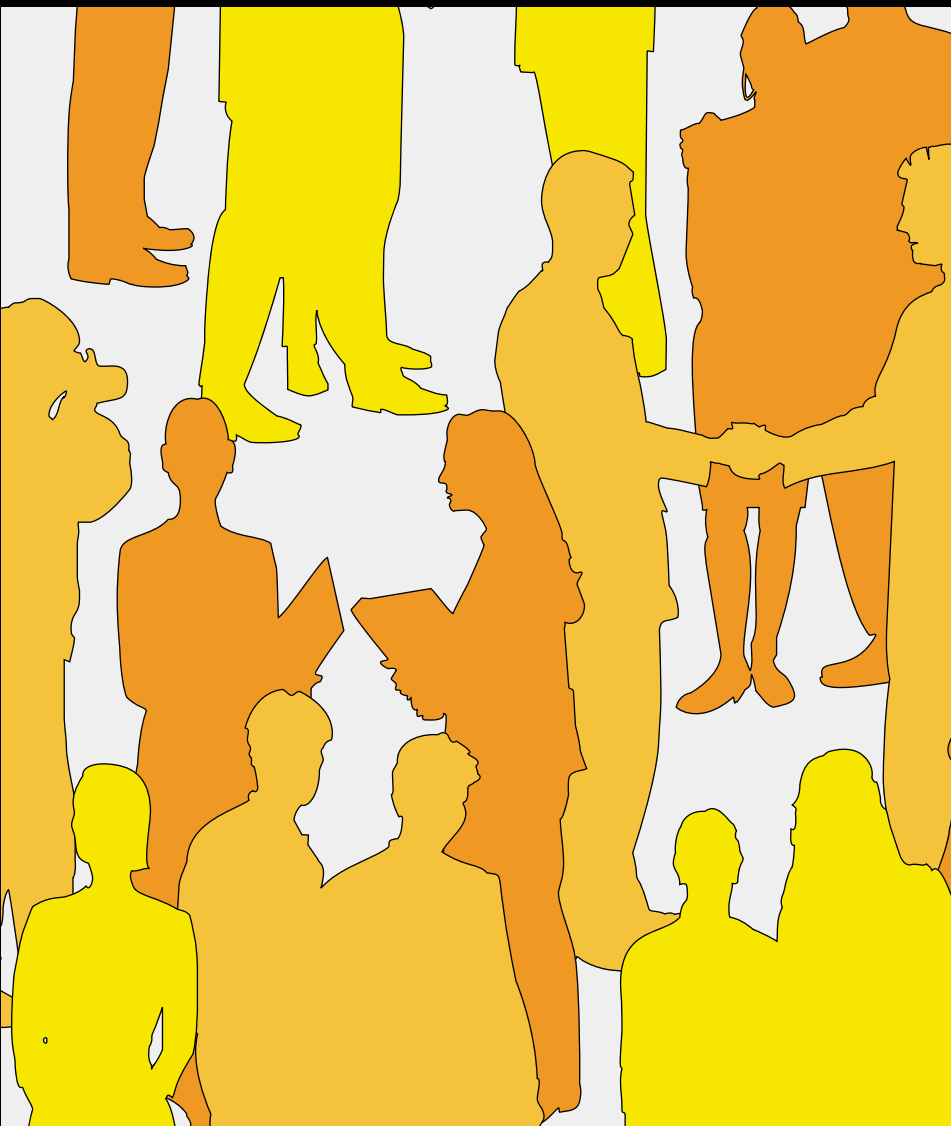


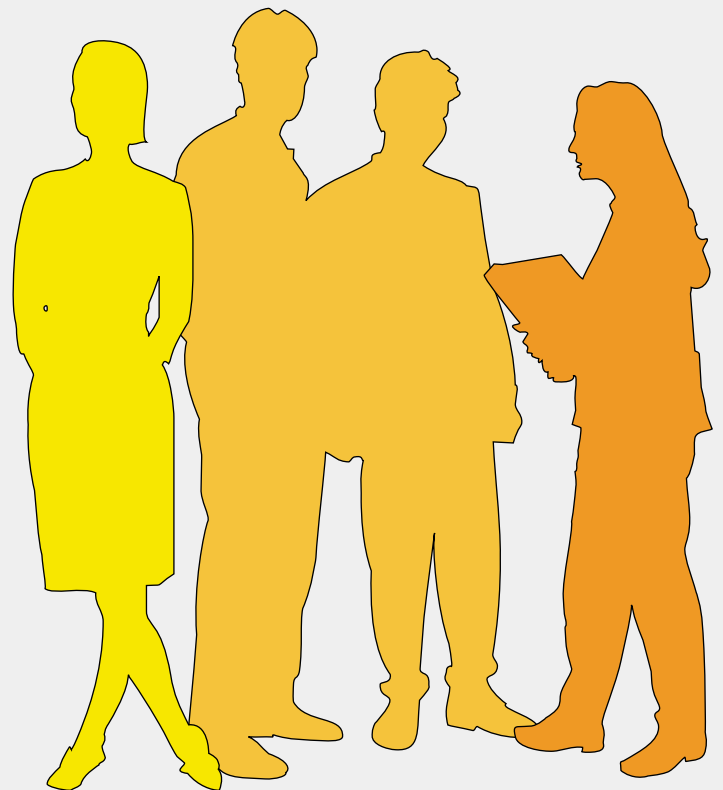
# Strategic Plan 2006 – 2008

## *Embedding Equality*



THE EQUALITY AUTHORITY  
AN tÚDARÁS COMHIONANNAIS

# Embedding Equality



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by

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## Preface

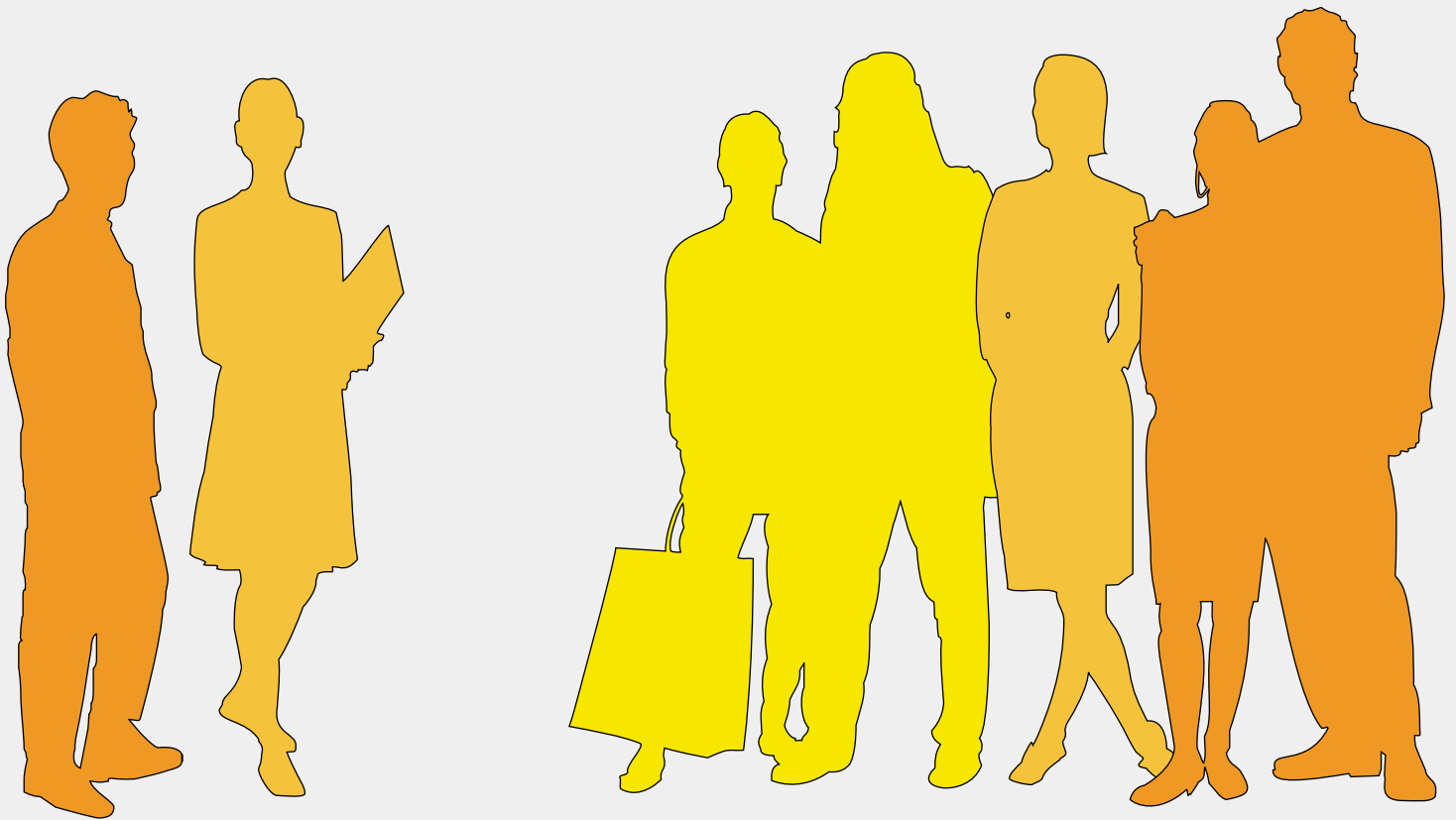
Embedding equality has been chosen as the core theme for this the third strategic plan of the Equality Authority. The actions and goals established in the plan are designed to place a concern for equality at the heart of individual endeavour, institutional practice and our societal value base.

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. The quality of their contribution is reflected in the ambition of this strategic plan.

The successful implementation of this plan will depend on the engagement of all these different organisations with the goals and actions that are set out. The Equality Authority has been fortunate in the past in the partnerships that it has been able to develop with this wide array of organisations. It is this shared ambition and shared endeavour that allows an optimism that this strategic plan can be successfully and effectively implemented.

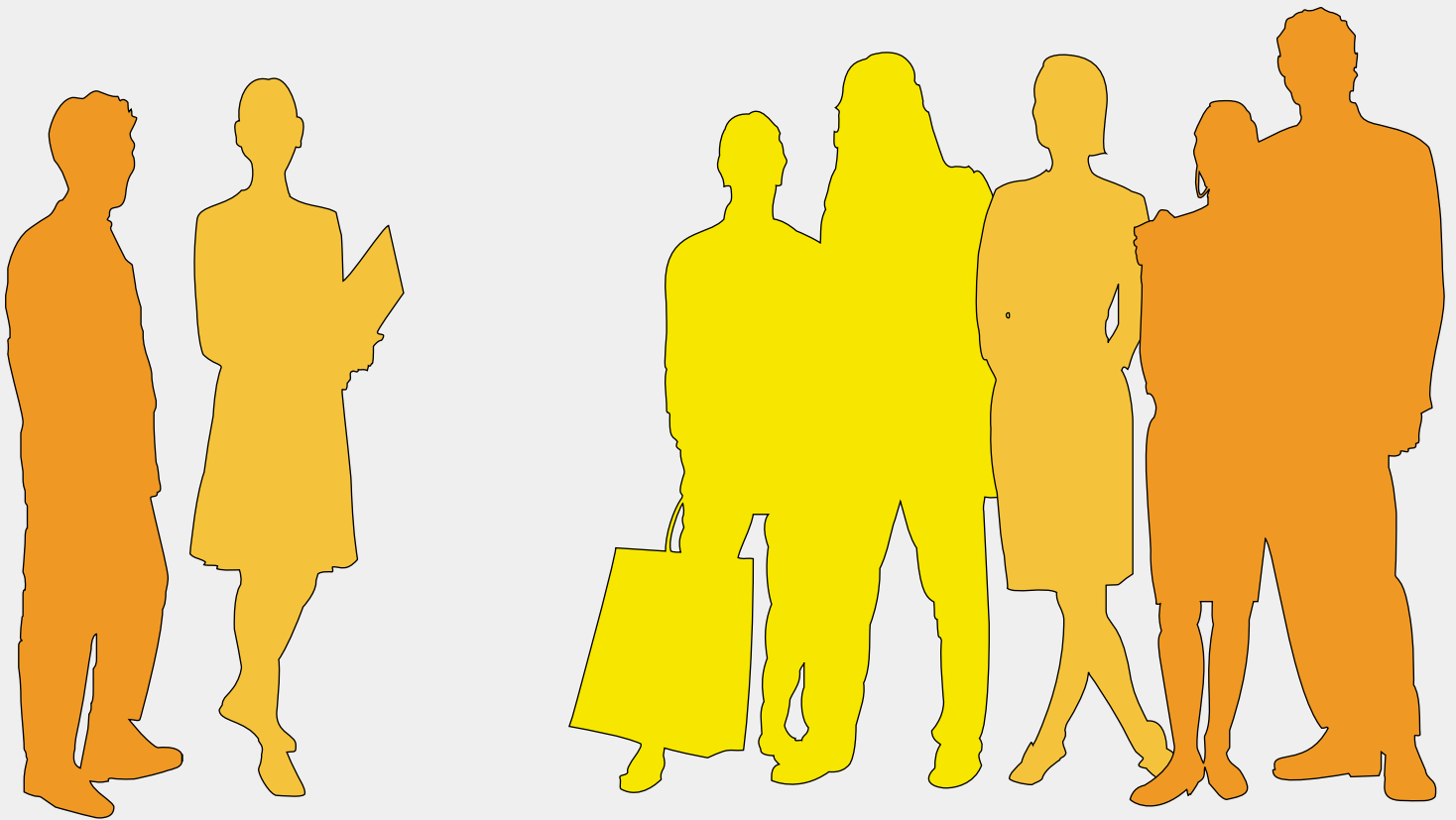
The Equality Authority is fortunate to have the support of an excellent, creative and committed staff in executing this ambitious plan. It also benefits greatly from the expertise and commitment brought to its endeavours by the Board. Finally, resources are also crucial to the successful implementation of this plan and we are grateful to the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform for their support in this regard.

Karen Erwin  
Chairperson

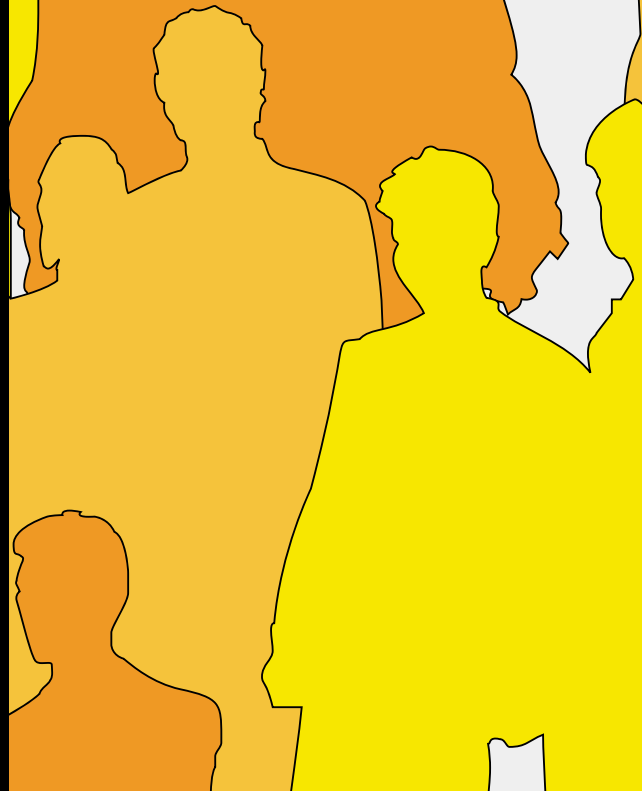


## Contents

Introduction	7
Mandate	9
Mission	11
Statement of Values	12
Context	14
Strategic Objectives	17
1. To stimulate and support initiatives that enable the systems and practices of key organisations and institutions to promote and achieve full equality in practice.	18
2. To maintain and further develop a culture of compliance with the equality legislation.	23
3. To contribute to the further development of a strategic framework for action on equality.	26
4. To stimulate and support a response to core equality issues for specific groups experiencing inequality.	30
5. To sustain and further develop the standing, expertise and capacity of the Equality Authority at international, national and local levels.	34



## Introduction



Embedding Equality is the third strategic plan of the Equality Authority. It reflects further growth in the capacity and ambition of the Equality Authority just as it seeks a continuity with previous work and achievements.

The first strategic plan of the Equality Authority reflected that new ground was being broken by equality legislation that covered nine grounds and both employment and the provision of goods and services, accommodation and education. An integrated approach to equality was developed that encompassed the nine grounds of gender, marital status, family status, age, disability, sexual orientation, race, religion and membership of the Traveller community and that focused on employment and on the wider arenas where goods and services are delivered.

The second strategic plan of the Equality Authority gave priority to promoting equality and combating discrimination in the workplace, in educational establishments, in health provision and in public sector service provision. It emphasised a focus on contributing to a wider strategic framework for action on equality including equality legislation and equality mainstreaming.

This strategic plan maintains these priorities within a wider ambition. It emphasises the contribution of individual action, organisational practice and societal values to promoting equality and combating discrimination and seeks to embed a commitment to equality in these three dimensions that will be longterm and sustained.



This work will take place in a context of inequalities that are significant and persistent for groups covered by the nine grounds under the legislation. These inequalities are reflected in limited access to:

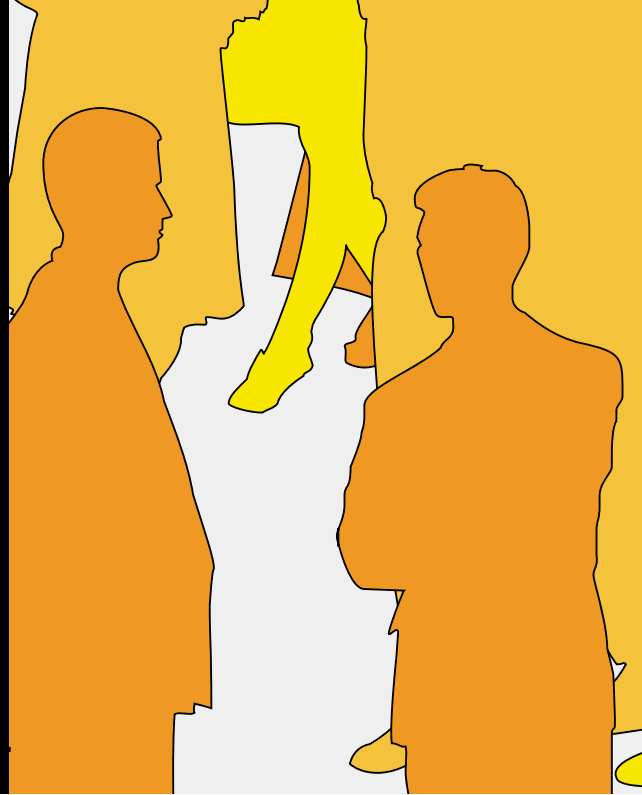
- Work, income, education, health status and accommodation
- Decision making
- Status and recognition for and accommodation of diverse identities, experiences and situations
- Relationships of care, trust, respect and solidarity.

This work will also take place in a context of significant engagement with the challenge posed by inequality within the political process, the social partnership model, the community and voluntary sector and the legal system. This wide engagement holds significant potential for the successful implementation of this strategic plan.

This strategic plan reflects the ambition of the Equality Authority in fulfilling its statutory functions. However its effective implementation will depend on sustaining adequate resources and staffing levels within the Equality Authority.

This strategic plan has been submitted to and approved by the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform in accordance with the provisions of the Employment Equality Acts 1998 and 2004.

## Mandate



The Equality Authority was established in 1999 under the Employment Equality Act 1998. Its functions and powers were further expanded under the Equal Status Act 2000 and the Equality Act 2004. It is also accorded a number of functions under the Intoxicating Liquor Act 2003.

This legislation establishes general functions for the Equality Authority. These include:

- To work towards the elimination of discrimination in relation to the areas covered by the Employment Equality Acts 1998 and 2004 and the Equal Status Acts 2000 to 2004.
- To promote equality of opportunity in relation to the areas covered by the Employment Equality Acts 1998 and 2004 and the Equal Status Acts 2000 to 2004.
- To provide information to the public on the working of the Employment Equality Acts 1998 and 2004, the Equal Status Acts 2000 to 2004, the Maternity Protection Acts 1994 and 2004 and the Adoptive Leave Act 1995. The Parental Leave Act 1998 also accords the Equality Authority an information role on the provisions of the legislation.
- To keep under review the working of the Employment Equality Acts 1998 and 2004, the Equal Status Acts 2000 to 2004, the Maternity Protection Acts 1994 and 2004 and the Adoptive Leave Act 1995 and to make recommendations for necessary change to the Minister.

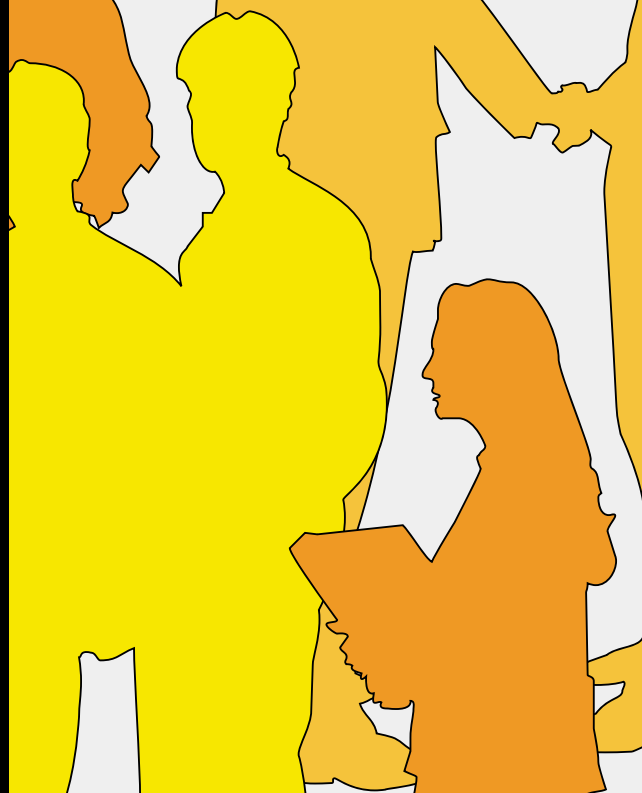
This legislation provides the Equality Authority with a range of explicit powers to implement these functions. These include:

- To provide assistance at its discretion to those who consider that they have been discriminated against (under the Employment Equality Acts, Equal Status Acts and Intoxicating Liquor Act) if there is an important point of principle involved or if it is unreasonable to expect the person to represent themselves.
- To take cases in its own name in certain circumstances.
- To prepare, for submission to the Minister, Codes of Practice which, if approved, can be relied on in relevant court proceedings.
- To invite a business to carry out an equality review and to prepare and implement an equality action plan or, where appropriate and where the business does not have less than fifty employees, to carry out such a review and prepare such an action plan on its own initiative.
- To conduct an inquiry for any purpose connected with its functions and to recommend actions on foot of this inquiry.
- To undertake or sponsor research.
- To undertake or sponsor activities related to the dissemination of information.

The Employment Equality Acts 1998 and 2004 prohibit discrimination in the workplace. The Equal Status Acts 2000 to 2004 prohibit discrimination in the provision of goods and services, accommodation and educational establishments. Separate provision is made in relation to registered clubs. Claims of discrimination in relation to licensed premises are governed by the provisions of the Intoxicating Liquor Act 2003. The legislation covers the nine grounds of gender, marital status, family status, age, sexual orientation, disability, race, religion and membership of the Traveller community.

The Equality Act 2004 seeks to implement the provisions of the amended Gender Equal Treatment Directive, the Framework Employment Directive and the 'Race' Directive. The Equality Authority is the specialised equality body required by the amended Gender Equal Treatment Directive and the 'Race' Directive.

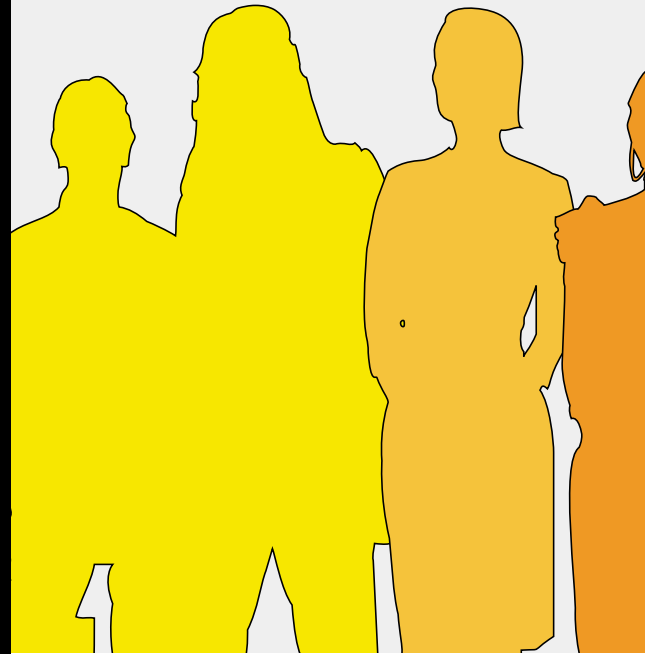
## Mission



The Equality Authority seeks to achieve positive change in the situation and experience of those groups and individuals experiencing inequality by stimulating and supporting 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.

## Statement of Values



This statement of values reflects the culture of the Equality Authority and underpins all our activities.

These values are:

### Attainment of Equality

We seek progress in achieving equality outcomes that have economic, political, cultural and caring dimensions. These dimensions encompass:

- redistribution and greater access to jobs, income, education, accommodation and health for those who currently experience inequality.
- representation and increased access to participation in decision making that impacts on groups experiencing inequality and to the skills and resources necessary for an organisational capacity within these groups.
- recognition and enhanced access to status and a valuing and accommodation of different identities, experiences and situations.
- relationships and access to relationships of trust, care, respect and solidarity.

### Promotion of Partnership

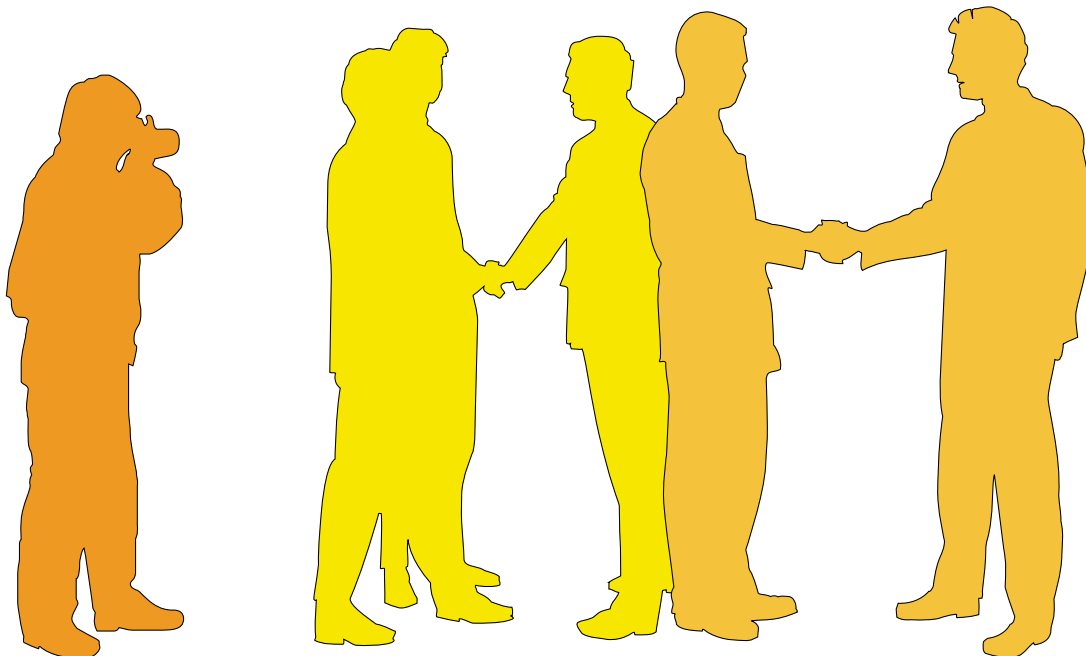
Our work is based on a participative approach. We seek to promote equality of opportunity and to combat discrimination in partnership with employers, trade unions, farming organisations, community and voluntary sector organisations and public sector institutions.

### Maintaining Independence

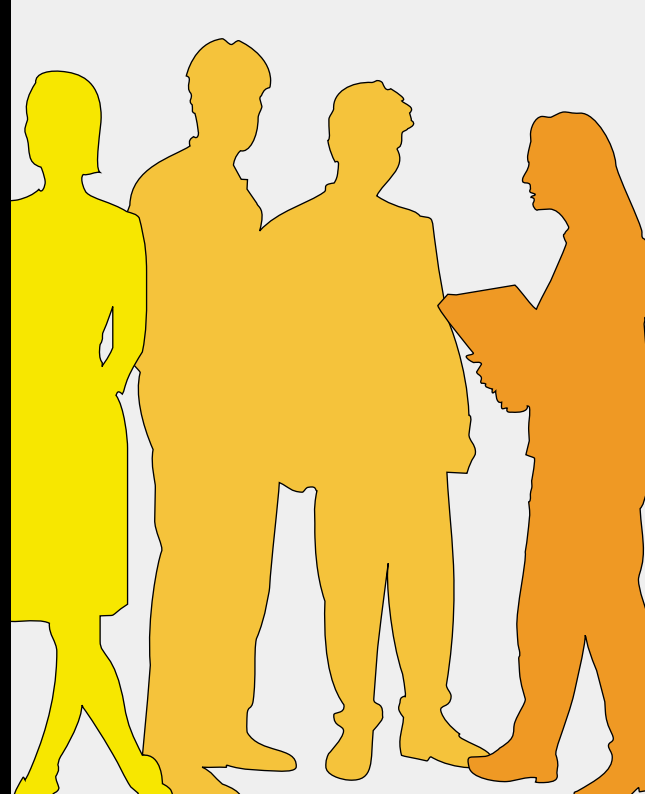
We have responsibilities to a wide range of different constituencies. We will realise those responsibilities with integrity and objectivity in a manner that reflects the independence of our mandate and role.

### Achieving Solidarity

Our work acknowledges the importance of those groups that experience inequality determining their own agendas for change. We seek to enhance the voice of such groups in articulating and progressing their agendas for change and to contribute an expert knowledge base to support the pursuit of a more equal society.



## Context



The Equality Authority works within a context that is subject to ongoing change. New legislation, new policies and programmes, developments in the situation and experience of groups experiencing inequality and operational changes within employment practices and the provision of goods and services can all impact on the mandate to promote equality of opportunity and to combat discrimination. A flexibility is required in implementing and further developing this strategic plan to ensure the work of the Equality Authority continues to be relevant and effective.

It is not possible to predict all of these changes. However there are a number of developments likely in the immediate future that will impact on the implementation and the further development of this strategic plan. These include:

1. The negotiation by the Social Partners and Government of a new national agreement.
2. The enactment of the new parental leave and adoptive leave legislation.
3. The transposition of the new EU Gender Equal Treatment Directive dealing with areas outside of the workplace.
4. The publication by the European Commission of a Communication on future developments for equality between women and men.

5. The publication by the Irish Government of a national strategy for women.
6. The review of social welfare provisions being carried out by the Department of Social and Family Affairs in relation to the provisions of the Equal Status Acts.
7. The preparation of a new National Development Plan.

These developments will both influence how some of the commitments in this strategic plan are implemented as well as involving the Equality Authority in further new initiatives.

The Equality Authority operates within a wider infrastructure of public institutions that contribute to the promotion of equality. These include:

- The Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform
- The Irish Human Rights Commission
- The National Disability Authority
- The Office of Social Inclusion within the Department of Social and Family Affairs
- The Combat Poverty Agency
- The National Council on Ageing and Older People
- The National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism
- The Equality Commission for Northern Ireland
- The Joint Equality and Human Rights Forum involving statutory equality and human rights bodies in Ireland, Northern Ireland and Britain
- The Anti Discrimination Unit of the European Commission
- The EU Advisory Committee on Equality of Opportunity between Women and Men
- EQUINET the European Network of specialised equality bodies

The implementation of this strategic plan will involve the Equality Authority in work of cooperation and coordination with these various institutions.

This strategic plan will also be implemented in the context of a range of national and

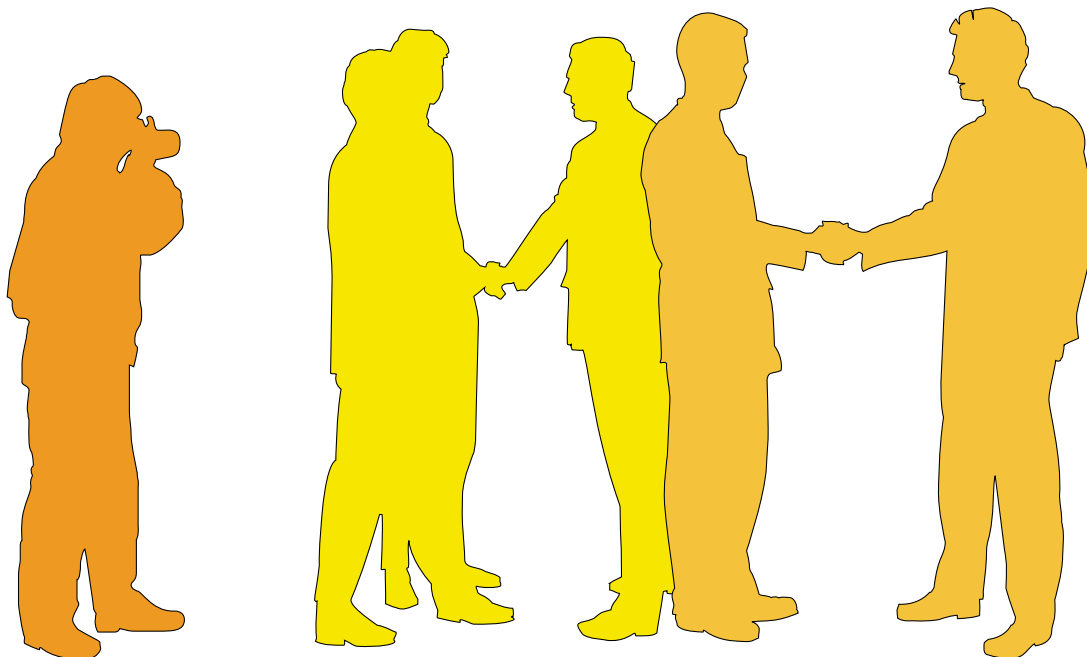


international initiatives that have a direct bearing on the work of Equality Authority and that involve the Equality Authority in their implementation. These currently include:

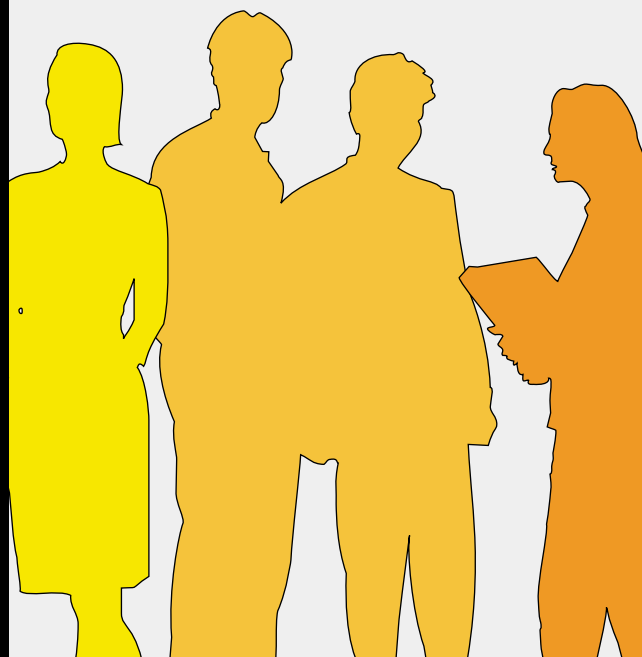
- The National Workplace Strategy
- The National Action Plan Against Racism
- The National Disability Strategy
- The EU Framework Strategy on non-discrimination and equal treatment for all
- The European Year of Equal Opportunities for All (2007)

This is the third strategic plan of the Equality Authority. It is important that it allows for initiatives that follow up and build on strategies and actions already developed or recommended by the Equality Authority. Particular attention will be required to support implementation of the reports on:

- Implementing Equality for Older People
- Implementing Equality for Lesbians, Gays and Bisexuals
- Implementing Equality for Carers



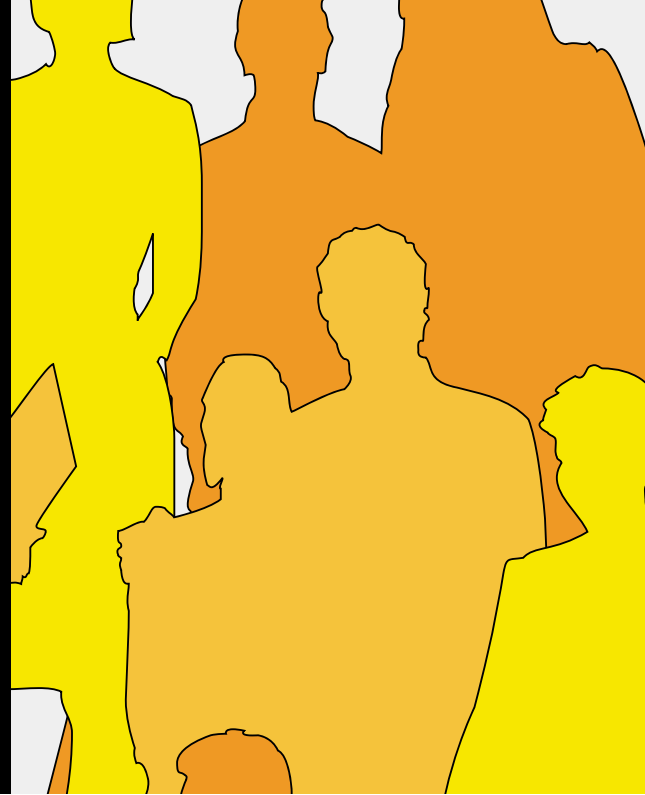
## Strategic Objectives



The Equality Authority will implement its mission through the pursuit of five strategic objectives.

1. To stimulate and support initiatives that enable the systems and practices of key organisations and institutions to promote and achieve full equality in practice.
2. To maintain and further develop a culture of compliance with the equality legislation.
3. To contribute to the further development of a strategic framework for action on equality.
4. To stimulate and support a response to core equality issues for specific groups experiencing inequality.
5. To sustain and further develop the standing, expertise and capacity of the Equality Authority at international, national and local levels.

## Strategic Objective One



To stimulate and support initiatives that enable the systems and practices of key organisations and institutions to promote and achieve full equality in practice.

This objective will prioritise a focus on the workplace and on organisations with responsibilities for education, healthcare, accommodation provision and the delivery of labour market measures. An integrated approach to promoting equality in these different areas will be taken that encompasses all nine grounds covered by the equality legislation.

Five goals are established through which this strategic objective will be achieved.

### Goals

#### 1. To encourage and assist planned and systematic approaches to workplace equality.

Planned and systematic approaches to workplace equality ensure that a focus on equality is integral to business planning, processes and systems. They are based on formal equality policies and plans and do not solely depend on individual good will and commitment. They

focus on achieving agreed equality objectives for employees and customers or service users rather than merely reacting to incidents of discrimination or instances of inequality. These approaches are sustained and longterm rather than being limited to short term actions.

Planned and systematic approaches to workplace equality require an equality infrastructure within an organisation or enterprise that involves equality policies, equality and diversity training for staff, an equality action plan based on an equality review and the assignment of responsibility for equality issues at a senior level.

These approaches promote full equality in practice, ensure an accommodation of diversity across the nine grounds and combat discrimination.

This goal will involve the Equality Authority in:

- a. Encouraging and supporting enterprises and organisations to develop such an equality infrastructure.
- b. Encouraging and assisting enterprises and organisations to develop flexible working arrangements for work life balance that enhances workplace equality and diversity.
- c. Further developing a support infrastructure for enterprises and organisations to be planned and systematic in their approach to workplace equality.
- d. Maintaining and further developing social partnership structures to achieve this goal.

## **2. To stimulate and support policy development and school practice that seeks to achieve inclusive schools and to maintain a partnership with the relevant partners in education in this work.**

The inclusive school prevents and combats all forms of discrimination prohibited under the equality legislation. It is one that respects, values and accommodates diversity across all nine grounds in the equality legislation. It seeks positive experiences, a sense of belonging and outcomes for all students across the nine grounds. Outcomes include access to the school, participation in all areas of school life, personal development and achieving education credentials.

This goal will involve the Equality Authority in:

- a. Contributing to a commitment to equality by schools within their development plans, admission policies and codes of behaviour and within whole school evaluation.

- b. Identifying, promoting and assisting a practice within all areas of school life that contributes to an inclusive school.
- c. Stimulating and supporting a focus on equality and diversity issues within teacher education.

### **3. To promote and contribute to policy development and organisational systems and practices for equality competent health service provision.**

Equality competence is about the ability of an organisation to effectively define and achieve equality objectives for staff and customers from across the nine grounds. Equality competent organisations are planned and systematic in their approach to equality. They put in place equality policies, they provide equality and diversity training for staff, they develop and implement equality action plans and responsibility for equality issues is assigned at senior level.

Equality objectives are a concern within governance in equality competent organisations. Decision making is assessed for its impact on equality objectives. It is evidence based due to the collection and analysis of equality data. It is participative in involving the organisations of those groups experiencing inequality.

This goal will involve the Equality Authority in:

- a. Working with the Department of Health and Children and the Health Services Executive to develop and implement an equality action plan for the sector.
- b. Developing initiatives with health services organisations to explore and support practices and systems that are equality competent.

### **4. To promote equality and diversity in labour market measures through supporting organisations to accommodate diversity in the provision of education, training and employment services.**

A central challenge for the educational and training sectors is to develop equality in learning opportunities for all people, taking full account of their diversity. Accommodating diversity involves taking account of the practical implications of difference in the design and delivery of labour market measures. Difference encompasses a focus on the identity, experience and situation of groups.

Developing equality and accommodating diversity in learning opportunities also involves addressing barriers faced by groups experiencing inequality across the nine grounds. These barriers are:

- contextual, including prevailing labour market conditions and policy trends
- institutional, including factors relating to the image, ethos, administration and practices of the providing organisation
- informational, including the quality of information available and the manner in which it is communicated
- situational, including participation costs and caring commitments of participants on labour market measures
- dispositional, including experiential and motivational factors of potential and current participants.

This goal will involve the Equality Authority in:

- a. Contributing to policy development that stimulates and secures equality and diversity in the labour market.
- b. Working with providers of labour market measures to review the design and delivery of these measures for their ability to achieve full equality in practice and to accommodate diversity, and to take steps to enhance this ability.

## **5. To explore strategies to promote equality within accommodation policy and provision.**

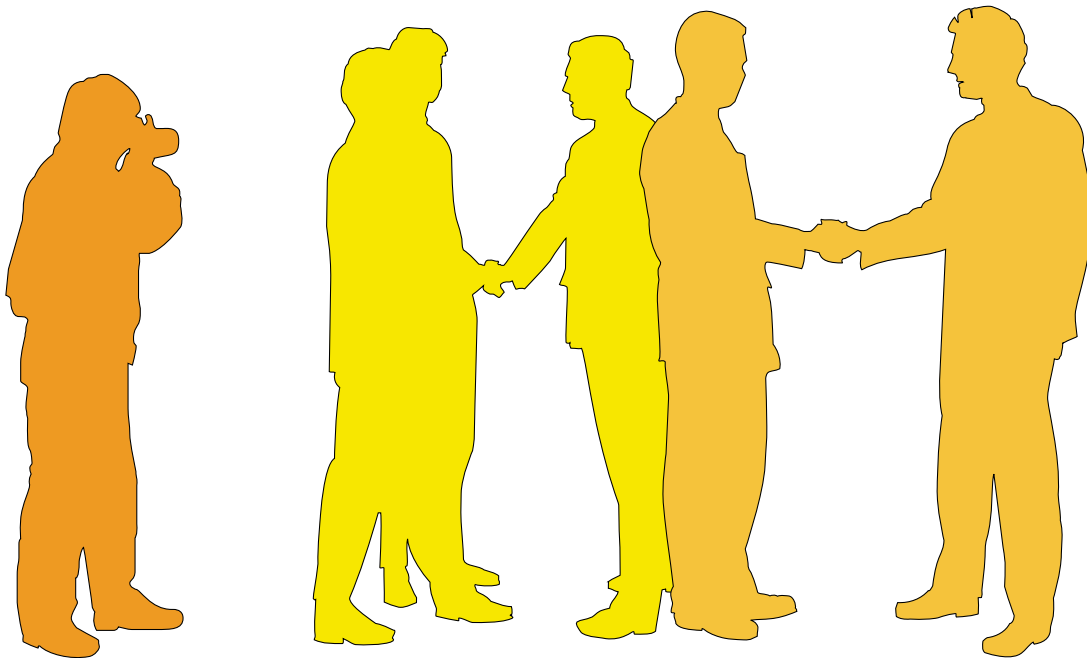
Accommodation policy and provision encompasses provision by the public sector and private rented accommodation.

This goal will involve the Equality Authority in:

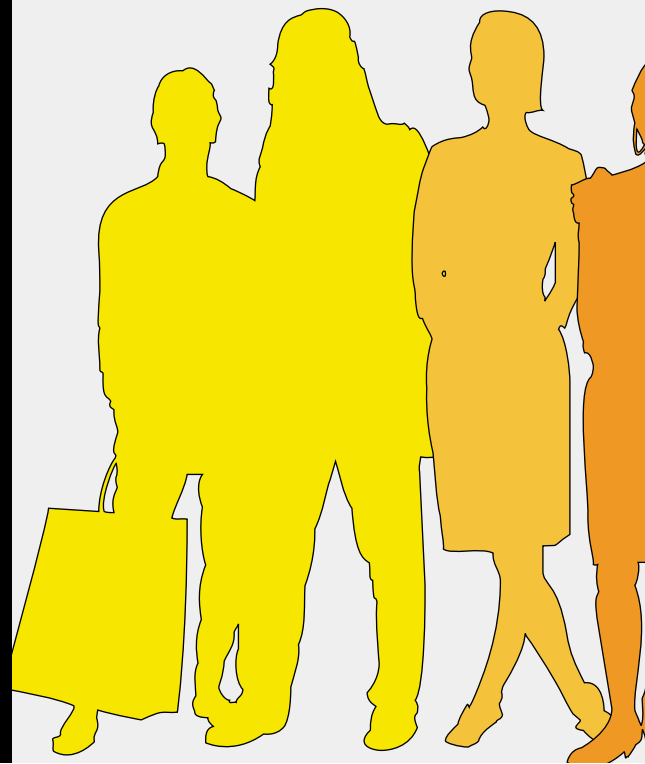
- a. Mapping accommodation policy and how it is currently implemented.
- b. Identifying and working on overlaps between equality legislation and housing legislation.
- c. Stimulating and supporting equality commitments in this field that promote full equality in practice, accommodate diversity and combat discrimination.

## Key Performance Indicators

- Working relationships developed with key organisations and institutions in each sector.
- Research and other knowledge development in relation to equality, diversity and discrimination issues in each sector.
- Practical guidance materials developed for different sectors.
- Practical initiatives, systems and policies developed by organisations and institutions in each sector that promote full equality in practice, accommodate diversity and combat discrimination.
- A value accorded to the work of the Equality Authority by key organisations and institutions within each sector and by organisations of groups that experience inequality.



## Strategic Objective Two



To maintain and further develop a culture of compliance with the equality legislation.

This strategic plan is based on a commitment to strategic enforcement. Strategic enforcement requires an integrated mix of the information provision, enforcement and development functions of the Equality Authority. It involves the most effective mix of the powers and functions available to the Equality Authority. Implementation of the legislation includes both voluntary compliance and enforced compliance which means stimulating and requiring service providers and employers to make use of the enabling provisions of the legislation and to comply with the mandatory provisions of the legislation.

This strategic objective focuses on the deployment of the enforcement functions and powers of the Equality Authority within a strategic enforcement approach. It encompasses support for individual enforcement, taking cases in the name of the Equality Authority itself, a stimulus for the development of other sources of such support or advocacy, and enforcement initiatives with a wider group focus at institutional or sectoral levels.

The following four goals will contribute to the achievement of this strategic objective.



## Goals

### **1. To provide information on the equality legislation and on parental leave, maternity protection and adoptive leave legislation.**

This goal will involve the Equality Authority in:

- a. Providing information through a public information centre.
- b. Developing and disseminating information materials on the legislation.
- c. Implementing a communication strategy involving a wide range of channels of communication.
- d. Developing specific information initiatives to target particular groups.
- e. Maintaining and further developing a website.

### **2. To provide legal advice and representation in cases under the legislation in accordance with criteria established and kept under review by the Equality Authority.**

This goal will involve the Equality Authority in:

- a. Providing legal advice and representation to individual claimants under the equality legislation at a level that is sufficient to maintain a culture of compliance.
- b. Taking cases under the equality legislation in the name of the Equality Authority as appropriate.
- c. Seeking to act as amicus curiae as appropriate in legal cases where the equality legislation has a relevance.
- d. Analysing and keeping under review caselaw that is established under the legislation.

### **3. To encourage and assist a broad range of organisations to provide supports to individual claimants under the equality legislation.**

This goal will involve the Equality Authority in:

- a. Providing practical supports to trade unions, community organisations and community information centres to assist their advocacy roles.

- b. Stimulating and supporting the availability of training for such advocacy.
- c. Promoting policy and programme development to support such advocacy.

**4. To test the full range of functions and powers available to the Equality Authority as a specialised equality body in order to assess and identify the most effective mix of these for the implementation of its mandate.**

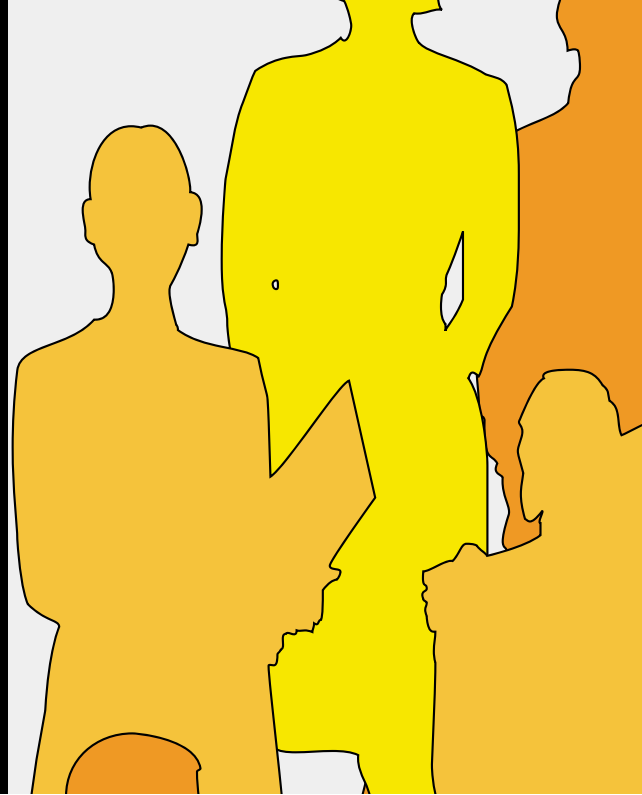
This goal will involve the Equality Authority in:

- a. Conducting a small number of inquiries and equality reviews in accordance with criteria established and kept under review by the Equality Authority.
- b. Preparing a small number of codes of practice.

**Performance Indicators**

- Number of inquiries to the Public Information Centre.
- Range of materials produced to provide information on the legislation.
- Number of Equality Authority casefiles under the equality legislation.
- Implementation of powers in relation to inquiries, reviews and codes of practice.

## Strategic Objective Three



To contribute to the further development of a strategic framework for action on equality.

The social partners first committed to a strategic framework for action on equality in the Programme for Prosperity and Fairness which included a commitment “to create a fair and inclusive society by putting in place strategic framework for action on equality”. The description of this framework was further elaborated on in the National Economic and Social Forum report “A Strategic Framework for Equality Issues”. This report set out that the strategic framework for action on equality involved a vision for a more equal society that incorporates all nine grounds covered under the equality legislation, equality objectives through which to realise this vision, and seven core dimensions through which activity can be delivered to achieve these equality objectives. These seven core dimensions are:

- Legislation and in particular equality legislation to promote equality and combat discrimination.
- Institutions and in particular institutions to secure an effective implementation of the equality legislation.

- Mainstreaming including processes to ensure all public sector policies and programmes contribute to achieving equality objectives.
- Targeting which involves investment of resources to address the impact of discrimination on particular groups, to provide for needs that are specific to a group and to support equality outcomes from mainstream provision for groups experiencing inequality.
- Participation which includes involving organisations that articulate the interests of groups experiencing inequality in decision making processes.
- Agenda setting by developing and agreeing action agendas to enhance the experience and situation of groups experiencing inequality.
- Monitoring including gathering and analysing equality data.

Six goals are established through which this strategic objective will be achieved.

## Goals

### 1. To promote and support the further development of equality legislation.

This goal will involve the Equality Authority in:

- a. Supporting the transposition of the EU Gender Equal Treatment Directive dealing with areas outside of the workplace into equality legislation.
- b. Supporting any review of the grounds covered under the equality legislation.
- c. Supporting the implementation of the gender mainstreaming requirement in the amended gender equal treatment directive and the development of further positive duties in the equality legislation.

### 2. To further develop and support approaches to equality proofing public sector plans, policies and programmes at national and local level.

This goal will involve the Equality Authority in:

- a. Supporting the work of the Equality Proofing Working Group convened by the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform.
- b. Further developing equality proofing within the National Employment Action Plan and the National Action Plan on Social Inclusion.

- c. Stimulating the inclusion of equality objectives in initiatives taken by regulatory bodies or organisations with responsibility for setting and monitoring standards.

### **3. To further promote and support the collection and analysis of equality data.**

This goal will involve the Equality Authority in:

- a. Stimulating and supporting the implementation of the report of the National Statistics Board on “Developing Irish Social and Equality Statistics to Meet Policy Needs” and other strategies in relation to the gathering and analysis of equality data.
- b. Developing and implementing a research programme on equality and discrimination based on the identification and analysis of existing information sources and datasets supplemented with some primary data collection.

### **4. To explore and identify the boundaries for, and to promote the use of, positive action.**

This goal will involve the Equality Authority in:

- a. Analysing the scope for positive action within the provisions for full equality in practice in the equality legislation.
- b. Providing guidance and support for positive action in employment and in the provision of goods and services, accommodation and educational establishments.

### **5. To stimulate, engage with and support public debate on a societal commitment to equality and diversity.**

This goal will involve the Equality Authority in:

- a. Preparing publications and hosting seminars on equality and diversity issues.
- b. Supporting and informing a media profile for equality and diversity issues.
- c. Stimulating further growth in the provision of equality and diversity training.

### **6. To engage with the implementation in Ireland of the EU Year of Equal Opportunities for All 2007.**

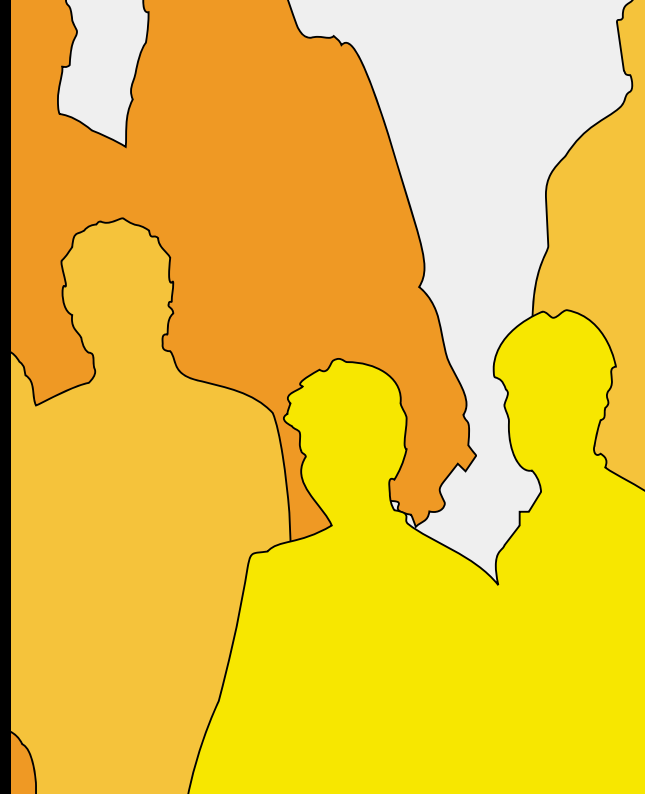
This goal will involve the Equality Authority in:

- a. Convening and supporting a committee to prepare, implement and evaluate the European year programme.

## Performance Indicators

- The extent to which equality legislation is enhanced.
- The level of public sector engagement with equality proofing.
- Inclusion of equality objectives in regulations and standards.
- Materials produced to support positive action.
- Public profile for equality and diversity issues.
- Development of working relations with key training organisations with a capacity to provide equality and diversity training.
- Contribution made by the EU Year of Equal Opportunities for All 2007.

## Strategic Objective Four



To stimulate and support a response to core equality issues for specific groups experiencing inequality.

The Equality Authority has developed an integrated approach to its mandate and the nine grounds it encompasses. This involves the organisation in work that is multiground, cross ground and single ground. Multi ground work involves initiatives that seek to enhance the experience and situation of groups experiencing inequality across all nine grounds covered by the equality legislation. Cross ground initiatives seek to address the situation and experience of groups made up of individuals who are members of more than one ground. Single ground initiatives focus on specific groups that experience inequality and seek to ensure their visibility within multiground initiatives, to address issues that are particular to that group or to realise opportunities that have opened up for that group.

This strategic objective is focused on projects that have a single ground focus. There will be a flexibility to the design and development of these projects to ensure their relevance to issues of current importance for the grounds concerned. These projects will be developed and implemented over the lifespan of this strategic plan, and will support a positive resolution to these issues. They will reflect a commitment to full equality in

practice, the accommodation of diversity and non discrimination. Some project work will reflect a continuity with or follow on from current projects already developed on a single ground base by the Equality Authority.

## Project Areas

1. Ground: Gender  
Issues: Supporting greater economic independence for women.  
Promoting a more equal sharing of caring responsibilities between men and women.  
Stimulating and supporting a focus on transsexual people in relevant policies and programmes.
2. Ground: Family Status  
Issues: Ensuring implementation of the report on “Implementing Equality for Carers”.  
Contributing to policy development that meets the needs of one parent families.
3. Ground: Age  
Issues: Promoting a consciousness and understanding of ageism experienced by older people and of strategies to combat ageism.  
Ensuring implementation of the report on “Implementing Equality for Older People”.  
Developing an understanding of the negative stereotyping of young people and promoting initiatives to combat such negative stereotypes.
4. Ground: Sexual Orientation.  
Issues: Promoting partnership rights for gay and lesbian couples.  
Ensuring implementation of the report on “Implementing Equality for Lesbians, Gays and Bisexuals”.



5. Ground: Disability

Issues: Supporting practical initiatives by service providers in making reasonable accommodation for people with disabilities.

Stimulating an effective mainstreaming of people with disabilities in labour market measures providing training, education and employment services.

Encouraging initiatives that respond to the employment situation and needs of people with disabilities including within sheltered settings.

6. Ground: Race

Issues: Organising and further developing the annual anti-racist workplace week with the social partners and the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform.

Promoting, supporting and monitoring implementation of the National Action Plan Against Racism including a particular focus on the objectives of effective protection against racism, economic inclusion and equality of opportunity and accommodating diversity in service provision.

Promoting the development of an equality infrastructure for planned and systematic approaches to equality within public institutions with responsibility for migrant workers, refugees and asylum seekers.

7. Ground: Religion

Issues: Supporting a response to the documented harassment and discrimination experienced by Protestant communities in the southern border region and by Muslim communities and to similar experiences for other communities under this ground.

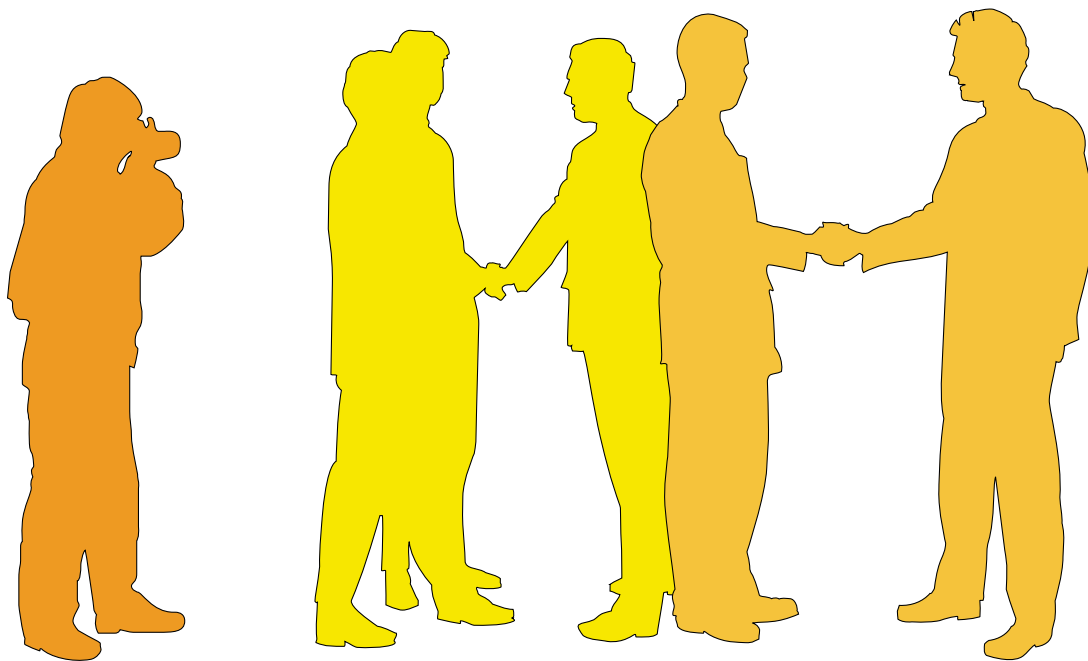
8. Ground: Membership of the Traveller Community

Issues: Contributing to greater progress in Traveller accommodation strategies.

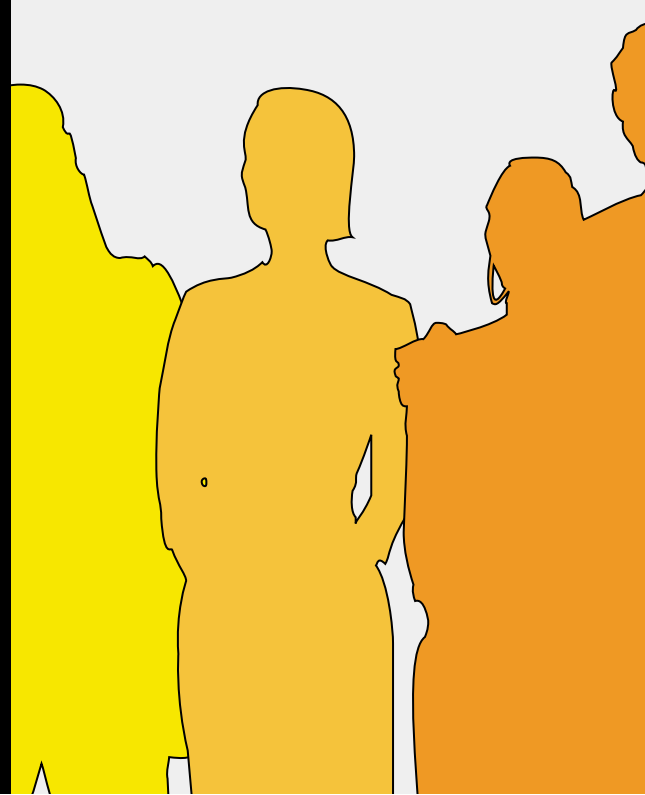
Exploring the scope and extent of the Race Directive as it applies to the Traveller and race grounds.

## Performance Indicators

- Developed links with organisations working on these issues.
- Projects that provide a stimulus for progress in relations to these issues.
- Public profile for these issues.
- Research and other knowledge development in relation to these issues.



## Strategic Objective Five



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

The Equality Authority is an independent statutory body. It is a specialised equality body as identified in the EU amended gender equal treatment Directive and ‘Race’ Directive. The Equality Authority has developed a standing, expertise and capacity to make an effective impact on the discrimination and inequality experienced across the nine grounds. Within this it seeks to serve as an authoritative source of expertise and knowledge in relation to equality and diversity. It aims to be at the forefront of good practice in promoting full equality in practice, accommodating diversity and combating discrimination. It strives to be at the cutting edge in opening up issues of inequality and devising equality strategies. It seeks to share its knowledge and expertise with and to learn from relevant organisations in other settings and jurisdictions.

The following five goals will contribute to the achievement of this strategic objective.

## Goals

### 1. To maintain and further develop a profile for the Equality Authority with Northern Ireland, the EU and at a wider international level.

This goal will involve the Equality Authority in:

- a. Participating within and contributing to relevant international fora with a remit in relation to equality and discrimination issues.
- b. Cooperating and developing joint ventures with other specialised equality bodies across the European Union. This cooperation is structured around the EQUINET network which seeks to develop information exchanges between the bodies, to support a dynamic interpretation of the EU equal treatment Directives at member state level, to examine approaches to strategic enforcement taken by the bodies and to contribute to policy formation at EU level.
- c. Engaging with the European Commission in particular through the anti discrimination unit, the advisory committee on equality between women and men and the annual high level equality summit of the EU.
- d. Cooperating and developing joint ventures with equality and human rights bodies in Ireland, Northern Ireland and Britain. This cooperation is structured around the Joint Equality and Human Rights Forum and with the offices of the equality bodies in Wales and Scotland.
- e. Co-operating and developing joint ventures with the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland. This cooperation is structured around an annual joint Board meeting.

### 2. To maintain and further develop a profile and presence for the Equality Authority at local level.

This goal will involve the Equality Authority in:

- a. Working with libraries and with the National Library Council.
- b. Working with Citizens Information Centres and with Comhairle.
- c. Convening local consultative meetings with community, trade union and business sectors.

**3. To develop further and pursue an implementation plan in relation to the Government decision to decentralise the Equality Authority to Roscrea that can sustain and enhance the capacity of the Equality Authority to carry out its functions.**

**4. To further develop and expand effective channels of communication with key constituencies for the work of the Equality Authority.**

This goal will involve the Equality Authority in:

- a. Further developing communication initiatives with politicians, civil servants, business organisations, trade unions, farming organisations, community organisations, service provider networks and individual enterprises.

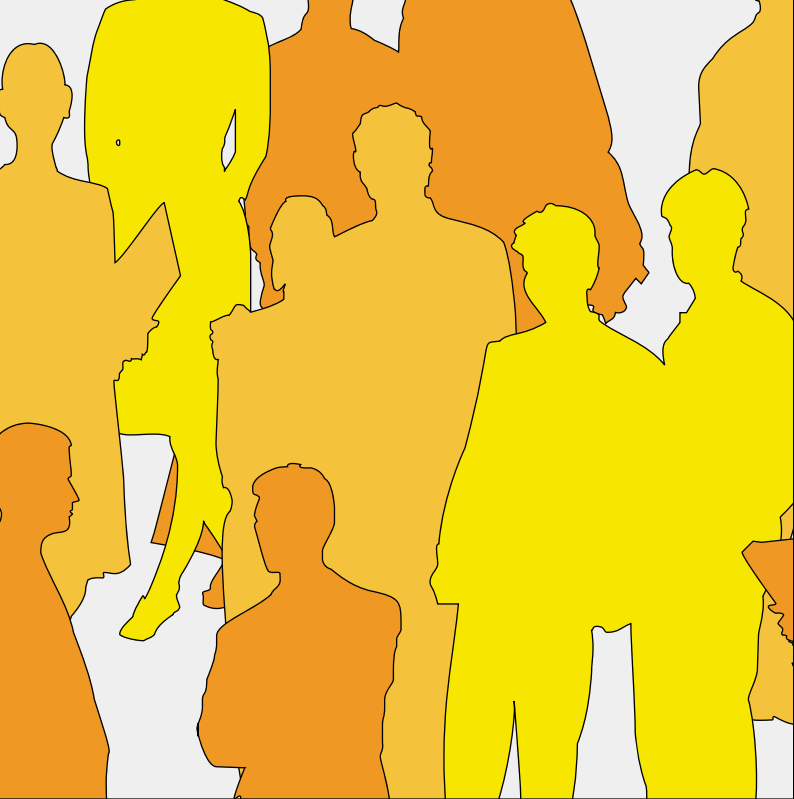
**5. To maintain high standards in the operation and organisation of the Equality Authority.**

This goal will involve the Equality Authority in:

- a. Maintaining and enhancing staff capacity.
- b. Meeting audit and governance requirements.
- c. Maintaining and operating effective ICT systems.
- d. Implementing quality customer service.

### **Performance Indicators**

- Linkages and working relationships with international fora, specialised equality bodies and European Commission.
- Linkages and working relationships with organisations operating at a local community level.
- The spread and diversity of organisations that the Equality Authority works with.
- Implementation plan for decentralisation that can sustain and enhance the capacity of the Equality Authority to carry out its statutory functions.
- Meeting audit and governance requirements.
- Number of staff training hours.
- Staff satisfaction as internal customers.
- Customer feedback received.



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**THE EQUALITY AUTHORITY**  
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