explain what is so different about the bodily functions of staff that they require separate toilet facilities?

The language of everyday life is no different. The best way of defining someone's status in a community is often to listen to the things that are said about them behind their backs, and most of us have heard the objectionable and insulting terms by which people with poor mental health are likely to be described.

Societal misconceptions make it difficult for people with mental health problems to get a job or to find good quality accommodation. People with mental health problems are then generalised as unemployable or living in squalor. It becomes extremely difficult for these people to live ordinary lives and then it is said that they are in some way abnormal.

In sections of the print media, inappropriate language is used in a way that would not be tolerated if it were applied to other groupings. A newspaper article, for example, in the last few weeks was headlined: **"PSYCHO DRUG DEALER"**

Examining the story from a different perspective revealed that the individual in question was attempting to obtain the largest market share possible for his



product, he promoted it as desirable and trendy, he capitalised upon his competitors' weaknesses and he was ruthless in his pursuit of bad debts. He wanted to become the sole agent for its supply. In fact, he displayed more of the attributes of a successful businessman than he did those of a person suffering poor mental health. Yet imagine the outrage if the headline had described him in entrepreneurial terms!

This casual use of terms like "psycho" or "crazy" belittles and offends those who experience mental ill-health. I accept that this is mostly unintentional (although intentional ignorance also exists), and reflects back to times when little heed was given to the "correctness" of our language. Other "different" groups are no longer so frequently described in terms that offend them and it is time that this understanding and awareness was extended to those with a mental health problem. This is vital since there is an insidious effect that occurs. Constant use and acceptance of discriminatory language makes people feel bad about themselves and the way they are. It strikes at the heart of self-esteem and makes people with poor mental health begin to internalise the discrimination and to collude with it. It is the beginning of the road to self-stigmatisation and despair.

This is not an exhaustive examination of the discrimination and inequality faced by people with poor mental health, it is more an introduction. In order to progress we need to abandon the language of disability and difference, and embrace the notion of diversity and inclusion. Bodies like the Equality Authority can attack discriminatory practice in other ways than through casework. All leading independent statutory bodies need to design progressive programmes for using their resources to advance the right of all marginalised groups to inclusion and full participation in society on a truly equal footing. We have much to be proud of in Ireland; let us begin to be proud of the way that we treat our most vulnerable citizens.

I am indebted to the late Kieran Crowe for the many lively discussions we enjoyed on this subject, and his insight and understanding contributed in large part to this article.

Case Studies



By Patrick O'Leary,
Equality Authority

District Court Judge Makes Maximum Award in Discrimination Case under Intoxicating Liquor Act

The District Court recently awarded €6,300 in a case involving discrimination by a public house. This is the maximum award allowed under the Intoxicating Liquor Act 2003.

Sr Bríd Smith was refused access to Conway's Pub and Restaurant in Blackrock because she was accompanied by her guide dog. She arrived at the pub at 4.30pm to have a cup of coffee. She stated that she explained that she was allowed by law to bring her guide dog onto the premises but despite this the employee insisted she leave and ushered her through the door. Although a number of letters were exchanged Sr Smith felt that Conway's Pub and Restaurant had not accepted responsibility for the incident and did not make any effort to resolve the matter amicably or apologise to her.

Sr Bríd Smith brought a discrimination case on the disability ground to the District Court under the Intoxicating Liquor Act 2003. She was represented by the Equality Authority. The District Court found that she had been discriminated against under the disability ground and awarded €6,300.

The scale of the award is important. To be effective, anti-discrimination legislation requires that awards made, where discrimination is found to have happened, are effective, proportionate and dissuasive. In making the maximum award allowed, the Judge has sent out a clear and unequivocal message that discrimination by licensed premises is unacceptable and will prove costly to those found to have discriminated against people under the Intoxicating Liquor Act.

Discrimination by licensed premises has been a significant focus in the casework to date of the Equality Authority under the Equal Status Acts. The Intoxicating Liquor Act 2003 transferred jurisdiction for cases involving allegation of discrimination from the Equality Tribunal to the District Court.

Discrimination by licensed premises remains a serious issue. It affects people with disabilities as well as Travellers, gay and lesbian people, Black and minority ethnic people and young and older people. The finding of, and the award made by, the District Court will hopefully stimulate a review of current practices within this sector.

Equality Authority given leave to appear as Amicus Curiae in High Court case, should the Race Directive arise as part of the case.

Equality Authority to Play Role of Amicus Curiae for First Time in High Court Proceedings involving controversial trespass legislation.

The Equality Authority was recently given leave to appear as amicus curiae (friend of the Court) in High Court proceedings being brought by a Traveller family against Ballina Town Council, Mayo County Council, the Commissioner of An Garda Síochána, the Director of Public Prosecutions, the District Justice sitting in Ballina Court and Ireland and the Attorney General.

Mr Justice Iarfhlaith O'Neill gave leave to the Equality Authority to appear as amicus curiae in relation to the application and interpretation of the Race Directive should it arise as part of the case.

The case being taken by the Traveller family raises a number of issues. These include the failure to meet the accommodation needs of the Traveller family. The plaintiffs also contend that the Criminal Justice (Public Order Act) has a disproportionate and discriminatory impact on members of the Traveller community. This Act criminalises entry into and occupations of lands in certain situations. It gives members of An Garda Síochána broad powers including arrest and removal of caravans.

The EU Race Directive prohibits discrimination based on racial or ethnic origin in a range of areas including housing.


This is the first time that the Equality Authority has sought to play this role of amicus curiae (friend of the Court). Should the Race Directive arise in this case, it will provide an important opportunity to set out its relevance to the matters under consideration by the Court. This reflects a valuable precedent in the work of the Equality Authority in combating discrimination and promoting equality of opportunity.

First Case on Sexual Orientation ground under Intoxicating Liquor Act 2003

The Equality Authority welcomes the judgement of District Justice Clyne in Cork District Court that the conduct of Malone's Bar in Blarney, County Cork in relation to Myra McGuirk and Eileen Twomey amounted to discrimination on the sexual orientation ground contrary to section 19 of the Intoxicating Liquor Act, 2003.

The two women had brought a claim of discrimination and harassment under the Intoxicating Liquor Act 2003 against Malone's pub Blarney Co. Cork. The claim was brought under the sexual orientation ground and the claimants were supported by the Equality Authority.

On 13th March 2005 the two women went to Malone's pub between 9.30 pm and 10 pm with two friends. They stated that there



was a lively going away party taking place in the pub and they went to the back of the pub where they ordered drinks and put their names down to play pool.

One of the women went to the bathroom where she stated she encountered a number of women from the party blowing up a naked life size doll. On her way out she stated that she met the owner of the pub and a male customer who started to speak to her. She stated that the owner of the pub informed the customer that he was wasting his time as the woman's girlfriend was nearby.

Subsequently the two women played pool. After a game of doubles one of the women played a second game of singles. Her partner wished her luck and gave her a good luck kiss. The woman stated that the owner of the pub then informed her that if she did not refrain from such behaviour she would be asked to leave.

The woman stated that her partner gave her a hug and told her they would finish their drinks and leave. After the two women hugged they stated that the bar staff cleared the pool table and turned off the lights.

The women stated that they told the owner that he had no right to behave in this manner and that they had the same rights as everyone else in the pub. They stated that the owner of the pub said he was the law in his own pub and that he threw his solicitor's business card at them.

The courage of the claimants in bringing forward this case was highlighted by the Equality Authority. The incident was traumatic for them yet they have come forward as valuable role models for the gay and lesbian community in challenging homophobia. There is a significant under-reporting of homophobia given the fear of exposure and further harassment for many lesbian and gay people. In such a context the outcome of this case is hugely important in beginning to break these fears and to affirm the rights of lesbian and gay people.

This was a case where discrimination and harassment were triggered by normal day to day expressions of affection between two lesbian women. It captures the difficult context within which lesbian and gay people seek to relate and create partnerships of love and care. It highlights again the need to progress the introduction of partnership rights that affirm and celebrate same sex relationships in the same way as heterosexual relationships.

However the failure to award compensation in this case was disappointing given the impact of the experience on the two women.

Implementing Equality for Carers



**By Patrick O'Leary,
Equality Authority**

'Implementing Equality for Carers' is a new report of the Equality Authority. It defines caring and caring work in terms of the provision of assistance and support, on an unpaid basis, to family members, relatives or friends who need such care because of disability, old age or long term illness. It highlights that:

- Carers are more likely to be women;
- More than half of Irish people will experience some caring responsibilities during their lifetime;
- There were 150,000 carers in Ireland in 2002, with 57% providing 14 hours or less of care work per week, while 27% provided 43 hours or more;
- There is diversity among the caring population. They are to be found amongst old people, lone parents, people with disabilities and from a diverse range of ethnic backgrounds (including Travellers).

This report presents a broad ranging strategy to enhance the situation and experience of carers and of those people with disabilities and older people who need care. There is a particular focus on employment, income and costs of care,

health and social care services, lifelong learning, status and participation.

Employment

There is a need to ensure that carers have genuine choices in relation to caring, paid employment or a combination of the two. Carers' concerns embrace equality in access to employment, in career progression, in working conditions and in access to work life balance provisions. Flexibility and security within employment is fundamental to carers. Moving into and out of the workplace periodically and reducing/increasing working hours requires facilitation through social security systems, providing financial cover, employment legislation guaranteeing necessary leave and human resource functions providing supportive workplace practices.

Flexibility and security within employment is fundamental to carers

Income and Costs of Care

Costs associated with caring include employment earnings and pension entitlements foregone, day to day costs, medical consultation and treatment, medication, home care and residential care. Some carers receive carer-related payments



and others receive pensions or other social welfare payments. However the report findings reveal that current income support levels do not reflect the economic value of caring work or the opportunity costs for doing this work.

The traditional and current approach of the State to the sharing of caring responsibilities between family and the State is a residual one

Health and Social Care Services

The traditional and current approach of the State to the sharing of caring responsibilities between family and State is a residual one, based on the premise that families have the main responsibility. The report emphasises the need for a greater role for the State in the provision of care services. The report advocates needs assessment, as carers require services and supports that address their own needs as carers. Home care, day care and respite care all have importance, if the needs of those who require care are to be met and if carers are to have the freedom to fulfil aspirations in relation to employment and

other areas of their lives. There needs to be an increase in the availability and flexibility of home and community care services to meet the needs of people with disabilities and older people who need care.



Social Participation and Lifelong Learning

Social participation in all its forms - friendships, recreation, community, civic and cultural engagement - has value for the individual. Respite services must be flexible and designed to fit with the social schedules of carers and the needs of those who require care. Lifelong learning is important for the continued enhancement of skills and abilities and for the individual's own general development, employment



and career prospects. Educational and training opportunities must be resourced and tailored for carers and offered in flexible modes.

Equality and diversity training is required for service providers and employers to promote greater awareness of carers

Recognition and Status

Recognition and status reflects the extent to which carers and the caring role are valued in society. When carers and the caring role are not valued, their needs are not met or are met inadequately. Equality proofing involves all policies and programmes being tested for their potential relevance to carers and other groups experiencing inequality. The report calls for equality proofing all policies and programmes alongside developing a capacity for policymakers, those who need care and carers' organisations to engage effectively in equality proofing. Equality and diversity training is required for service providers and employers to promote greater awareness of carers and their situation and experience. The report recommends an amendment to the

definition of the family status ground in equality legislation to better reflect the diversity of caring situations.

Participation

Participation by carers and carer organisations in decision-making is key to ensuring the needs of carers are taken into account in decision-making. Carer organisations should have access to the decision-making process and should be resourced sufficiently for effective participation.

Conclusion

'Implementing Equality for Carers' sets out an agenda for real and concrete change in the situation and experience of carers. Its recommendations focus on different policy areas and programmes capable of addressing the needs of a diversity of carers and caring situations, in a manner that is coherent with the pursuit of equality for people with disabilities, older people and people with long term illness that need care.

You can obtain a free copy of 'Implementing Equality for Carers' by contacting our Public Information Centre by phone on 1890 245545 or by post at 2 Clonmel Street, Dublin 2. It is also available to download on our website, www.equality.ie.

Update



By Niall Crowley,
Chief Executive Officer,
Equality Authority

Strategic Plan

The Equality Authority has launched its strategic plan 2006 to 2008. This emphasised the challenge to embed equality and established a mission for the Equality Authority "to stimulate and support a commitment to equality:

- Within the systems and practices of key organisations and institutions.
- As part of the cultural values espoused by society.
- As a dimension to individual attitudes and actions."

Over the next three years the Equality Authority will organise its work around five objectives:-

- To stimulate and support initiatives that enables the systems and practices of key organisations and institutions to promote and achieve full equality in practice.
- To maintain and further develop a culture of compliance with the equality legislation.
- To contribute to the further development of a strategic framework for action on equality.
- To stimulate and support a response to core equality issues for specific groups experiencing inequality.

- To sustain and further develop the standing, expertise and capacity of the Equality Authority at international, national and local levels.



*Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform,
Michael McDowell and Karen Erwin, Chairperson,
Equality Authority at the launch of the Strategic
Plan 2006–2008*

The Strategic Plan reflects a continuity with the work done by the Equality Authority over the previous two Strategic Plans of the organisation and new initiatives involved in the commitments:-

- To develop a focus on equality in accommodation.
- To test the full range of function and powers available to the Equality Authority.
- To explore and identify the boundaries for, and to promote the use of, positive action.



- To develop projects on core equality issues for specific groups experiencing inequality across the nine grounds.
- To maintain and further develop a profile and presence for the Equality Authority at local level.



Minister of State at the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, Tony Killeen launching Work Life Balance Day

Work Life Balance

The Framework Committee for Work Life Balance once again organised the annual Work Life Balance Day on 1st March. The Equality Authority used the occasion to highlight significant challenges that remain in relation to achieving Work Life Balance. These related to:-

- Practice at enterprise level in all sectors to secure planned and systematic approaches to workplace flexibilities that facilitate Work Life Balance across the nine grounds.
- Policy change to address deficiencies in parental leave and the absence of paternity leave and to develop rights in relation to access to flexible working arrangements.
- The further development of a support infrastructure to assist enterprises in the design and implementation of Work Life Balance initiatives.

North South Co-operation

The Equality Authority and the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland have developed a strategic approach to cooperation based on an annual joint Board meeting. This year's meeting focused on the issues of migration, of inequality and poverty, and of equality in health services. Current collaboration includes joint work on the annual Anti-Racist Workplace Week and on the issue of achieving a visibility for lesbian and gay people in the work of specialised equality bodies.

The two bodies have just launched an important research project on "Equivalence in Promoting Equality – The Implication of the Multi Party Agreement for the Further Development of Equality Measures for Northern Ireland and Ireland". This was written by Colm O'Cinneide.

The project explores the requirement on the Irish Government under the Agreement "to further strengthen the protection of human rights in its jurisdiction" and to ensure "at least an equivalent level of protection of human



Colm O'Kinneide, author of Equivalence in Promoting Equality

rights as will pertain in Northern Ireland". It identifies a lack of equivalence in a number of areas including:-

- Limitations in the scope of Irish equality legislation
- Limitations in the treatment of transsexual people and of gay and lesbian people in Ireland
- The absence of positive duties to promote equality in the Irish equality legislation.

Age

The Equality Authority, the National Council on Ageing and Older People and the Health Service Executive are organising the third



annual Say No To Ageism Week. This will take place from May 15th to May 19th. It will emphasise age friendly provision of goods and services. The Health sector and the Transport sector have committed to developing and implementing action plans to mark the week.



Attendees at the launch of Inequality and the Stereotyping of Young People

Young people have been a focus for a joint initiative between the Equality Authority and the National Youth Council of Ireland. "Inequality and the Stereotyping of Young People" was researched and written by Maurice Devlin. This concluded that the young people involved in the research "see their institutional relationships with adults as for the most part unequal, troubled and rooted in stereotypical ideas about their attitudes and abilities". The report sets out a range of recommendations which will now be pursued by the Equality Authority and the National Youth Council of Ireland.



Housing and Equality: what are the key issues?

By Michelle Norris,
School of Applied Social Science,
University College Dublin

The advent of the 'celtic tiger' economy in the mid 1990s and the associated population growth contributed to dramatic change in the Irish housing market. In the mid 1990s the traditional pattern of low and steady rate of residential property price and rent inflation ceased – house prices increased by 251 per cent between 1996 and 2002 and private rent inflation jumped from 3 per cent per annum between 1990 and 1996 to 14.6 per cent in 2000/2001. These developments also had implications for the social housing sector. They brought an end to falling demand and consequently waiting lists for accommodation of this type grew by 76 per cent between 1996 and 2002. Although the latest available information indicates that waiting lists have fallen slightly since the latter year.

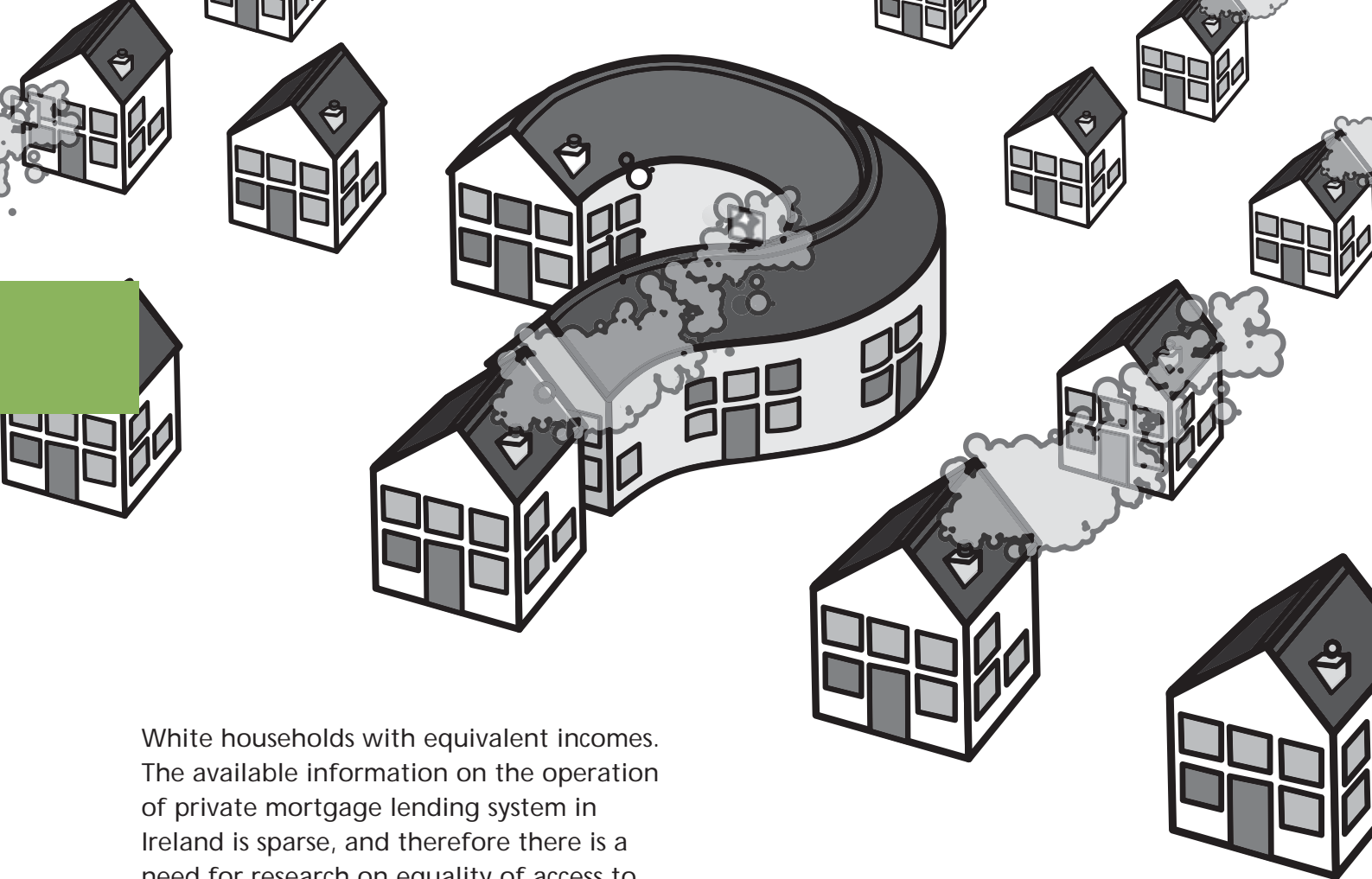
In the mid 1990's the traditional pattern of low and steady rate of residential property price and rent inflation ceased

The implications of these pressures on the housing system for housing affordability have been well documented in the media,

in research and in reports from government, including most recently the National Economic and Social Council study – *Housing in Ireland: Performance and Policy*. However, the relationship between the house price boom and the other aspects of equality, such as discrimination in access, have been the subject of relatively little research, and only a small number of equality proofing projects have been implemented in the housing field. This article suggests an agenda for research and equality proofing action in this area.

Home Owners

According to Census 2002, 77.4 per cent of the Irish population own their own homes, and 49 per cent of these households have a mortgage. In view of the dominance of this sector, access to mortgage credit is a key equality issue. Many more lenders have entered the Irish mortgage market and lending criteria in terms of the types of households to which mortgages are advanced have liberalised significantly. However, evidence from the USA highlights problems in access to mortgages on the part of the Black community, particularly among low and middle income Black households, which has contributed to lower home ownership rates compared to



White households with equivalent incomes. The available information on the operation of private mortgage lending system in Ireland is sparse, and therefore there is a need for research on equality of access to mortgage credit, together with the inclusion of more detailed information on the characteristics of borrowers than is currently published in the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government's Housing Statistics Bulletin, to facilitate equality monitoring.

Access to mortgage credit is a key equality issue

Private Renters

The longstanding decline of the private rented sector has reversed in recent years and the proportion of households living in this sector grew from 7.0 per cent in 1991 to 11.1 per cent in 2002. This development has significant implications for equality because there is evidence of discrimination in the letting of accommodation in this sector. For instance Guerin's (1999) study of recipients of rent supplement – the main support for low income tenants in this sector – which was published by

the Combat Poverty Agency, reveals that recipients of this benefit faced significant problems securing accommodation because landlords are unwilling to let to them. While research published in 2004 by the Vincentian Refugee Centre, revealed that asylum seekers and refugees face similar problems.

The introduction of the Residential Tenancies Act, 2004 effected a greater equalisation of the rights of landlords and tenants in the private rented residential sector than has traditionally been the case. The Private Residential Tenancies Board which is responsible for implementing the legislation could potentially play a role in averting discrimination by highlighting the Equal Status Act, 2000 and the role of the Equality Authority among tenants and landlords, and extending the types of data it collates on tenancies to provide information appropriate for equality monitoring.



Social Renters

Although only 8 per cent of Irish households live in social rented accommodation, this sector plays a key role in housing low income households and those with specific needs in addition to housing. Approximately 80 per cent of social housing is provided by local authorities, and the Housing Act, 1988, requires that tenancies in this sector be allocated according to a scheme of letting priorities adopted by the elected members of the authority. Wicklow County Council recently published research on the operation of its scheme in view of the requirements of the Equal Status Act, and has conducted an equality proofing exercise on this basis. This approach could be usefully followed by other local authorities. Over the past two decades housing associations and housing co-operatives have taken on an increasingly important role in the provision of social housing. Therefore, equality proofing action would also be

appropriate in this sector. This could be managed by the representative body for this sector – the Irish Council for Social Housing.

Other Groups

In addition to the groups mentioned above, members of the Traveller community and people with disabilities merit particular attention, because there is evidence that members of both these communities experience particular difficulties in accessing appropriate accommodation. Moreover, their difficulties in this regard contribute to other problems such as exclusion from paid employment in the case of people with disabilities and poor health status in the case of Travellers.

Reference:

Guerin, D., 1999, *A Survey of Recipients of SWA Rent Supplement*. Dublin: Combat Poverty Agency



Reviews and Action Plans



By Karen Downes,
Human Resources
Manager, Siemens
Business Services



Siemens Business Services is an internationally leading IT Services and Outsourcing organisation; the company is a wholly owned subsidiary of Siemens AG. Globally, Siemens Business Services have over 33,000 employees. In Ireland Siemens Business Services employ over 500 people across 3 different locations, Dublin, Cork and Belfast. The company offers a complete range of IT solutions and services – everything from IT consulting and systems integration to the operation and maintenance of IT infrastructures, the product service offering spans along the entire design, build, operate and maintain value chain. Our customers include many of the largest organisations in the financial services, government and retail sectors. Our offerings are supported by a service culture built on trust and a belief in individual business relationships.

The diversity of our business, the customers we deliver to and our locations, translates to our people

The diversity of our business, the customers we deliver to and our locations, translates to our people. Because the customer base that we serve is so diverse, so too are the people

working for us delivering to those customers. Having our business spread across 3 different locations north and south of the border creates a cultural diversity awareness challenge for us, so too does the fact that our call centre in Cork employs people from over 20 different countries and delivers support to customers right across the Europe/Middle East/African region 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. At Siemens Business Services our mission is to create value for our customers by providing business services enabled by information and communication technology. We achieve this through creative and committed people employing innovative solutions to meet customer needs, today and tomorrow. Our values guide each employee towards achieving excellence for our customers, the company and the individuals themselves. Our people are the driving force for achieving excellence. Our values are customer culture, competitiveness, cooperation, creativity and commitment. Diversity awareness and equality at work are fundamental organisational components to helping us realise those values.

People are the lifeblood in any organisation. The declining available labour force will continue to present challenges for Irish organisations, especially those that have in the past maintained a fairly homogeneous labour force. Recognising the need to draw from a wider global talent pool and



leveraging of it will be a key differentiator in determining organisational success. What will be even more important is ensuring that that talent is nurtured and retained. In order for us to attract and retain talent both now and in the future for our business not only to survive, but to thrive, it is crystal clear to us that we must be aware and sensitive to all employees in our organisation. We need to be sensitive toward a growing market segmentation based on differing cultures, differing customs and attitudes and differing beliefs.

This means that we all need to learn to accept what is different from us and respect it. When all segments are respected and utilised, it benefits everyone involved. Successfully managed, diversity can be a strategic tool to build stronger, more flexible organisations. Managing diversity is about creating an environment in which everyone can achieve his or her full potential. Employees are happier and more productive if they are appreciated and included, not assimilated or tolerated.

Successfully managed diversity can be a strategic tool to build stronger, more flexible organisations





Improved innovation and creativity are documented benefits of a diversity aware organisation. Teams that are diverse and inclusive find more innovative, feasible

and effective ways to overcome challenges. They bring a variety of perspectives to a situation and thus offer a wider range of solutions. For Siemens Business Services, creating a more diversity aware culture is living our values as well as proactively contributing to the future success of our organisation.

Becoming more diversity aware will help us understand the global cultural differences of our customers, enable us to become a more competitive employer and customer of choice, allow us to work together in the spirit of cooperation, realise the creativity that can be enhanced through the sharing of ideas across a diverse workforce and demonstrate a real commitment to our employees that we value equality in our workforce.


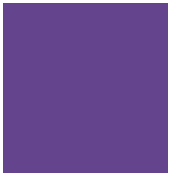

On a more practical and tangible level, what we hope to realise is the benefits to the business from:

- selecting, promoting and developing people based on ability and potential;
- making appointments from the widest appropriate source;
- maximising the potential contribution of all employees;
- ensuring the involvement and commitment of all employees;
- encouraging innovative and productive working relationships both internally and externally with customers;

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- ensuring we meet the varied needs of our diverse customer base; and
 - retaining competitive edge through a strengthened reputation.

It is for this reason that we decided in conjunction with support from the Equality Authority, to embark on a business and process Equality Review. From the Equality Review that we are currently carrying out we hope to gain a 'temperature check' as to where our organisation is currently at on its route to creating a more diversity aware culture. Working with a team of external consultants chosen through a tendering process, we are looking at everything we do across our business, how we do it, and what our employees think of what we do.

The Equality Review has essentially four main components:

- 1 All of our policies and procedures will be reviewed by the external consultants;
 - 2 Our HR team will complete an equality questionnaire designed specifically to measure HR processes;
 - 3 Our managers will complete an equality questionnaire designed specifically to measure how management comply with HR processes; and
 - 4 Our employees will complete questionnaires designed specifically to measure how fair and diverse they believe the culture of the company currently is.
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Once the review is complete, the hard work starts and we will have to start action planning to make improvements based on the recommendations that we receive.

Reviewing Progress on Equality for Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual People




**By Eoin Collins,
Director of Policy
Change, GLEN –
Gay and Lesbian
Equality Network**

Since the publication of the Equality Authority report *Implementing Equality for Lesbian, Gays and Bisexuals* in 2002 areas of progress can be identified in addressing some of the key inequalities identified. The Garda Síochána in particular have taken a number of important strategic steps to make the police service more responsive to the reality of anti-gay violence. However, progress in many other areas is less apparent. For example, despite the best efforts of individuals within the education sector, very limited systemic action has been taken to address the reality of bullying and harassment experienced by young lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB) people, or those perceived to be LGB, at school. Such bullying has been identified by BeLong To Youth Project (Ireland's only dedicated project for LGB and transgendered youth) as one of the most significant issues raised by young participants in their project and a risk factor for mental health problems and suicide for the most vulnerable young people.

The enactment of the Civil Partnership Act for same sex couples in Britain and Northern Ireland has also highlighted the lack of legal recognition given to lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB) couples and families in Ireland. Although it falls short of full equality, as LGB people continue to be excluded from civil marriage, the Act does give LGB couples north of the border almost all of the rights and responsibilities of marriage, including joint adoption, parental responsibility and recognition of same sex partners in immigration law. These are hugely important issues for LGB families with children in Ireland and for the growing number of those in relationships with people from outside the EU. In the absence of legal recognition, LGB couples and families experience or face the threat of separation.

There has also been an international trend towards rejecting 'separate but equal' institutions such as civil partnership, and opening out civil marriage to all. Five countries have gone for full equality with civil marriage now accessible to same sex couples. These include the Netherlands, Belgium, Canada and most recently Spain and South Africa. Access to marriage has also been secured in the US State of Massachusetts. The Supreme Judicial Court of that State overturned the ban on same



sex civil marriage in 2003, treating it as a civil rights issue on a par with previous bans in the US on inter-racial marriage.

GLEN – Gay and Lesbian Equality Network has secured funding from the Atlantic Philanthropies that will support our five year strategy to address these and other inequalities. The strategy is an ambitious one, with high expectations about what can and should be achieved over the next few years to promote equality across a wide range of areas including legal recognition of relationships and families, education, employment, health, immigration, community development and security and safety.

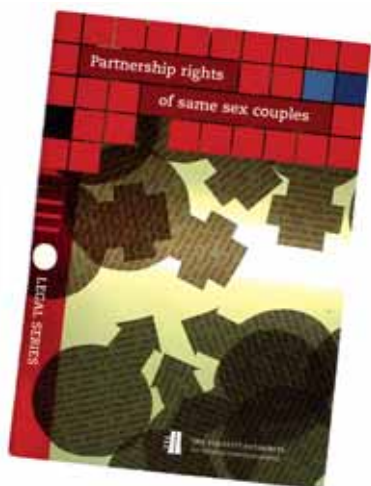
Significant changes have happened in Irish society that provide an important opportunity for promoting equality in these areas. Rapid growth in employment has raised the expectations of many LGB people, who now have the opportunity to access employment where they can be open about their sexuality and the opportunity to avoid or address discriminatory or unsafe work environments. This has been recognised by a growing number of companies, who have explicitly included sexual orientation in their equal opportunities policies so as to attract LGB workers. There has also been a much greater visibility of LGB people, with

prominent people in the media and show business 'coming out' with general public support or with benign public indifference.



*Implementing
Equality for
Lesbians, Gays
& Bisexuals*

These and other changes have increased confidence among LGB people and raised expectations of people's entitlements as full and equal citizens. LGB people, especially younger people who have come to adulthood with criminalisation part of a distant history, expect to be valued by their families and friends, expect to be valued in school free of bullying and harassment and expect to pursue any career option open to their heterosexual peers. LGB people expect to be safe on the streets or in the areas in which they socialise or live. Probably most importantly, they expect to have their relationships and families recognised and treated equally before the law.



Partnership Rights of Same Sex Couples

GLEN has a responsibility to deliver on and further raise these expectations by implementing an effective and feasible strategy for action based on the simple principle of equality. We want to foster a 'can do' culture where there is no sense of limited horizons, a quality that is already evident among many younger LGB people. With regard to legal recognition of relationships for example, GLEN has called on the Government not to limit its horizons to legislative change in the UK and to make Ireland the sixth country in the world to open civil marriage to LGB people. This step would be in line with the Taoiseach's stated ambitions for Ireland as outward looking, open and accommodating of change and diversity.

The Equal Status Acts 2000 to 2004 and the Provision of Health Services



By Patrick Lynch,
The Health Service
Executive

The past year has seen the continued implementation of the largest change management programme ever undertaken in the history of the State. The health boards, which had delivered health services since the early 1970s, ceased to exist and the Health Service Executive (HSE) was established to manage the hospital, primary, community and continuing care services across the country. These services run at a cost in excess of €12 billion per year, employ over 100,000 people.

Everyone at some point in their lives can expect to avail of the health services and that is why the *National Health Strategy: Quality and Fairness* published in 2001, commits to the development of a 'world class' health service that is equitable, people-centred, responsive and that offers appropriate care delivery.

Tackling Health Inequalities

Nowadays it is recognised that there are a range of environmental and socio economic

factors that determine health status and that impact on health outcomes, including higher rates of suicide, mental health problems, mortality, and levels of chronic and physical illness. Tackling health inequalities is therefore a major challenge for the HSE, as it seeks to improve the health of the nation and is a challenge that is receiving a major focus in the health service reform programme. Some of the specific initiatives being put in place by the HSE include the development of a population health approach to planning and implementing health services, establishment of a National Social Inclusion Programme, the development of a national Intercultural Strategy and active involvement in delivering on the objectives of the National Anti Poverty Strategy.

In this wider context of tackling health inequalities and as one of the largest providers of services in the State, the HSE also recognises that the Equal Status Acts 2000 to 2004 place significant statutory



Tánaiste and Minister for Health and Children, Mary Harney, TD launching Equal Status Acts and the Provision of Health Services

equality responsibilities on the health services. It acknowledges that while services typically meet the needs of the majority, they do not always respond adequately to those on the margins. Historically people with physical disabilities faced difficulties accessing buildings that were not designed to allow them readily access the service inside. While not visible, there are other barriers which are in every way as daunting as those physical ones.

The experiences and personal stories of people under the nine grounds covered by the Equal Status Acts, help illustrate some of the difficulties that can be faced.

- The pregnant 15 year old who stops attending ante natal classes because the class leader keeps encouraging the participants to bring their husbands to the sessions;
- The teenage unmarried father who may be excluded in the care of his new born;
- The young gay person who fears disclosure about his sexuality, even though this might have a bearing on his condition. (There is growing evidence of considerably higher rates of self harm and suicide amongst people who are gay, due to stigma and marginalisation);

- The potential lack of understanding of cultural characteristics that impact on ethnic and cultural minorities accessing health services, including the availability of chaplaincy/worship facilities and provision for spiritual needs of minority ethnic groups, particularly during the process of dying and at death;
- At the age of 65 Irish men have the lowest life expectancy in the EU; and
- That members of the Traveller community live between 10 and 12 years less than the overall population.

An Equality Competent Health Service

An equality competent health service should therefore ensure that services are responsive to all parts of the community, recognising that a range of factors including marginalisation, discrimination, alternative cultures and practices may impact on equality in terms of:

- Access to services
- Treatment
- Provision and receipt of health services
- Participation and representation
- Outcome

and that positive action may be required to redress the balance for specific groups.

Working with the Equality Authority

The HSE is working closely with the Equality Authority and the Department of Health and Children to explore ways in which equality in the provision of services can be progressed. A joint publication entitled *'The Equal Status Acts 2000 to 2004 and the Provision of Health Services'* was recently launched by the Tánaiste and Minister for Health and Children. This publication serves as a useful guide to health service staff on implementing equality. The HSE has also established a national equality programme to provide leadership across the HSE in this area. This programme will build on the range of equality initiatives around the country and in particular will draw on the findings from the Equal Status Reviews undertaken in the North West and Tallaght Hospital.



*Equal Status Acts
2000 to 2004 &
the Provisions of
Health Services*

The HSE has also included in its three year Corporate Plan (2005-2008) an explicit commitment to equality, and work has commenced on developing a national equality framework for the health services. This framework will provide direction for the organisation at every level, ensuring equality continues to be promoted as a core value of the health services. Additionally, during 2006 following a review of the experiences of the

Work has commenced on developing a national equality framework for the health services

Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual (LGB) community in the North West, a specific initiative will be undertaken to consider the health service needs of this community. The HSE will also work to implement the health related provisions of the National Action Plan Against Racism in response to the health needs of Ireland's increasingly ethnically diverse population.

So 2006 is an important year for the HSE, both organisationally and in terms of advancing its equality work. It is hoped the momentum that has been developed to date will be built on and that the health services can become a leader in this important area.

Recent publications



*Strategic Plan
2006 - 2008*

'Embedding Equality' is the title of the third Strategic Plan 2006-2008 of the Equality Authority. The actions and goals established in the plan are designed to place a concern for equality at the heart of individual endeavour, institutional practice and societal value base.

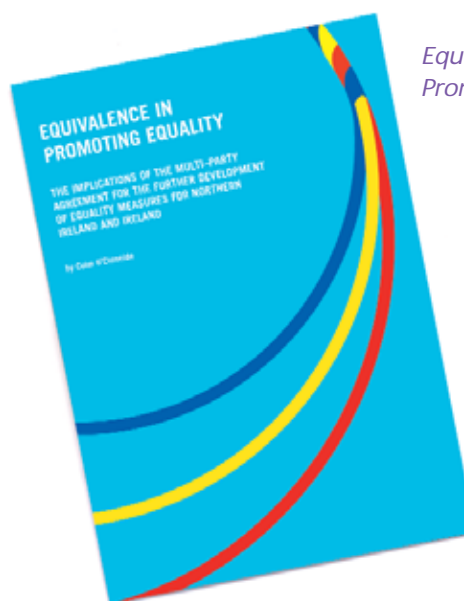
This strategic plan is the product of widespread consultation at national and local level. This consultation involved community organisations and networks, business networks, trade unions, Government departments and state agencies.

This strategic plan establishes Equality Authority commitment to contributing to change through:

- enforcement and enhancement of the equality legislation,
- negotiation and joint initiative, to devise and support good practice in promoting

equality, accommodating diversity and combating discrimination,

- knowledge development that provides new information and analysis of equality issues,
- cultural action that contributes to a societal value base that prizes equality.



*Equivalence in
Promoting Equality*

A research report on 'Equivalence in Promoting Equality – the Implications of the Multi-Party Agreement for the further Development of Equality Measures for Northern Ireland and Ireland' is a joint initiative of the Equality Authority and the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland. Research was carried out by Colm O'Connell from the Faculty of Law in University College London.

The Multi-Party Agreement signed in Belfast in 1998 provides a backdrop to the establishment and work of both the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland and the Equality Authority. *'Equivalence in Promoting Equality'* is an exploration of the commitment by the Irish Government in the Agreement to "further strengthen the protection of human rights in its jurisdiction" and to ensure "at least an equivalent level of protection of human rights as will pertain in Northern Ireland". The research highlights that this is a binding commitment that places an obligation on the Irish Government to take action to maintain this equivalence in the protection of human rights.



Inequality & the Stereotyping of Young People

Young people believe they are seen in a very negative light by adults and perceive their treatment at the hands of adults as being unequal and unfair according to *'Inequality and the Stereotyping of*

Young People', published by the Equality Authority and the National Youth Council of Ireland.

Stereotyping is about putting labels on a group of people. It is about establishing fixed and unyielding characteristics for young people that make no allowance for personal choice or for the diversity of young people. Young people are stereotyped as idealistic, as irresponsible or as given to excess. This has practical consequences for young people in terms of their views being dismissed, of having no say in decisions that impact on them, and of control emerging as the imperative in policy initiatives targeting young people. The research poses particular challenges to journalists, politicians, teachers and the Gardaí in terms of the perspectives of young people.

The research involved ten focus groups with approximately ninety young people from different parts of the country including young people with different identities and circumstances.

Free copies of these reports can be obtained by contacting our Public Information Centre by phone on 1890 245 545 or by post at 2 Clonmel Street, Dublin 2. They are also available to download on our website at www.equality.ie



THE EQUALITY AUTHORITY
AN tÚDARÁS COMHIONANNAIS

Research and Consultancy Contracts

The Equality Authority is reviewing its register from which tenders are sought and wishes to invite individuals/organisations with expertise in equality, research and certain corporate issues to apply for inclusion on its register by completing a Registration Form.

The register will be used when the Equality Authority is issuing Requests for Tenders. Inclusion on the list will not, however, imply that individuals/organisations will be invited to tender.

Information on the work of the Equality Authority is on its website at: www.equality.ie

Requests for Registration Forms should be e-mailed to: tenders@equality.ie

If you have any enquiries please contact:

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The Equality Authority would like to advise all callers that they can visit www.equality.ie or contact our Public Information Centre directly at 01 417 3333 or Lo Call number 1890 245 545, for information on the Employment Equality Act, 1998 and the Equal Status Act, 2000. Information is also available on the Maternity Protection Act, 1994, the Adoptive Leave Act, 1995 and the Parental Leave Act, 1998.