



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

Annual Report 2025



Protecting and Promoting
Human Rights and Equality
in Ireland

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The Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission was established under statute on 1 November 2014 to protect and promote human rights and equality in Ireland, to promote a culture of respect for human rights, equality and intercultural understanding, to promote understanding and awareness of the importance of human rights and equality, and to work towards the elimination of human rights abuses and discrimination.

Report to the Houses of the Oireachtas

I hereby submit the annual report of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission to the Houses of the Oireachtas pursuant to section 28(1) of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014. This annual report covers the period from 1 January to 31 December 2025.



Liam Herrick
Chief Commissioner



Contents

Report to the Houses of the Oireachtas	3
Message from the Chief Commissioner	5
Who we are	7
Our Theory of Change	9
Our Vision, Our Mission and Our Values	11
Commission Members in 2025	13
Key findings from our 2025 Annual Poll	14
Report of activity	18
1. Developing robust responses to current threats to human rights and equality	19
2. Enhancing accountability mechanisms	25
3. Strengthening the human rights and equality infrastructure in the State	33
4. Fulfilling our international role as part of a global network of NHRIs & NEBs	40
5. Operating as a model organisation for implementing human rights and equality in practice	45
Reporting	50
Report under the Official Languages (Amendment) Act 2021	54
Appendices	54

Message from the Chief Commissioner

Human rights and equality do not exist in isolation from the wider social, political and economic conditions in which we live. They are sustained by institutions, protected by law, and shaped every day by the choices we make together as a society. At a time when democratic values are facing increasing pressure across the world, those choices matter more than ever.

Currently, the international human rights system is going through one of the most challenging periods in its history. The multilateral institutions established in the aftermath of the Second World War are under strain. Armed conflicts, rising authoritarianism, attacks on the rule of law, and growing hostility towards minority communities have tested assumptions that many once believed were secure. Progress on equality is stalling in some places and reversing in others. Rights that were hard won are increasingly being contested, if not reversed.

Ireland is not immune from these developments. While we remain a strong democracy with a robust legal framework for the protection of rights, many of the pressures visible internationally are also evident here. Growing economic inequality, housing insecurity, rising levels of hate and discrimination, and increasing polarisation in public debate all present significant challenges to social cohesion and to people's ability to participate equally in society.

Chief Commissioner Liam Herrick, Deirdre Malone, Director and Dr Iris Elliott, Head of Policy and Research in Geneva to meet with the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women ahead of the Committee's review of Ireland under CEDAW.



Yet it would be a mistake to view this moment solely through the lens of risk and uncertainty. It is also a moment that invites reflection on the kind of society we wish to build. Human rights and equality are not simply safeguards against harm. They are the foundations of a fair, inclusive and resilient society. They offer practical tools for addressing complex challenges while ensuring that human dignity remains at the centre of our public policy.

The 2025 Annual Report explores the current state of human rights and equality in Ireland across a range of interconnected issues. They highlight both areas of progress and areas where further action is urgently required. Many of the challenges facing Ireland are not isolated policy problems but questions about how rights are realised in people's everyday lives.

A recurring theme throughout this report is the critical importance of implementation. Ireland has often shown leadership in articulating human rights principles, both domestically and internationally. The task now is to ensure that those commitments are translated into meaningful outcomes. Rights must be accessible in practice and realised in people's daily lives, not merely recognised in principle. Equality must be experienced in daily life, not simply reflected in legislation.

There are, however, compelling reasons for hope and confidence. Across Ireland, communities, civil society organisations, public institutions, educators, trade unions, employers and activists continue to demonstrate a deep commitment to fairness, inclusion and democratic values. Their work strengthens our society and provides an essential foundation for progress.

The Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission remains committed to supporting that work: promoting accountability, strengthening protections, and ensuring that the voices of those most affected by inequality and exclusion are heard.

The future of human rights and equality in Ireland will not be determined by circumstance alone. It will be shaped by our collective willingness to uphold the principles of dignity, participation, accountability and justice. The choices we make now will help define not only the strength of our institutions, but also the kind of society we leave to future generations.



Liam Herrick

Chief Commissioner



Who we are

The Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission ('the Commission') was established on 1 November 2014, as an independent public body under the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (IHREC) Act 2014. We are Ireland's independent National Human Rights Institution ('NHRI') and National Equality Body ('NEB').

We protect and promote human rights and equality in Ireland.

We are the Independent Monitoring Mechanism for Ireland under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities; the independent National Rapporteur on the Trafficking of Human Beings; and will be assigned the role of the Co-ordinator of the National Preventive Mechanism under the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture, pending ratification. We are an Article 77 fundamental rights body under the EU Artificial Intelligence ('AI') Act.

Alongside Northern Ireland's national human rights and equality bodies, we have a mandate to consider and report on equality and rights issues with an island of Ireland dimension.

We also have legal powers under the Gender Pay Gap Information Act 2021 and are the designated body for the promotion and support of gender balance on the boards of listed companies under the EU Gender Balance on Listed Corporate Boards Directive.



**Our mission is to
build a just and
inclusive society
that protects and
promotes human
rights and equality
in Ireland.**





IHREC staff pictured at the Dublin Pride Parade

Statutory mandate

We have a statutory remit to:

- Protect and promote human rights and equality;
- Encourage the development of a culture of respect for human rights, equality, and intercultural understanding in the State;
- Promote understanding and awareness of the importance of human rights and equality in the State;
- Encourage good practice in intercultural relations, promote tolerance and acceptance of diversity in the State and respect for the freedom and dignity of each person; and
- Work towards the elimination of human rights abuses, discrimination and prohibited conduct.

The Commission Members are appointed by the President, following an independent recruitment process and a resolution by both Houses of the Oireachtas.

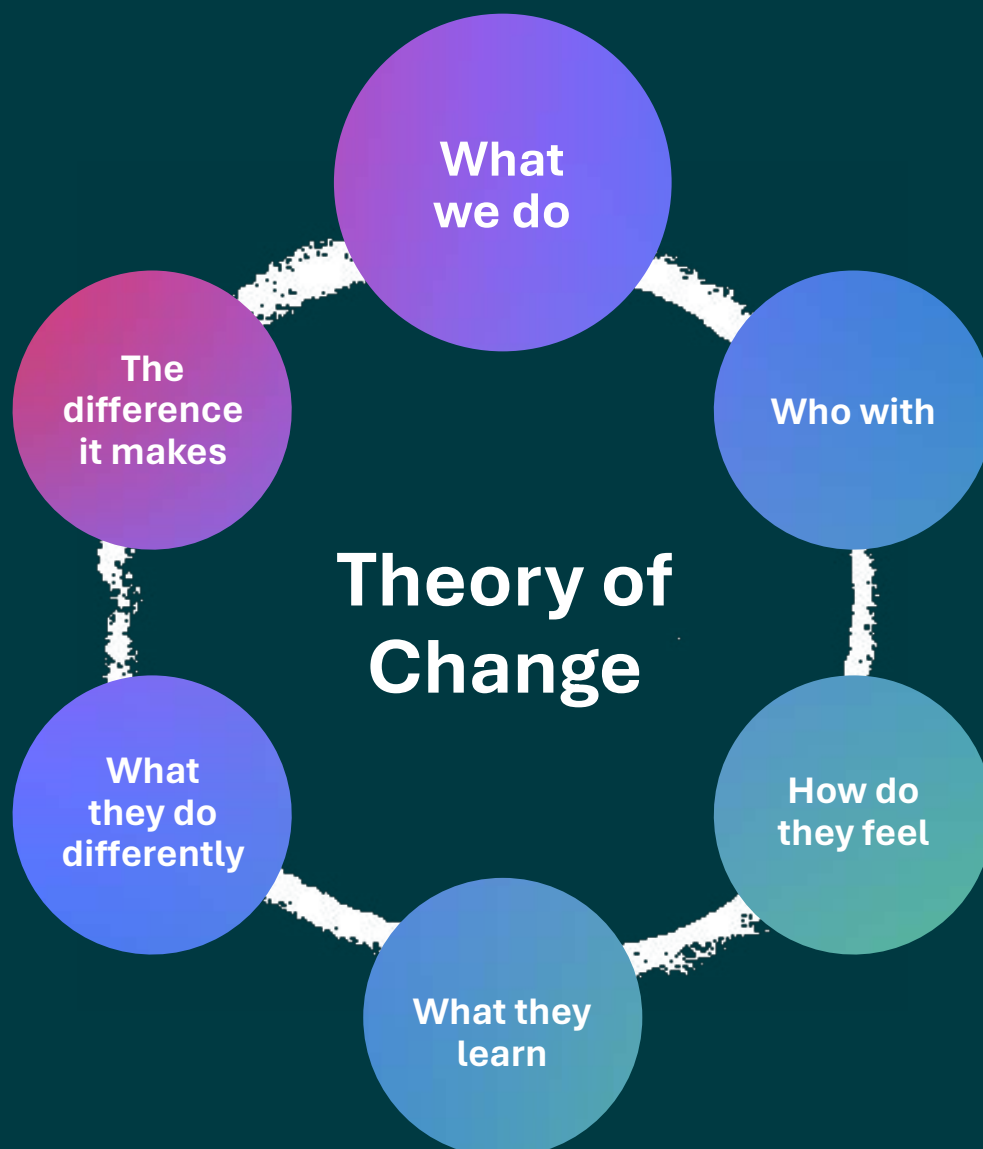
We operate independently of Government, with our institutional independence guaranteed in our establishing legislation, which provides for accountability of the Commission for our statutory functions to the Oireachtas.

Our Theory of Change

Our theory of change shows what we want to achieve and how we plan to get there. It sets out clearly what we do, who we work with, and the difference we want our collective efforts to make.

Our theory of change is important because it sets out the links between our activities and the achievement of our long-term goals.

This leads to better planning, delivery, review and evaluation. It keeps our focus on strategy and on the achievement of long-term goals, while enabling agility and responsiveness to a changing context.



What we do

We safeguard and advance human rights and equality in Ireland

We work with

- rights holders
- duty bearers
- civil society
- the private sector
- trade unions
- international human rights mechanisms

We want them to feel

- informed
- accountable
- heard
- supported
- confident
- empowered

We want them to have

- a clear understanding of IHREC
- independent insights into equality and human rights
- opportunities to engage, learn and connect
- practical understandings of how to apply equality and human rights standards

We want them to

- advocate for and defend human rights and equality
- seek our advice, expertise and guidance to support their work

We want

- **everyone** to be more aware of human rights and equality and to understand why human rights and equality are relevant and important to them
- **duty bearers** to have more respect for human rights and equality and to take responsibility and accountability for their decisions and actions.



Our Vision

Our vision is of an inclusive Ireland where human rights and equality are respected, protected and fulfilled for everyone, everywhere.

Our Mission

Our mission is to build a just and inclusive society that protects and promotes human rights and equality in Ireland.

Our Values

Our values define how we approach our work, how we work as a Commission and how we engage with people living in this State.

We believe that our values are key to our culture, and critical to our performance as an organisation.

Our values include:



Non-Discrimination and Equality

We commit to supporting people who face the greatest barriers to justice as part of human rights and equality protection for all.

Accountability

We are fully committed to the values of openness, transparency and accountability to the people and to the Oireachtas.

Respect

We build respect and trust by valuing the contribution and initiative of everyone within our organisation and those we work with. Respecting the trust placed in us, we conduct our work to the highest professional standards.

Participation

We recognise the personal autonomy and self-determination of all rights holders and duty-bearers. We are committed to hearing and learning from others' perspectives.

Independence

We value our independence and act, where others cannot always do so, in furtherance of human rights, equality and intercultural understanding. We take action based on the highest quality evidence and robust decision-making.

Responsiveness

We are responsive to opportunities to advance our mission, and we ensure that our governance, resources, and ways of working support this approach.

Collaboration

We collaborate across and beyond the organisation so that we act promptly and effectively.

Commission Members in 2025



Liam Herrick
Chief Commissioner



Noeline Blackwell



Jim Clarken



Michael Finucane



Dr. Andrew Forde



Caoilfhionn Gallagher KC



Adam Harris



Professor Colin Harvey



Professor Kathleen Lynch



Dr Salome Mbugua



Dr Rosaleen McDonagh



Sunniva McDonagh SC



Dr Lucy Michael



Professor Ray Murphy



Eoin Ronayne

Key findings from our 2025 Annual Poll

Purpose

Our Annual Poll measures public awareness and attitudes towards key human rights and equality issues in Ireland. The poll uses a cross-sectional survey design that collects and analyses data from a population at a single point in time.

The Annual Poll measures:

- public awareness of and support for the Commission in our work;
- support for key human rights issues;
- support for key equality and discrimination issues; and
- attitudes towards our strategic priorities and themes under our mandates.

What the Annual Poll tells us

The poll provides timely primary data to help us understand the level of public awareness of the Commission and its role, public support for human rights and equality, how attitudes differ across particular groups in Ireland and the extent to which people perceive that certain rights are realised and protected.

The themes covered in the 2025 Annual Poll include human rights; equality and discrimination; disability; racism; economic equality; work and family life; digital regulation and artificial intelligence.



Key findings

The poll was undertaken by Ipsos B&A between July 15th and August 6th with a sample size of 1,243 adults living across Ireland.

In 2025 84% of people in Ireland are worried about the cost-of-living crisis, while fewer than one in seven believe government is doing enough to address it, down sharply from one in five in 2024. Almost half of respondents feared they would not meet household costs in the year ahead.

The poll also shows whether people think economic inequality is fair. Only 13% of people believe Ireland's wealth is distributed fairly. Almost three-quarters say it is not.

While our survey finds that 80% of people agree that everyone should be treated equally regardless of who they are or where they come from, this belief has diminished from 85% in 2023 and 84% in 2024.

80%

of people agree that everyone should be treated equally



Equality

62% of respondents agreed they have equal opportunities, representing a marginal decrease since 2024, with 21% actively disagreeing with this sentiment. Males and those aged over 65 are more likely to believe they have equal opportunities in Ireland compared to females or younger aged cohorts.

Discrimination

Only two in five respondents thought that the efforts made in Ireland to fight all forms of discrimination are effective, with 28% feeling the efforts are not effective. Perceived ineffectiveness has increased year-on-year, with females, those aged 18-24 and those who have experienced racism/discrimination in the past 12 months being less likely to say efforts have been successful.





37%

18-24 year olds witnessed disability-based discrimination

Disability

Opinions are polarised as to whether disabled people receive equal opportunities in education.

In other areas, the public feel that disabled people are at a disadvantage, and particularly in terms of employment opportunities and Government support. Females are consistently less likely to believe that disabled people receive fair treatment in Irish society compared to males.

16% of those with a self-reported disability said they had directly experienced discrimination in the past 12 months, up six percentage points since last year. 15% of all respondents have witnessed discrimination due to disability in the past 12 months, rising to 37% among those aged 18-24 years old.



66%

Non-white Irish people experienced racism in the past year

Racism

14% of respondents said they had experienced racism over the past 12 months, which is an increase compared to 2024 (10%) and 2023 (11%). Among non-Irish, this increases to 35%, and among non-white Irish, 66% reported they had experienced racism over the past 12 months.

31% of respondents had directly witnessed racism in the past year, with younger aged cohorts and Dubliners more likely to have done so. Among non-Irish respondents, this increases to 44%, up seven points on 2024.



How we use the Annual Poll

The attitudinal questions tell us how people think about an issue while awareness questions can show how well issues are understood. Together, we use these findings to inform our work over time. For example, we use the poll findings in shaping our policy and research work; to better understand emerging issues and set agendas on matters of public importance; to guide communication and awareness-raising activities and target our work for greatest impact.



Our Annual Poll informs us about public opinion on human rights and equality which is increasingly important in an Ireland being pulled in two directions. On one hand, growing inequality and increasing reports of discrimination. On the other, a resilient and deep commitment in our society for values of fairness, solidarity and justice.

Economic inequality, racism, and democratic erosion are not forces of nature. They are outcomes of policy, and the consequence of political choice and political rhetoric. And they are outcomes that can be changed by courage, action and solidarity.”

— Chief Commissioner Liam Herrick

Report of activity

This Annual Report covers the first year of our Strategy Statement 2025-2027. It highlights key examples of progress under each of the Commission's five strategic priorities, with an emphasis on our drive towards impact.

The Commission's strategic priorities are:

- 1 Develop robust responses to current and emerging threats to human rights and equality;**
- 2 Enhance accountability mechanisms;**
- 3 Strengthen the human rights and equality infrastructure in the State;**
- 4 Fulfil our international role as part of a global network of National Human Rights Institutions and National Equality Bodies; and**
- 5 Operate as a model organisation for implementing human rights and equality in practice.**

We also report on our obligations under:

- Section 42 of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014; and
- The Official Languages (Amendment) Act 2021

The appendices set out our corporate and compliance responsibilities.

1. Developing robust responses to current threats to human rights and equality

We believe the rise of violence, hate, the climate crisis and the persistence of poverty are actively eroding the enjoyment of equality and human rights in the State.

Under this strategic objective, we focus on working with and supporting civil society to play an active and effective role to the promotion and protection of human rights and equality in the context of a vibrant and healthy democracy. Our Civil Society Grants Scheme is a key part of this work. We also pursue this objective through work on policy, research, legal cases and analysis, independent monitoring, communications and engagement with key stakeholders.



23

Organisations supported through the 2025-2026 Grants Scheme



200

Engagements by staff with Civil Society Organisations



45

Civil Society events hosted in our Events Space



2

Research publications in partnership with ESRI



21

Published correspondences with Government Ministers and Departments on key and emerging issues of concern



58

Press releases issued

Empowering people with intellectual disabilities

– National Platform for Self-Advocates



"This project has increased our knowledge, confidence, and ability to advocate for our rights."

— Brian Hayes

The National Platform of Self Advocates is an independent self-advocacy organisation run by people with intellectual disabilities for people with intellectual disabilities. It is a Disabled Persons Organisation (DPO) set up to make sure that the voices of people with intellectual disability (self-advocates) are heard. They received funding through our Grants Scheme for their project, "[How legislation can change your life – Understanding your rights.](#)"

The project aimed to make the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) and Irish equality laws more accessible and relevant to the everyday lives of people with intellectual disabilities. Led and co-produced by self-advocates, the project created 20 professionally filmed videos, an online UNCRPD course for self-advocates, and a more detailed course for policy makers and disability service staff. The resources used plain English, real-life examples, and practical guidance to explain people's rights and how to respond to discrimination.

The project had a significant impact on participants by increasing their knowledge, confidence, and self-advocacy skills.

Self-advocates developed a stronger understanding of their rights, how Irish laws protect them, and what actions they can take if they experience discrimination. Through their involvement in planning, script writing, filming, and reviewing materials, participants gained confidence in expressing their views and developed practical skills in communication, public speaking and rights education. The project also strengthened peer connections, reduced isolation, and improved the visibility and representation of people with intellectual disabilities by positioning self-advocates as leaders and experts in their own lives.

Overall, the project has empowered people with intellectual disabilities to understand their rights, use their voices, and play an active role in shaping a more equal and inclusive Ireland.





Brian Hayes, Chair of
the National Platform
of Self-advocates

Project organisers, Brian Hayes and Martina Neylon said:

”

By building skills and confidence, the project has strengthened the National Platform’s role as a Disabled Persons Organisation. Members are now better prepared to take part in public decision-making, influence policy, and hold systems accountable.”

Respecting and protecting fundamental rights for international protection applicants

Across Europe, political pressures that are driven by rising social and economic inequality are the backdrop to significant reforms in migration and international protection policy. We are also witnessing a worrying trend in the targeting of migrants and people seeking international protection, sometimes with violent attacks.

In this context, it was very important that the transposition of the EU Migration Pact into Irish law was carried out in a manner which protected the fundamental rights of international protection applicants. In April, the Minister for Justice, Home Affairs and Migration published the General Scheme on the International Protection Bill. We engaged in extensive pre-legislative scrutiny on the General Scheme, outlining our significant concerns about human rights and equality issues in areas such as access to legal representation and counselling and the treatment of children and vulnerable persons, including victims of trafficking.

Our submission to the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Justice, Home Affairs and Migration stated that we believed the State was in danger of introducing a system prone to legal challenge, administrative dysfunction, and human rights violations.

The Chief Commissioner appeared before the Joint Oireachtas Committee for Justice, Home Affairs and Migration in October, where he flagged the challenges faced by experts, and members of the Oireachtas, with properly scrutinising the legislation.

We subsequently drafted a detailed analysis document for the Committee and we continued to engage with Oireachtas members and with the media until the end of the year, at which point the Bill had not yet been published.

We believe that by bringing our substantial legal and policy expertise to the important debates on this bill, we provided policy makers with key information that enabled them to analyse the legislation as it developed.

Our work will continue on this Bill into 2026, alongside other key stakeholders, as we approach the transposition date of June 2026.



Supporting civil society to engage in CEDAW and on employment equality legislation

Ireland is required to report regularly to the United Nations on how it is implementing international treaties. This year, Ireland was reviewed under the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). [Our own CEDAW submission](#) covered several of the themes named within this strategic priority including hate speech, domestic, sexual and gender-based violence, poverty and social exclusion as well as the impact of climate change.

Reporting to the CEDAW Committee is also a valuable way for civil society to achieve national and international impact. Sharing lived experiences of the infringements experienced by under-represented groups plays an important role in holding the State to account.

Throughout the year, we took an active role enabling civil society organisations to engage more in the review process. We developed [specific guidance for civil society](#) to make a submission. We held a civil society forum, launching the guidance and giving organisations the opportunity to offer recommendations to include in our own parallel report.

During the review in Geneva, we supported the organisations in attendance by sharing materials and briefings and by hosting a civil society specific networking event.

When the review process completed, we developed a series of [policy primers for civil society](#) and met with a number of organisations who made submissions to the Committee, to gain insights into what support from us worked well and what we could improve on for future submissions. Overall, organisations reported that our support was very beneficial, with some stating that they would not have been able to make a submission without it.



Pictured in the UN building (Palais des Nations) are Deirdre Malone, Director; Chief Commissioner Liam Herrick; Nahla Haidar, Chair of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women; and Jelena Pia-Comella, Member of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and Country Rapporteur for Ireland's CEDAW Review.

Engaging to build strategies for change

In December, members of the Commission met with civil society and community groups at Southill Hub, in Limerick City, to support meaningful stakeholder engagement and build strong collaborative relationships. The discussion focused on the structural nature of poverty, its impact, and strategies for change.

The event programme included a panel discussion featuring expert speakers, followed by breakout group discussions between participants, our Commissioners and our staff.

The aim of the event was to explore with these groups how to build community voice and resilience to challenge the structural nature of poverty and its impact on people's lives, including the threat of extremism and effects of climate injustice.

In doing so, our hope was that the experiences and perspectives in Limerick can illuminate issues relating to poverty in Ireland more generally and inform our work in this area at the national level.

This highly interactive format enabled us to engage directly with those working to protect equality and rights in communities on a daily basis. The outcome of the event also directly informed the theme for our 2026 conference: *Together Rising: Challenging Inequality, Countering Hate* which will focus on building social cohesion in a context of rising inequality and hate.

Prof Niamh Hourigan, Mary Immaculate College; Olive O'Reilly, Limerick Traveller Network; Liam Herrick, Chief Commissioner; Jennifer Moroney-Ward, Limerick Partnership; and Sarah Clancy, Clare PPN at a Commission Meeting with leaders from Limerick civil society organisations on Human Rights Day.



2. Enhancing accountability mechanisms

We believe strong accountability mechanisms ensure that the State will be held to account on the human rights and equality matters for which it is responsible.

Under this strategic objective, we focus on optimising the unique powers we have as the National Human Rights Institution and National Equality Body to be effective in safeguarding rights and equality. We strengthen access to justice, hold the state to account and contribute to robust accountability by working with policy makers, oversight and monitoring bodies, civil society organisations and people who seek our support through legal assistance.



544

Individual clients
provided with legal
assistance



283

New applications
for legal assistance
received



9

Equality Reviews
started



Holding employers to account: Mary Tracy's story



"...it is important that employers properly engage with employees about reasonable accommodation." — Mary Tracy

We provided legal advice and representation to Mary Tracy in her case at the Workplace Relations Commission (WRC) against her former employer Smurfit Kappa Ireland Ltd t/a the Educational Company of Ireland ('EDCO'). She complained that she had experienced discrimination on the grounds of disability, failure to provide reasonable accommodation, experienced victimisation and ultimately discriminatory dismissal.

Ms. Tracy has Systemic Lupus Erythematosus (SLE), a condition that causes joint pain from repetitive strain. Her role as a sales representative for EDCO required her to lift many books in and out of schools. An occupational health assessment stated that she was fit to work and recommended a manual handling restriction of 3kg for at least six months.

By law, employers are required to make reasonable accommodations for disabled workers.

Ms. Tracy proposed reasonable accommodations like using a trolley or pre-posting books and suggested potential funding for accommodations.

However, EDCO did not trial or investigate the accommodations that Ms. Tracy suggested and instead presented her with an ultimatum to accept a different role within the company or be dismissed. Ms. Tracy argued that the alternative position offered was not a suitable fit for her, and she believed she could continue in her existing role with the appropriate accommodations.

Ultimately, EDCO terminated her employment, claiming they thought she could not fulfil the essential duties of her role.

Following the adjudication hearing, the WRC found that EDCO had violated employment equality laws by failing to provide reasonable accommodations for Ms. Tracy's disability and that she had been directly discriminated against.

She was awarded €64,000 in compensation.



Mary Tracy

Reflecting on her experience, Ms. Tracy shared:



As someone living with an invisible disability, having the support of IHREC throughout my case made an enormous difference. From the outset, I felt listened to, believed, and supported. Their expertise, guidance, and commitment ensured that my voice was heard and that my rights were fully represented. Taking a case like this can feel overwhelming, particularly when you are already dealing with the impact of a disability, but IHREC gave me the confidence to continue. I am deeply grateful for the support they provided and for the role they played in helping me achieve a just outcome."

We were very happy to provide legal representation for Ms Tracy in this important equality case and delighted that her new employer has implemented her suggestions regarding appropriate accommodation measures for her disability.



Protecting the Rule of Law

As part of our mandate to promote and protect human rights, we seek to ensure respect for democracy and the rule of law.

We contribute to the European Network of National Human Rights Institutions (ENNHRI) State of the Rule of Law in Europe report on an annual basis. This report is used to monitor respect for human rights, democracy, and the rule of law in Europe.

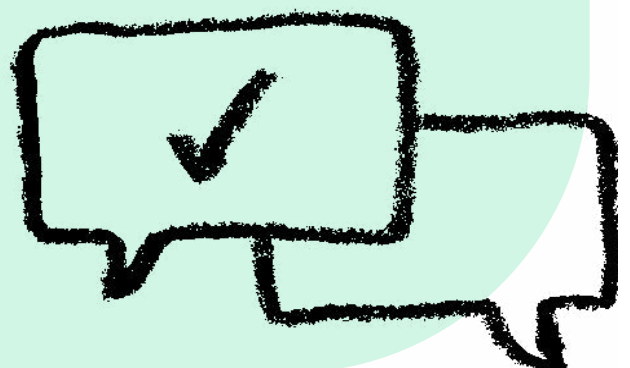
In our submission to the report, we highlighted that previous recommendations on legislation have not been implemented and raised concerns about upcoming human rights legislation not being properly scrutinised by Parliament. We recommended that the State establish a dedicated Oireachtas Committee to closely examine the human rights implications of legislation and policies.

We also drew attention to issues within the justice system, such as court delays, access to legal aid, and the implementation of European Court judgments.

We recommended that the state commit to a clear, time-bound plan for implementing the European Court of Human Rights' 2014 judgment in the case of O'Keeffe v Ireland, to provide adequate redress for certain abuse survivors. We also recommended that jurisdiction for discrimination cases against licensed premises is returned to the Workplace Relations Commission, by repealing section 19 of the Intoxicating Liquor Act 2003.

The final ENNHRI report showed that there are increasing threats to fundamental rights and a deterioration of the rule of law across Europe, particularly regarding civic space, threats to media freedom, and access to justice. The findings also informed the European Commission's Rule of Law in the European Union Report.

A key element of the rule of law is ensuring that legislation is carefully scrutinised and implemented effectively. Given concerns that legislation that has important implications for equality and human rights is being delayed or enacted without adequate scrutiny, we will continue to invest in work on this issue into the future.



Identifying the core components of national equality strategies

National equality strategies concerning disabled people, LGBTQIA+ people, migrants Travellers and Roma, and women and girls are essential for delivering an inclusive and equal society for everyone in Ireland.

To ensure that equality strategies meaningfully change the lives of these equality groups, we published our policy statement '[Core Components of National Equality Strategies](#)'. We set out key elements that the State must consider in the design, development, implementation, monitoring, review, and evaluation of national equality strategies.

We use the five core components (evidence, collaborative governance, implementation, intersectionality, accountability) to work with Government Departments, public bodies and the Oireachtas to advise, monitor and report on the effectiveness of equality strategies.

The Department of Children, Disability and Equality used the policy statement in developing the 'National Strategy for Women and Girls 2025-2030'.

We will continue to support civil society and rights holders to influence equality policymaking.



Challenging discrimination in pubs

“If I go to the district court, it's quite hard to prove that they treated you differently because you're a Traveller.” — Martin Mongan

Section 19 of the Intoxicating Liquor Act 2003 makes it complicated and difficult to challenge discrimination by pubs. This particularly affects the Traveller community by making it harder for them to go pubs and hotels for music events, weddings, communions and graduations.

Under Section 30 of the IHREC Act, we have specific discretionary powers to review the working and effect of any legislation relating to the protection and promotion of human rights and equality. We used this power to publish a [new review of Section 19 of the Intoxicating Liquor Act 2003](#), calling for it to be urgently repealed and replaced.

Our review finds that Section 19 makes it harder for people to challenge discrimination in pubs, bars and other licensed venues. Under Section 19, if someone is discriminated against in a pub, they have to go to the District Court to prove it, whereas all other discrimination cases are taken to the Workplace Relations Commission. This causes confusion about where people can take their cases, makes the process complicated and costly, and discourages people from making valid complaints. Many complaints never go ahead because of the barriers involved.

It also finds that Section 19 fails to meet EU equality law requirements around the burden of proof as it fails to transpose the Race Directive. If someone is discriminated against in a shop, it is up to the shop to prove that discrimination didn't happen. If someone is discriminated against in a pub, the burden of proof is less clear, leading to uncertainty and inconsistency in how Irish courts handle these cases.

Our review outlines a number of recommendations to repeal Section 19, and place strong safeguards so that everyone has fair and equal access to justice.

We have supported many people bringing Section 19 cases and will continue to work with Government, the Oireachtas and other partners to make sure these reforms happen without delay.

Promoting inclusive employment for Travellers and Roma

Travellers and Roma experience systemic barriers to employment, and these communities are under-represented in workplaces across Ireland. To empower employers to be leaders in supporting Travellers and Roma to access, participate, and progress in decent work on an equal basis with others we developed an employer guide, [‘Traveller and Roma Inclusive Employment’](#) through our Worker and Employer Advisory Committee.

This is the first employer guide developed in partnership with Traveller and Roma researchers and organisations that gives voice, visibility, and a road map to achieve more inclusive employment. It includes testimonials by Traveller and Roma employees and offers case-studies from public and semi-state employers including the Department of Justice, Home Affairs and Migration and the ESB.

“Being part of developing this guide ensured Traveller voices shaped practical solutions. It supports employers to move from intention to action, particularly through recruitment and retention practices, creating real opportunities for inclusion, respect, and progression for Travellers in the workplace.”

— Bridget Kelly, Peer Researcher and National Traveller Policy Co-ordinator for Employment and Enterprise, Irish Traveller Movement

The Guide has since been promoted widely by Ibec, publicjobs.ie, the Department of Justice, Home Affairs and Migration, and the Department of Children, Disability and Equality, and ICTU. The Guide has been used by Traveller and Roma organisations, including the Irish Traveller Movement (ITM) and by Pavee Point Traveller and Roma Centre in their employment and anti-racism training work. There has been increased interest and take-up by employers for such training and support. The Commission is planning further promotion of the guide in 2026.

”

There has long been a need for a guide like this to be developed and published so that Travellers and Roma can find empowerment in their professional lives and in the workplace. With this guide it would be our hope that we can immediately see better outcomes for Traveller and Roma in employment.”

— Rudolf Simonic, Peer Researcher and Community Development Worker, Pavee Point Traveller and Roma Centre



3. Strengthening the human rights and equality infrastructure in the State

We believe that we are responsible for monitoring and guarding the health of our national human rights and equality infrastructure which includes our domestic, European and international obligations, the education system and civil society.

Under this strategic objective, we focus on the leadership that is required to develop and maintain robust human rights and equality infrastructure in the State. This includes providing thought leadership through our annual conference.

We support public bodies to implement the Public Sector Human Rights and Equality Duty. We monitor the state's compliance with international human rights and equality treaties; implement our role as National Rapporteur on the Trafficking in Human Beings; and protect and promote human rights with an all-island dimension in partnership with the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission and Equality Commission for Northern Ireland. We provide support to the Oireachtas, public bodies and local authorities on a range of human rights and equality issues and we invest in the future through our work on human rights education.



700

Public servants trained on the PSD



3

Submissions to international treaty bodies



6

Appearances before Oireachtas Committees



122

Organisations represented at our first annual conference



1

Section 42.5 Public Sector Duty review commenced – our first time using this power



247

Mentions of the Commission in print and broadcast media

Protecting the Right to Vote: Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage



"We believe that our work in making information about voting more accessible, and in promoting awareness of supports for voters, supported participation by citizens in the recent presidential election."

— The Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage

Ensuring a supportive legislative and policy framework to achieve accessible, inclusive elections is one way that the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (DHLGH) demonstrates how Equality and Human Rights principles are embedded into their work. It serves as a practical example of the Duty in action, showing a dedication to implementing commitments undertaken under its 2024–2026 Public Sector Duty Assessment and Action Plan.

The Franchise Section of the DHLGH is responsible for the policy, legislation, and administrative oversight of Ireland's electoral system.

They engaged in our Public Sector Duty government department sectoral support programme. Through this programme, we supported them to put the Public Sector Duty into practice.

By conducting their Public Sector Duty assessment, they found that there were elements of Ireland's voting system that could be made more accessible. Within its Public Sector Duty action plan, the DHLGH put together a series of actions to make voting more accessible.

In advance of the 2025 Presidential election, they created clear and accessible information about voting.

They produced advertisements detailing supports for disabled voters, including how to transfer to a more accessible polling station, if desired.

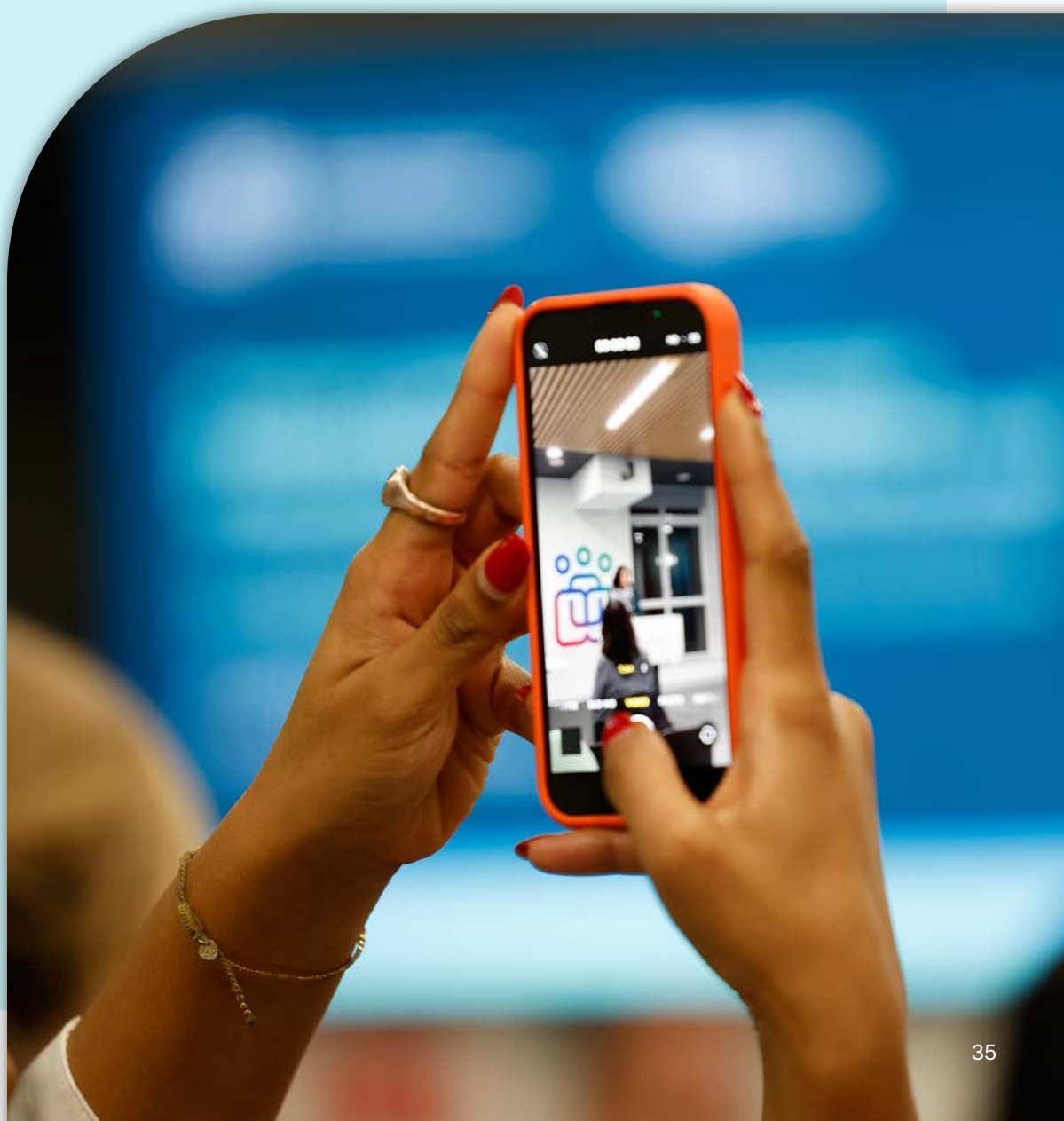
They reviewed and updated the design of Polling Information Cards to include larger, more accessible text. Local authorities included Eircodes on the addresses of polling stations on Polling Information Cards to make it easier for disabled voters to find them on mobile maps.

Accessibility audits for the registration portals Voter.ie and checktheregister.ie were undertaken by the local government sector in 2025. Work on the establishment of a new central electoral registration system was underway, with all local authorities due to be using the system by the end of 2026.

They also have an information leaflet in a range of different languages specifically for voters with disabilities. The Department has introduced mandatory Equality and Human Rights training for staff, alongside a range of other actions.

These actions show a strong commitment by the DHLGH to engage with and understand the issues faced by marginalised members of society in exercising their right to vote, to put in place practical plans to address those issues directly and crucially to put those plans into motion.

This is the Public Sector Duty in action.



Convening Human Rights Leaders

“I left the event feeling energised by the passion of the people I met throughout the day and inspired by the amazing work and initiatives showcased.”

— Conference attendee

We held our first annual conference on Leadership on Human Rights and Equality in September. The aim of the conference was to convene senior decision makers, rights holders and influencers in public, civil society and private sectors on the island of Ireland to inform and identify actions to protect, promote and advance human rights and equality.

The conference was chaired by Shada Islam of New Horizons Project, with Sirpa Rautio, Director of the Fundamental Rights Agency providing the keynote. We conveyed the findings from our first annual [Key Developments in Human Rights and Equality report](#).

We had a panel discussion on ‘Ireland as a leader for human rights and equality.’ The panelists were Eamon Gilmore, Former Tánaiste, and EU Special Representative on for Human Rights; Professor Siobhán Mullally, UN Special Rapporteur on Trafficking in Persons; Nyanchama Okemwa, Chair of the European Network Against Racism; and Debbie Kohner, Secretary General of the European Network of National Human Rights Institutions.

We ran parallel workshops centered on rule of law, human rights and equality budgeting, equality and human rights data, Ireland as a leader on human rights and equality in Europe, artificial intelligence and tackling misinformation, disinformation, and hate. The conference closed with a discussion on the need for courageous and visionary leadership for equality and human rights.

The conference was attended by representatives from 122 organisations across a wide range of sectors and feedback was overwhelmingly positive. Attendees praised the wide range of topics and speakers within the programme, the networking opportunities provided by the mix of attendees, and the Commission staff they interacted with. Over 80% of attendees reported that the conference was informative and enabled a high level of engagement with our work.

Our 2026 conference: ‘Together Rising: Challenging Inequality, Countering Hate’ will focus on building social cohesion in a context of increasing inequality and hate and will incorporate feedback from attendees to create an even better experience for all in attendance.



Nyanchama Okemwa, Chair, European Network Against Racism, Deirdre Malone, Director and Prof Siobhán Mullally, UN Special Rapporteur on Trafficking in Persons at the 2025 Leadership on Human Rights and Equality Conference



Conference Chair Shada Islam and Sirpa Rautio, Director, Fundamental Rights Agency



The aim of the conference was to convene senior decision makers, rights holders and influencers in public, civil society and private sectors on the island of Ireland to inform and identify actions to protect, promote and advance human rights and equality.

Monitoring compliance with UNCRPD

As the Independent Monitoring Mechanism for Ireland, it is vital that people who have real experience with disability inform our work and that disabled people and their representative organisations participate in an active and meaningful way in the monitoring process.

Ireland is expected to be reviewed by the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2027. Prior to this review, the Committee will prepare a list of priority issues for the State review. To help the Committee to identify the correct issues to raise with the State, we submitted our [first report as the Independent Monitoring Mechanism for Ireland](#) under the UNCRPD to the Committee in advance of their pre-sessional meeting to consider the list of issues. Our submission highlighted the many systemic and persistent barriers that disabled people experience in Ireland.

Our submission was significantly informed by the input of disabled people, Disabled Persons Organisations (DPOs), our Disability Advisory Committee, and civil society organisations.

Before we began drafting, we developed guidance and co-hosted an information webinar for civil society organisations to empower them to engage with the process.

We held two consultation sessions on the topic of independent living. One for a broad audience of individuals and groups and a specific session for Disabled Persons Organisations. We engaged heavily with individual DPOs throughout the drafting process and drew on materials they provided to give the Committee a real-world view of living with a disability in Ireland.

We engaged directly with the UN Committee before and during their meeting and sat as an observer in their session with Irish DPOs in Geneva.

The impact of civil society engagement on the List of Issues is evident, as the issues identified and prioritised by the Committee aligned significantly with those that we had recommended.

We will continue to work closely with civil society as we look towards the States' review by the UNCRPD Committee in 2027.

Building understanding of the Public Sector Duty

“This was one of the best written and presented seminars I’ve been on in a long time. I understood the basic requirements of Public Sector Duty, but this seminar made everything clearer.”

— Webinar Attendee

Implementing the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty means that public bodies address human rights and equality issues in a proactive way, rather than waiting until an issue or complaint arises, before addressing it.

To support public bodies to build their understanding and help them to implement the Duty, we ran a series of thematic webinars. The six webinars on topics such as “An Introduction to the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty”, “Compliance with the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty in Education” and “Ongoing compliance with the Duty in your organisation” gave a practical overview of the Duty for a wide audience across the public sector. They highlighted some simple steps public bodies can take to better comply with the duty, as well as helping them to recognise when they are already taking positive actions that fall within the scope of the Duty.

Almost 700 public servants from across 100 different public bodies attended the webinars. Participant evaluations were overwhelmingly positive, particularly around the use of lived experience examples of the issues faced by marginalised communities when public policy fails to adequately understand and consider their needs.

Increased engagement with public bodies through our monitoring portal and innovative training strategies has led to a steady increase in compliance with the Duty. For the first time since we started monitoring compliance in 2023, close to half of all public bodies (48%) have met their obligations under Section 42 (2) in part or in full, while 94 (33%) are fully compliant with their obligations.

We will continue to offer [our Guidance](#), Public Sector Duty webinars and provide recordings of each webinar to public bodies for use within their organisations. Based on feedback received we have committed to continue to bring a strong focus on the lived experience across all our training and guidance output.



4. Fulfilling our international role as part of a global network of NHRIs & NEBs

We believe that as a National Human Rights Institution (NHRI) and National Equality Body (NEB) we are strengthened by our membership of global human rights and equality networks.

Under this strategic objective, we ensure that we are seen as an important and valued contributor to learning and an active collaborator with NHRIs and NEBs across Europe on key issues. We concentrate on being active members of EQUINET, ENNHRI and GANHRI in particular. We focus on work that supports NHRIs and NEBs who are at risk when democracy, peace and the rule of law are under threat.



100

Meetings or events with other NHRI's/NEBs



10

Training sessions with other bodies



16

ENNHRI and Equinet working groups participated in by staff



ICHR Commissioner Diana Buttu

Showing solidarity at a time of genocide: Dr Ammar al Dwaik



“At a moment when many remained silent, you spoke with moral clarity about the gravity of what is unfolding in Gaza...”

— Dr Ammar al Dwaik, Director General, ICHR

In August, at the height of the war on Gaza, the Director General of the Palestine Independent Commission for Human Rights wrote to our Chief Commissioner, Liam Herrick, to recognise our solidarity and to encourage us to continue our work supporting NHRIs and NEBs who are at risk when democracy, peace and the rule of law are under threat.

“I write to you on behalf of Palestine Independent Commission for Human Rights, with deep appreciation for your continued leadership and solidarity. Your Irish Times opinion of 14 May 2025 was a courageous and timely intervention. At a moment when many remained silent, you spoke with moral clarity about the gravity of what is unfolding in Gaza, and the responsibility of Ireland to act.

... There is now a growing legal consensus among human rights organizations—including prominent Israeli groups—that the events unfolding in Gaza meet the criteria for genocide under international law...

Ireland’s voice carries weight far beyond its size. It has earned global respect for standing on principle, even when others hesitate. At this moment of immense suffering, we urge you to continue pressing for actions that match the scale of the injustice unfolding before us. We stand ready to support your work in any way we can—with legal analysis, documentation, or policy advice. And above all, we thank you for continuing to speak out—not just for Palestine, but for the values of dignity, accountability, and humanity.

With deep respect and solidarity, Dr. Ammar Dwaik, Director General, ICHR.”

Having forged a connection between the leaders of both institutions, Ammar subsequently travelled to Ireland at our invitation, along with Commissioner Diana Buttu from the Palestine ICHR (see below).



Amplifying voices: visit of Ammar al Dwaik and Diana Buttu

“It's taken a genocide for people around the world to realize that Palestinians have been oppressed since 1948.”

— Diana Buttu, Commissioner, Palestinian Independent Commission for Human Rights (ICHR)

In December, we were privileged to host Ammar al Dwaik, Director of the Palestinian and ICHR Commission member Diana Buttu on a 3-day visit. The purpose of the visit was to support the ICHR by amplifying their voice and increasing their influence internationally; to facilitate engagement between the ICHR and the Irish government; and to keep a focus on how systemic violations of international law are impacting on Palestinians and what the international community needs to do in response.

During the course of their visit, Ammar and Diana met with members of the Dáil and Seanad, including the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Foreign Affairs and the Friends of Palestine Parliamentary Group. They met with MEPs and senior officials in the Department of Foreign Affairs. They met with Commission members, civil society organisations and experts in international human rights law as well as a senior advisor to the UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders.

Throughout the visit, Ammar and Diana underscored the absolute obligation on third party states, including Ireland, to take action to prevent and respond to genocide and to take actions to end the unlawful occupation of Palestinian territory by Israel.

Diana Buttu said:

“If the international rules-based order is going to mean anything, it means that Israel must be held to account”.

While both welcomed the Occupied Territories Bill as an initiative, they were clear that enactment of the Bill was a minimal step that was long overdue.



Diana Buttu, ICHR Commissioner; Chief Commissioner Liam Herrick and Dr Ammar al Dwaik, Director General, ICHR speaking at the public meeting “Human Rights in the occupied Palestinian Territory: where to now?”

Ammar al Dwaik said that:

“Recognition of genocide must trigger a shift from condemnation to prevention. Prevention is not passive. It requires immediate political, legal and diplomatic steps aimed at disrupting the structures enabling mass atrocity”.

Ammar and Diana’s visit to Ireland had a lasting and powerful impact. It has informed policy and strategic thinking in the Commission and amongst those whom they met. It has created a strong bond and a human connection between our two institutions in Ireland and in Palestine.



Improving Standards for Equality bodies

The EU Directives on Standards for Equality Bodies are the first legally binding international instruments providing detailed standards for equality bodies. The aim of the Directives is to improve the effectiveness of equality bodies across the European Union and guarantee their independence. This is important as, if proportionately resourced, it should increase our ability to assist victims of discrimination, monitor and report on discrimination, promote equal treatment and contribute to raising awareness of people's rights. The Directives must be transposed into Irish law by 19 June 2026.

Over the course of the year, we carried out intensive work to prepare for the transposition and implementation of the Standards Directives.

We carried out a legal analysis of the Directives to identify the implications for us as an equality body, and for Irish legislation. A resource analysis was carried out to support planning for implementation. We regularly engaged with senior officials in the Department of Children, Disability and Equality, and held meetings and briefings with the Oireachtas Committee on Children and Equality and representatives of each political party. In June and November, we hosted events on the Standards Directives for civil society with international expert speakers.

We have also contributed strongly to the implementation of the Standards Directives across the EU. Given our expertise in equality data, we were asked by the EU Subgroup on Equality Data to be lead drafter on a new European Commission Guidance Note on the data provisions in the Standards Directives (2026). We also contributed to the monitoring framework for the Standards Directives, by participating in a pilot project on indicators conducted by the European Commission during the year.

The Head of Policy and Research joined the advisory group for a research project commissioned by the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland on the Standards Directives. The aim of the project is to identify how legislation and policy in Northern Ireland would need to be reformed to meet the requirements of the Standards Directives.

We have made a substantive policy contribution at national and EU level to the understanding of the Directives and their requirements and are well advanced in our planning for the Directives to be implemented from June 2026.

5. Operating as a model organisation for implementing human rights and equality in practice

We believe that to deliver our mandate effectively, we must reflect and develop internally to meet the high standards expected of us.

Under this strategic objective, we focus on the governance of our organisation and on the structures, policies and practices that underpin highly effective performance. We focus on ensuring that the members of the Commission are supported to perform their leadership roles. We focus on excellence in terms of people and culture and in how we live our values. We make sure that our outreach and communications work supports meaningful stakeholder engagement and strategic impact.



88

Staff



6

New Commission Members
appointed



10

New Disability Advisory
Committee members
appointed



249,800

Website visitors



530

Documents made accessible and
uploaded to the new website

Mentoring to success: Katie Murphy

"I get to speak to public bodies and civil society about my experiences as a person with a disability." — Katie Murphy

The AHEAD Willing Able Mentoring (WAM) programme offers graduates with disabilities the chance to undertake a minimum 6 month, paid, mentored work placement. We have been proud participants in the WAM programme for a number of years.

Katie Murphy is the most recent graduate to join our team through WAM. She joined our Public Sector Duty team and helps to provide training for public bodies on how to implement the Duty.

"I decided to take part in the WAM programme as a new graduate as I was struggling to find employment following completion of my master's programme in Global Legal Studies. I was worried about disclosing my disability to potential employers and as an extension of this, I was concerned about asking for and getting reasonable accommodations. The WAM programme has taken this stress away from me and made it easier for me to find a career that has meaning and purpose. As part of my work in the Public Sector Duty Team, I get to speak to public bodies and civil society about my experiences as a person with a disability. I see my role here as an example of the Public Sector Duty in action." — Katie Murphy

Katie sharing her lived experience during our training webinars has had huge impact with participants. Feedback has consistently highlighted the value of hearing her speak. Katie successfully completed her WAM placement and is now a valued permanent member of our staff team.



Katie Murphy, Public Sector
Duty Team Member

Increasing digital accessibility: new website

Building on our previous work to make our branding, publications and event space more accessible, we redeveloped our website, aiming to make it more accessible for all. As a public body, we are required to make sure that our website complies with the Web Accessibility Directive. This legislation sets out the basic technical standards that a website must meet to be accessible for disabled users. Our aim was to be more than technically compliant; we also wanted to make sure that the site was user-friendly and engaging.

We consulted with our stakeholders before we started developing the new site to figure out what was working and what wasn't with the existing site. Using these insights, we created a new site map and started to build. We continued to engage with users and stakeholders during the build, doing two rounds of user testing on the proposed layout and content. One round of testing was exclusively with disabled users to ensure that our content was user friendly and not just technically compliant. Our team underwent extensive training in writing content in plain English, PDF accessibility and writing content for the web to ensure that content would continue to be fully accessible to multiple users.

In July, we launched the new site in 7 languages – English, Irish, French, Spanish, Portuguese, Russian and Ukrainian. The new site contains extended information on rights under equality laws, new topic focused pages and expanded information about our work and mandates.

When the National Disability Authority released their annual monitoring report, we had significantly increased our accessibility score as a result of the changes we made. The website subsequently won an Institute of Designers Ireland Award in the New Website Launch category for its excellence in usability, functionality, and inclusion.

Our team continues to upskill and attend trainings on tools and technologies that will help us to improve our knowledge about accessibility standards, and we will continue to work to make the website even more accessible.



Marching for Pride: LGBTIA+ Rights Belong to All of Us

Ireland's ambition for equality demands courageous leadership at a time when those seeking to reverse our progress are gaining ground. LGBTQIA+ people still face many forms of discrimination in their daily lives and face significantly more violence and hate crimes than the general population.

Throughout June, we showed our solidarity with the LGBTQIA+ community through several internal and external Pride initiatives.

We hosted a series of webinars to celebrate Pride Month

We took part in the Pride Parade for the first time, facilitating and encouraging our staff and their family members to publicly show our support for our LGBTQIA+ community.

To mark 10 years since Ireland became the first country to vote for marriage equality, and 10 years since we legislated for Gender Recognition, we launched a one-day digital outdoor advertising campaign at bus stops along the Pride Parade route across Dublin City.

The bilingual campaign in Irish and English led with the message, "LGBTIA+ Rights Belong to All of Us", also appearing on Dublin City Centre screens, and in the main LBGQT venues, including those hosting Pride events.

We know that Irish leadership on these issues is needed now more than ever. We must all remember that hard-won rights can easily be reversed and continue to show leadership and solidarity.

IHREC staff pictured at the Dublin Pride Parade



Promoting sustainability: Green Team

- We established a Green Team in May to promote sustainability and green practices across the organisation.
- We signed up for the Reduce Your Use Campaign, raising awareness among staff about energy conservation, recycling and waste reduction.
- We are in the process of applying for the Smarter Travel Mark and have introduced a series of initiatives to encourage staff to use sustainable modes of transport.

These initiatives have already resulted in tangible energy savings across the organisation, and we are committed to becoming more sustainable and embedding green practices. Details can be found in the appendix.



Reporting

Report under section 42 of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014

Section 42(1) of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Act 2014 provides that:

A public body shall, in the performance of its functions have regard to the need to:

1. eliminate discrimination;
2. promote equality of opportunity and treatment of its staff and the persons to whom it provides services; and
3. protect, promote and fulfil the human rights of its members, staff and the persons to whom it provides services.

Under this statutory Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty every public body is required to Assess, Address and Report on how they incorporate equality and human rights into their work.

In keeping with the principles of the Duty, the priorities outlined in our Strategy Statement have been informed based on extensive consultation across all sectors of society, from a variety of backgrounds, and across the generations. Protection and promotion of human rights and equality, and the elimination of discrimination, are core to our functions and purpose and by working towards achieving our strategic goals we are, at all times, upholding the requirements of the Duty in our core work.

However, to meet our statutory obligations under the Duty we must also take account of human rights and equality in how we implement our functions and go about our daily work.

The following table is our report on progress in relation to meeting the commitments which derive from our Assess Address Report which can be found in our Strategic Statement 2025-2027.

Section 42 Progress Report

Current Status:  Ongoing  Complete

All IHREC

Prepare terms of reference for an accessibility audit across our external communications, with respect to the purpose of that communication and its end user/ intended audience. Develop an action plan for the organisation on the basis of this audit.

Draft terms of reference for an IHREC wide audit of external communications has been completed by the Public Sector Working Group and will be progressed in 2026.

Review and update consultation and engagement guidelines to take into account the development of procedures for regional engagements with stakeholders on key projects

Commission held its first combined plenary and regional stakeholder event in December 2025.

Learnings from this will be applied and review of consultation guidelines will progress in 2026.

Monitoring and Compliance

Develop an internal procedure and guidance for how we engage directly with rights holders, including structurally vulnerable groups.

Planning underway in 2025 and will be progressed in 2026.

Evaluate unit training needs and develop a training plan accordingly.

Planning underway in 2025 and will be progressed in 2026.

Strategic Engagement

Carry out an audit of civil society groups we reach and identify gaps to inform the development of a co-ordinated and effective outreach plan by teams across the organisation.

Planning underway in 2025 and will be progressed in 2026.

Develop a training plan to include screening of the needs of attendees to ascertain accessibility issues in advance. Screening process will be informed by survey issued alongside invitations.

Event Accessibility screening questionnaire/survey developed and in use in advance of Public Sector Duty training.

Incorporate panel testing by disabled people, people with literacy needs and people with other language requirements into the process for designing and building new website.

Actioned.

Carry out independent accessibility check on new site.

Completed and actions developed for further improvements to website accessibility in 2026.

Corporate Services

Review recruitment processes to explore further promotion of inclusivity including additional channels for recruitment, advertisement and information.

Notification of all external recruitment campaigns are sent to a wide range of diverse representative groups to share within their networks. These groups are reminded of IHREC's commitment to equal opportunity employment and are proactively provided with information on reasonable accommodation and accessibility.

Further increase support and recruitment of those with a disability via the Willing Able Mentoring, Oireachtas Work Learning and Northeast Inner City Transition Year Work Experience programmes.

IHREC actively supporting WAM and the NEIC TY programme.

Further develop participation in work experience opportunities for diverse groups.

Engaged with Traveller and Roma Placement Programme in 2025.

Develop a fully comprehensive, best in class, Equality, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion policy.

Intercultural training made available to staff.

Consultants engaged to undertake all-staff EDI audit in early 2026.

Legal

Provide intercultural awareness training for the Legal Team/ Your Rights Service staff.

Intercultural Training provided for Legal and Your Rights Teams.

Identify groups not accessing Your Rights Information Service (YRIS) currently, to inform YRIS service redevelopment.

New YRIS currently in development. Access by service users has been a central consideration of the development plan.

Design specific actions as part of YRIS service re-development to address identified gaps.

New YRIS currently in development.

Policy and Research

Take an inclusive approach to research and data projects, ensuring the collection, use and communication of relevant disaggregated equality data, adhering to all ethical standards and the EU guidance on equality data.

Presentation on Research Ethics delivered to Grants Scheme awardees at their induction seminar.

Delivered dedicated workshop 'Integrating equality and human rights data into the national data infrastructure' at IHREC annual conference

Review our identified stakeholder partners to ensure optimum and inclusive engagement in all activities.

Stakeholder partners reviewed as part of Annual Conference and P&R events.

Develop an internal procedure and guidance for how we engage directly with rights holders, including children and young people.

Planning underway.

Develop an internal procedure on diversifying our research, data, legislation, policy, international monitoring and technical networks.

Planning underway.

Report under the Official Languages (Amendment) Act 2021

We are obliged to report on our performance of obligations under the Official Languages (Amendment) Act 2021. In compliance with new obligations that came into force during the year, we appointed the manager responsible for corporate governance, facilities and ICT to oversee our compliance with the Acts.

Our Irish Language Officers provided practical advice and support to all teams in relation to the Irish language and our obligations as a public body. Lists of basic phrases was shared with all staff to use throughout their daily work and continuous assistance was provided to all staff to ensure their internal standard messaging is bilingual. The Irish Language Officers presented throughout the year to all staff on our Irish Language Scheme and also presented to new staff as part of their induction process. Engagement and attendance at Irish language courses is supported and encouraged by the organisation. Irish language books were purchased for shared staff use to further encourage learning and interest in the language.

An Coiste Gaeilge, led by our Irish Language Officers, coordinated a programme of events as part of Seachtain na Gaeilge in March. This included our Lón le Gaeilge where staff gathered to share their cúpla focal, a tea break talk given to staff by representatives from the Public Sector Irish Language Network, as well as staff social and professional language resources.



Appendices



Contents

Appendix 1: Legal Work..... 1

Appendix 2: Corporate Governance and Structure 29

Appendix 3: Commission Member Profiles 39

Appendix 4: Attendance at Commission Meetings 45

Appendix 5: Attendance at Committees 48

Appendix 6: Commission staff 53

Appendix 7: Additional financial disclosures..... 54

Appendix 8: Publications..... 57

Appendix 9: 2025-26 Human Rights and Equality Grants Scheme 62

Appendix 10: Your Rights data 73

Appendix 11: Monitoring Implementation of the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty
..... 76

Appendix 1: Legal Work

Providing legal assistance to individuals

Under Section 40 of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014, we can, in certain circumstances set down in law, give legal assistance to members of the public who wish to take a case relating to equality or human rights law before the Workplace Relations Commission, the Labour Court or the courts. The assistance provided can include legal advice only or legal advice and representation.

At the beginning of the year, we had 414 individual clients who had been granted legal assistance and whose cases were ongoing. Of these, 79 had been approved for legal advice and 335 had been approved for legal advice and representation. A further 37 applicants were awaiting a decision on their application for assistance.

Applications for legal assistance

In addition to the 37 applications carried over from 2024, an additional 283 new individual applications for legal assistance were received during the year.

This year:

- 130 applications were approved for assistance, of which:
 - 32 approvals were for legal advice only; and
 - 98 approvals were for legal advice and representation;
- 53 applications were declined; and
- 32 applications were withdrawn or discontinued.

We completed work on 44 individual cases assisting 88 clients. 15 clients (across 13 individual cases) were granted legal advice only, while 73 clients (across 31 individual cases) were provided with legal advice and representation.

Details of these completed matters including some that had been opened in previous years are set out below.

Legal advice assistance completed

During the year, 15 clients relating to 13 case files were granted legal advice assistance, but not legal representation, across the following areas:

Advice only under the Employment Equality Acts

Ground: Race

Number of clients: 1

Details: We provided a grant of legal assistance for legal advice to a client regarding a claim of racial discrimination and harassment in his previous place of employment, which led to his resignation. The client was provided with legal advice on racial discrimination and harassment in the employment context and the legal remedies available.

Ground: Protected Leave

Number of clients: 1

Details: We provided a grant of legal advice to a client in relation to a complaint that they were excluded from a promotion process while on parents' leave. The client also complained of a failure to provide reasonable accommodation while on certified sick leave. The client was provided with legal advice in relation to both matters.

Ground: Disability / Reasonable Accommodation

Number of clients: 1

Details: We provided a grant of legal advice to a client with a disability regarding a claim of discrimination in seeking to access employment in the public sector. The client complained that an offer of employment was revoked due to the employer's perception that the role was unsuitable for a person with the client's particular disability. The client was provided with legal advice on their rights under employment equality legislation.

Advice only under the Equal Status Acts 2000 – 2018

Ground: Disability / Reasonable Accommodation

Number of clients: 1

Details: We provided a grant of legal advice to a client with a disability who had sought reasonable accommodation in order to access their accommodation. The client complained that the landlord/management company failed to provide the reasonable accommodation sought. Legal advice was provided regarding the relevant rights arising under the Equal Status Acts.

Ground: Race

Number of clients: 1

Details: We provided legal advice to a student who complained that they had experienced discrimination on the ground of race in trying to access the services of a third level education provider. The client complained that the provider treated them less favourably in declining them access to course materials and lectures following their enrolment on their chosen course. We provided legal advice to the client regarding the interaction between the State's Springboard+ programme and the third level institute.

Ground: Membership of the Traveller Community

Number of clients: 2

Details: We provided a couple with practical assistance and legal advice regarding a complaint of discrimination against a hotel on the grounds of membership of the Traveller community.

Ground: Disability

Number of clients: 1

Details: We provided legal advice to a client, who is a minor, regarding an incident of indirect discrimination on the grounds of disability in a school.

Advice only under the Intoxicating Liquor Acts 1988 - 2018

Ground: Gender / Membership of the Traveller Community

Number of clients: 1

Details: We provided legal advice to a client, who is a transgender woman and a member of the Traveller community, in relation to a claim of harassment and discrimination when accessing a licenced premises.

Advice only relating to Human Rights

Issue: Fair Procedures / Access to Temporary Protection

Number of clients: 1

Details: We provided practical assistance and legal advice to a Ukrainian client of Roma ethnicity in relation to their application for Temporary Protection.

Issue: Disability

Number of clients: 1

Details: We provided legal advice to a client regarding an appeal before the Disabled Drivers Appeal Board. Subsequently the client advised us that they successfully obtained a Primary Medical Certificate to access the Disabled Drivers and Disabled Passengers Scheme (DDP).

Issue: Disability

Number of clients: 2

Details: We provided legal advice to two clients who wished to challenge the proposed transition of an adult out of Wardship into the Assisted Decision-Making Capacity Act system.

Issue: Housing

Number of clients: 1

Details: We provided legal advice to a client in relation to their complaint against a County Council that the client alleged failed to provide them with suitable accommodation.

Issue: Fair Procedures

Number of clients: 1

Details: We provided legal advice to a client who had referred a complaint of discrimination to the Workplace Relations Commission on his behalf and on behalf of his wife alleging that a service provider had discriminated against them on the ground of disability and/or failed to provide reasonable accommodation.

Legal representation assistance completed

Cases under the Equal Status Acts 2000 – 2018

Members of the Traveller Community v. A Restaurant

Ground: Membership of the Traveller Community

Number of clients: 6

Issue: We provided legal advice and representation to this extended family who are members of the Traveller community in relation to a complaint of discrimination when a reservation at a restaurant was cancelled. A complaint of discrimination on the grounds of membership of the Traveller community was submitted to the WRC under the ESA.

Outcome: With the benefit of our legal assistance, this case settled to the satisfaction of all clients, including an apology and compensation.

Members of the Traveller Community v. A Hotel

Ground: Membership of the Traveller community

Number of clients: 12

- Issue:** We provided legal advice and representation to twelve family members in relation to a complaint of discrimination when trying to access accommodation from a hotel. A complaint of discrimination on the grounds of membership of the Traveller community was submitted to the WRC under the ESA.
- Outcome:** With the benefit of our legal assistance, this case settled to the satisfaction of all clients, with the hotel issuing an apology and compensation to the clients.

An Individual v. A Service Provider

Ground: Disability

Number of clients: 1

- Issue:** We provided legal advice and representation to a Deaf individual in relation to the failure of a service provider to provide reasonable accommodation and discrimination on the grounds of disability.
- The client in this case was refused service when they attempted to gain access to the service with the assistance of an Irish Sign Language interpreter.
- Outcome:** The matter settled to the satisfaction of the client at mediation before the WRC.

A Pupil (Minor suing by her Next Friend) v. A Secondary School

Ground: Membership of the Traveller Community

Number of clients: 1

- Issue:** We provided legal advice and representation to a minor client who was left in an empty classroom without supervision for hours after they arrived late for school. A complaint of discrimination on the grounds of membership of the Traveller community was submitted to the WRC under the ESA.

Outcome: The case was heard in an adjudication before the WRC in September 2024. The adjudication officer found that the complainant had failed to establish a prima facie case of discrimination arising from their membership of the Traveller community.

An Individual v. A Shopping Centre

Ground: Race / Ethnicity

Number of clients: 1

Issue: We provided legal advice and representation to a client who is a member of the Roma community in relation to a complaint of discrimination and harassment on the grounds of race, experienced when attempting to access a shopping centre. The client submitted a complaint of discrimination on the grounds of race to the WRC under the ESA.

Outcome: The matter was finalised to the satisfaction of the client.

An Individual v. A Healthcare Insurance Provider

Ground: Disability

Number of clients: 1

Issue: We provided legal advice and representation to a Deaf individual in relation to complaint of discrimination on the grounds of disability while accessing the services of a healthcare insurance provider. The service provider required the client to provide prior written permission to the use of an Irish Sign Language interpreter when contacting the service over the phone.

Outcome: The matter settled to the satisfaction of the client at mediation before the WRC.

Danut Nae v. Supervalu

Ground: Race

Number of clients: 1

Issue: We provided legal advice and representation to this client in relation to a complaint of discrimination and harassment on the grounds of race when accessing services in a grocery shop.

Outcome: The WRC adjudication officer found that the complainant had failed to establish a prima facie case of discrimination on the grounds of race.

A Customer v. A Shop

Ground: Access to services

Number of clients: 1

Issue: We provided legal advice and representation to a Deaf client in relation to a complaint of discrimination on the grounds of disability when accessing a shop. The client submitted a complaint of discrimination on the grounds of disability to the WRC under the ESA.

Outcome: The matter settled to the satisfaction of the client at mediation before the WRC.

A Member of the Traveller Community v. A Shop

Ground: Membership of the Traveller Community

Number of clients: 1

Issue: We provided legal advice and limited representation to a client in relation to a complaint against a shop regarding discrimination on the grounds of membership of the Traveller community.

Outcome: Following legal advice, the client decided not to proceed with the matter.

Members of the Traveller Community v. A Grocery Store

Ground: Membership of the Traveller Community

Number of clients: 3

Issue: We provided legal advice and representation to three family members in relation to a complaint of discrimination and harassment when attempting to access services from a grocery store. A complaint of discrimination on the grounds of membership of the Traveller community was submitted to the WRC under the ESA.

Outcome: The matter settled on the day of the hearing to the satisfaction of both parties.

William Gallagher v. Jenny Brennan and Matthew Hannigan

Ground: Housing Assistance

Number of clients: 1

Issue: We provided practical assistance, advice and legal representation before the WRC to a client in a case of discrimination and victimisation by his landlords on the housing assistance payment ground.

Outcome: The matter was successful at WRC adjudication, and the Complainant was awarded a total of €23,000 in compensation. This amount comprised the jurisdictional maximum award of compensation for discrimination, which is €15,000, and a further award of €8,000 for the effects of victimisation.

An ISL User v. A Utility Service Provider

Ground: Disability

Number of clients: 1

Issue: We provided legal advice and representation to a Deaf client in relation to a complaint of discrimination on the grounds of disability. The client had attempted to phone the utility provider with the assistance of an ISL interpreter. The service provider required the client to provide prior written permission to the use of an Irish Sign Language interpreter when contacting the service over the phone.

Outcome: The matter settled on the day of the hearing to the satisfaction of both parties.

A Pupil and their Parent v. A Secondary School

Ground: Disability

Number of clients: 2

Issue: We provided advice and legal representation before the WRC to a minor client and their parent in relation to a complaint of discrimination, harassment and sexual harassment experienced by the child at school.

Outcome: The matter settled on the day of the hearing to the satisfaction of both parties.

A Family v. Offaly County Council

Ground: Housing

Number of clients: 4

Issue: We provided legal advice and limited representation to a family of four (two adults and two young children) in relation to a request seeking emergency accommodation from Offaly County Council.

Outcome: The clients were offered vouchers to access emergency accommodation; however, they were unable to source emergency accommodation using the voucher.

Members of the Traveller Community v. A Coffee Shop

Ground: Membership of the Traveller Community

Number of clients: 10

Issue: We provided legal advice and representation to this extended family in relation to a complaint of discrimination at a coffee shop in the West of Ireland. The family, which included four young children, had been on holiday and went to visit a nearby café and bakery. When the clients

arrived in the car park in two campervans and a car, management told them they couldn't park there as their vehicles were too big. When the clients approached the café and bakery, the same management ran down in front of them and began closing the coffee shop, informing the clients that the café was closed. The clients were then followed out of the premises. A complaint of discrimination on the grounds of membership of the Traveller community was submitted to the WRC under the ESA.

Outcome: Mediation took place before the WRC and a settlement agreement was reached to the satisfaction of both parties, which included the payment of compensation.

Members of the Traveller Community v. A University

Ground: Membership of the Traveller Community

Number of clients: 4

Issue: We provided legal advice and representation to four separate clients in relation to a complaint of discrimination when attempting to access educational services within a university.

Outcome: The matter settled to the satisfaction of the four clients, to include an apology and compensation.

A Pupil and their Parent v. A Secondary School and A Statutory Body

Ground: Gender and Disability

Number of clients: 2

Issue: We provided legal advice and limited legal representation to a minor client and their parent regarding a request for reasonable accommodation for the State examinations. The clients were still awaiting a decision on their request two weeks before the commencement of the exams.

Outcome: The matter resolved when a positive decision was made on the client's application for reasonable accommodation for the State examinations.

Ayman Abdul Samad v. Allied Irish Banks

Ground: Race

Number of clients: 1

Issue: We provided legal advice and representation to a client in an adjudication hearing before the WRC in relation to a claim of discrimination on the grounds of race under the ESA.

Outcome: The WRC adjudication officer found in the bank's favour and the client decided not to appeal the decision.

Cases under the Employment Equality Acts 1998 – 2015

Mary Tracy v. Smurfit Kappa Ireland Ltd t/a the Educational Company of Ireland

Ground: Disability / Failure to Provide Reasonable Accommodation / Victimisation / Discriminatory Dismissal

Number of clients: 1

Issue: We provided legal advice and representation to a client in relation to a complaint of discrimination on the grounds of disability, failure to provide reasonable accommodation, victimisation and ultimately discriminatory dismissal.

The client disclosed details of her disability from the outset of her employment and sought reasonable accommodations, which were ultimately refused. She was dismissed while on sick leave for refusing to accept an alternative role offered to her.

Outcome: Following the adjudication hearing, the WRC found that the employer had failed to comply with employment equality legislation regarding the provision of reasonable accommodation for the client's disability, and that she was directly discriminated against by the employer in relation to her dismissal from employment. The client was awarded compensation to the total of €64,000.

An Employee v. A Hotel

Ground: Membership of the Traveller Community

Number of clients: 1

Issue: We provided legal advice and representation to a client who was harassed during the course of his employment, including a physical assault, arising as a result of him being a member of the Traveller community.

Outcome: A settlement agreement was reached to the satisfaction of both parties on the day of the WRC hearing. The settlement includes the provision of Traveller specific awareness training to all staff within the hotel chain.

An Employee v. A State Department

Ground: Gender and Sexual Orientation

Number of clients: 1

Issue: We provided legal advice and representation before the WRC to a client in relation to a complaint of discrimination on the grounds of gender and sexual orientation, harassment and sexual harassment, which was brought against their employer on the basis of the actions of co-workers.

Outcome: The matter settled on the day of the hearing to the satisfaction of both parties.

Two Employees v A Fast Food Restaurant

Ground: Race

Number of clients: 2

Issue: We provided legal advice and representation to two separate clients in relation to a claim of racial harassment in the workplace, arising as a result of them both being members of the Roma community.

Outcome: A settlement agreement was reached to the satisfaction of both parties on the day of the WRC hearing, to include compensation.

Cases relating to Intoxicating Liquor Acts 1988 - 2018

Members of the Traveller Community v. A Licensed Premises

Ground: Discrimination on the ground of Membership of the Traveller Community

Number of clients: 4

Issue: We provided legal advice and representation to four clients in relation to the refusal of entry to a licenced premises in County Dublin. The four clients had booked a table in a bar to celebrate a birthday, and they were stopped by security at the door. The clients were asked if they had a booking and they responded that they did. The staff went inside to check the booking and, on their return, informed the clients that their booking was gone as they were 5 minutes late. During this time, the clients noted that other people were being let into the bar and that it appeared that these customers did not have bookings at all. We assisted the clients in bringing a complaint of discrimination against the licensed premises to the District Court on the grounds of membership of the Traveller community.

Outcome: On the date of the hearing, the matter settled to the satisfaction of the clients, including compensation.

A Member of the Traveller Community v. A Licensed Premises

Ground: Membership of the Traveller Community

Number of clients: 1

Issue: We provided legal advice and representation to a client in relation to a complaint of discrimination on the ground of membership of the Traveller community. The client had made a booking at a licensed premises in County Dublin over the phone. When they visited the

premises in person to pay the required booking deposit, they were informed that they could no longer accept the booking. The client believed that this refusal was made on the basis of their membership of the Traveller community.

Outcome: This case was settled to the satisfaction of the client.

Members of the Traveller Community v. A Licensed Premises

Ground: Membership of the Traveller Community

Number of clients: 2

Issue: We provided legal advice and representation to two clients in relation to a refusal of service on a licensed premises in County Leitrim. The clients issued proceedings in the District Court and also made a complaint to the WRC to protect their position as it was not clear whether the liquor licence extended to the outdoor seating where the clients were refused service. In the District Court, the matter was struck out on the basis of incorrect jurisdiction on application of the Licensed Premises. At the WRC hearing, the licensed premises produced the license to cover the outside seating area, and the WRC therefore declined jurisdiction. New proceedings were again filed in the District Court.

Outcome: On the date of the hearing, the matter settled to the satisfaction of the clients, including compensation.

A Member of the Traveller Community v. A Licensed Premises

Ground: Membership of the Traveller Community

Number of clients: 1

Issue: We provided legal advice and representation to a client who is a member of the Traveller community in relation to a claim of discrimination against a hotel and licenced premises in County Donegal.

On St. Patrick's Day 2024, the client went into a hotel bar to watch a football game while his wife and grandchildren attended the local parade. He ordered a soft drink and he was refused service and informed that he was barred from the hotel. The manager cited previous noise complaints regarding a group of Travellers the client was with, resulting in the hotel refunding a number of customers the cost of their stay. The client disputed this claim, stating that no complaints were made to the group and that the group left the hotel without incident. He believed he was barred on the basis of his membership of the Traveller community.

Outcome: Following legal advice, the client decided not to proceed with the matter.

Cases relating to human rights

A Litigant v. WRC

Ground: Right to fair procedures

Number of clients: 1

Issue: We provided legal representation to a client to challenge a decision of the Workplace Relations Commission by way of judicial review in the High Court. The client brought a claim to the WRC in relation to a complaint of racial discrimination that he experienced while accessing services in a grocery shop. During the adjudication proceedings, concerns were raised regarding the client's right of access to justice, having regard to the actions of the Adjudication Officer and their failure to adequately investigate the claim by making a determination on the claim notwithstanding a planned adjourned hearing date.

Outcome: On consent, an order was made by the High Court quashing the original decision of the WRC and remitting the case to the WRC for re-hearing before a different Adjudication Officer.

N and Ors v. Minister for Foreign Affairs and Ors

Ground: Citizenship by descent – equality under the Constitution

Number of clients: 2

Issue: A naturalised Irish citizen had to register the birth of their child abroad on the foreign birth register in order to have their child’s Irish citizenship recognised. The client brought a High Court challenge to the constitutionality of the Foreign Birth Register requirement, saying that it unlawfully discriminated against them and their family when compared to Irish citizens by birth, whose children were automatically Irish citizens when born abroad without the requirement for registration.

Outcome: The High Court heard this constitutional challenge over the course of two days in December. Judgment is awaited.

A Ukrainian Couple v. Department of Justice

Ground: Ukrainian nationals of Roma ethnicity refused Temporary Protection

Number of clients: 2

Issue: We provided legal advice and representation to a couple who are Ukrainian Roma nationals in relation to the husband’s refusal of Temporary Protection on arrival.

Outcome: Temporary Protection was granted to the husband, and the family were reunified.

An IP Applicant v. State Agency

Ground: International Protection / Reception Conditions / Accommodation / Age

Number of clients: 1

Issue: We provided legal advice and representation to a client who is an applicant for international protection whose age was in dispute. The client was deemed an adult by State Agencies and was refused appropriate child care services.

Outcome: Following engagement with the relevant State Agency and a further assessment, the client was provided with childcare services.

An IP Applicant v. State Agencies

Ground: International Protection / Reception Conditions / Accommodation / Age

Number of clients: 1

Issue: We provided legal advice and representation to a client who is an applicant for international protection whose age was in dispute. When the matter failed to resolve through engagement and correspondence, judicial review proceedings were issued against the relevant State Agencies.

Outcome: The matter settled to the satisfaction of the client.

Own Name Proceedings

In 2023, we used our power under section 41 of the IHREC Act and brought proceedings before the High Court in our own name, seeking to address the State’s failure to provide for the basic needs, including accommodation, of people recently arrived in Ireland and seeking international protection.

The Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission v. The Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, Ireland and The Attorney General

Court: High Court and Court of Appeal

Commenced: 21 December 2023

Status of Case: Ongoing

Details: We brought proceedings before the High Court in our own name, seeking to address the State’s failure to provide for the basic needs, including shelter, of people recently arrived in Ireland and seeking international protection. Applicants for international protection (‘IP applicants’) are entitled to receive material reception conditions under EU and Irish law. Since 04 December 2023, not all IP applicants arriving in Ireland were offered State accommodation.

In 2024, the High Court declared that the State had failed in its duty to provide for the basic needs, including accommodation, for IP applicants who have recently arrived in Ireland and that this failure amounted to a breach of the applicants' right to human dignity. The State filed a Notice of Appeal to the Court of Appeal against the judgment of the High Court. In 2025, the Court of Appeal proceedings continued.

Outcome:

The appeal was heard in the Court of Appeal on 06 and 07 March 2025.

In its judgment, delivered on 30 July 2025, the Court of Appeal accepted that the Commission had proved that the IP applicants were in a situation of extreme material poverty. However, in granting the State's appeal, the Court of Appeal ruled that the Commission had not provided adequate evidence to prove that their physical or mental health was undermined or that they were in a state of degradation incompatible with human dignity.

In November 2025, the Supreme Court granted the Commission leave to appeal the Court of Appeal's ruling.

As of December, the case is ongoing.

Acting as *amicus curiae*

We can apply to the Superior Courts for liberty to appear as *amicus curiae* ('friend of the court') in proceedings before that court that involve, or are concerned with, the human rights or equality rights of any person. It is up to the Court, at its discretion, to grant or refuse our involvement.

As *amicus curiae*, we do not represent any of the parties in the case - rather we assist the Court in respect of the human rights and/or equality issues relevant to the case.

At the start of the year, we were involved in two cases as *amicus curiae* in the Superior Courts, of which one completed during the course of the year.

During the year, we sought and were granted liberty to intervene as *amicus curiae* in three additional cases, of which one completed during the year.

At year end therefore, we were involved in three ongoing cases as *amicus curiae*.

Our *amicus curiae* submissions are published on our website once the hearing of the matter has completed.

For more recent developments in relation to these and other legal cases where the Commission is exercising its *amicus curiae* role, please visit our website.

Completed cases

Work completed on two *amicus* cases during the year.

Details of the completed cases are set out below.

DOE (No.1) v The Director of Public Prosecutions [2024] IESCDET 102, DOE (No.2) v The Director of Public Prosecutions [2024] IESCDET 103 and DOE (No.3) v The Director of Public Prosecutions [2024] IESCDET 104

Court: Supreme Court

Commission Intervention: 15 November 2024

Hearing date: 3 and 4 December 2024

Judgment: 9 May 2025

Details: These cases are linked and deal with the loss of statutory protections for children who turn 18 prior to the completion of the criminal process. The cases involve three individuals who were charged with criminal offences, alleged to have been committed when they were under 18 years. The allegations were reported to An Garda Síochána when the three individuals were still minors. Prior to being charged, these individuals turned 18 and, as a consequence, they were no longer entitled to statutory protections provided for under the Children Act 2001, including anonymity. A High Court challenge taken by the individuals to prohibit the trial was unsuccessful. However, the High Court held that the loss of anonymity was potentially prejudicial and ordered reporting restrictions during the course of the trials of the

individuals. Both the State and the accused individuals appealed this decision of the High Court to the Supreme Court. The Attorney General was also a Notice Party.

Commission’s role: In our role as *amicus curiae* we submitted that a young person who turns 18 prior to the completion of the criminal process should be entitled to apply for anonymity in respect of offences allegedly committed as a child.

Outcome: The Supreme Court dismissed the appeal in a unanimous judgment. The judgment found that where a defendant has lost the protection of the Children Act, due to prosecutorial delay, a court should consider granting remedies falling short of prohibition of the trial to address the effects of the breach on the interests of the defendant. The relevant court could consider making an order of anonymity, equivalent to the protections set down in section 93 of the Children Act. This would also permit a court to lift this order, on application by an appropriate person for the reasons set out in section 93, to include if it is in the public interest to do so.

ZG and EW (a minor) v. Ireland and the Attorney General

Court: Supreme Court

Commission Intervention: 5 February 2025

Hearing Date 8 May 2025

Judgment 26 November 2025

Details The case was brought by ZG and EW (a child who brought the case with the assistance of their aunt). The child had lived with their mother as a one-parent family, in an apartment rented from an Approved Housing Body, Clúid Housing. The child’s mother died suddenly in July 2023. As the child was not yet eighteen years old, they were told that they did not come within the list of

eligible people who may inherit a tenancy under the Residential Tenancies Act 2004 (the “2004 Act”). In September 2023, Clúid Housing sought to end the tenancy and the child has lived with their grandparents ever since. A High Court case was taken, challenging the constitutionality of section 39 of the 2004 Act on the basis that it discriminated against the child, and the challenge was unsuccessful. The High Court decided that the difference in treatment between the child and a person over 18 seeking to inherit a tenancy under section 39 was lawful. The child and their aunt appealed this decision of the High Court to the Supreme Court.

Commission’s role: In our role as *amicus curiae*, we assisted the Court in its consideration of the High Court’s ruling with reference to the relevant national and international law.

Outcome: The Supreme Court upheld the High Court’s decision and dismissed the appeal. In its majority judgment, delivered by Chief Justice O’Donnell, the Supreme Court found that the legislation was constitutional. The Supreme Court accepted that age discrimination can occur when children and adults are treated differently. However, in this case, the Supreme Court considered that the reason for the difference in treatment was rational and, therefore, the legislation was lawful and permissible. Mr. Justice Hogan and Ms. Justice Donnelly both issued separate dissenting judgments. Mr. Justice Hogan considered that the Constitution provides strong protection for the inviolability of the home. As the legislation did not provide for any possibility for the continued tenancy by the child, he considered that this compromised the essence of the constitutional guarantees. Ms. Justice Donnelly considered that the legislation was inconsistent with the constitutional protections of the rights of the child and the equality guarantees.

Ongoing cases

At year end we were involved in **three** ongoing cases as *amicus curiae*. Details of ongoing matters are set out in the tables below:

Digital Rights Ireland Limited v. The Minister for Communications, Marine and Natural Resources, The Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform, The Commissioner for The Garda Síochána, Ireland and The Attorney General

Court: High Court

Commission Intervention: 01 July 2008

Status: Ongoing

Details The proceedings raise issues regarding the scope of the application of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights (the ‘Charter’) and the Court of Justice of the European Union’s jurisprudence on privacy rights; the substantive application of the proportionality principle and the relationship between the Charter, the Constitution and the ECHR.

Outcome: The proceedings are ongoing.

Freddie Jones -v- Minister for Public Expenditure, National Development Plan Delivery and Reform; Ireland and the Attorney General

Court: High Court

Commission Intervention: 28 July 2025

Hearing Date: 6 and 7 November 2025

Status: Ongoing

Details: This case concerned a challenge by Mr Jones of the decision of the Minister to refuse him the benefit of his late partner’s civil service pension under the Civil Service Spouses' and Children's Contributory Pension Scheme. The couple lived together for almost 25 years until the death of Mr Jones’ partner in 2022. Mr Jones was denied a pension on the basis that, according to the

State, the Civil Partnership and Certain Rights and Obligations of Cohabitants Act 2010 did not provide an entitlement to a spousal pension for cohabitees who were not married or in civil partnerships. The State’s position was that the public service pension is only payable to a “spouse” or “civil partner”.

Commission’s Role: In its legal submissions to the High Court, the Commission submitted that the exclusion of qualified cohabitants such as the Applicant from the spouse’s pension under the Scheme runs contrary to the guarantee of equality in Article 40.1 of the Constitution.

Outcome: Judgment in the case was reserved.

V, W, X, Y and Z v Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Attorney General and Ireland

Court: Supreme Court

Commission Intervention: 14 November 2025

Hearing Date: 16, 17 and 18 December 2025

Status: Ongoing

Details: This case concerned the entitlement to citizenship by descent for children of lesbian couples born through donor-assisted human reproduction procedures outside of the State. Over the course of a three-day hearing, the Supreme Court heard that two lesbian couples had conceived babies through a process of shared motherhood IVF. This process involved creating an embryo from an anonymous donor and an egg from one mother and implanting the embryo in the second mother. In both couples, a non-Irish mother gave birth to a baby that had been conceived using an egg from an Irish mother. Following the birth of the children, their mothers applied to the Minister for Foreign Affairs for Irish passports. The Minister declined to issue passports to the children, saying that the birth mothers did not satisfy the

definition of the term ‘parent’ under section 7 of the Irish Nationality and Citizenship Act 1956. Both couples sought to challenge the Minister’s decision by way of judicial review. In the High Court, Ms. Justice Phelan found in favour of the parents. The Minister appealed the decision by ‘leap frog appeal’ to the Supreme Court.

Commission’s role: The Commission submitted that, in failing to provide for a legislative pathway to pass citizenship by descent to the children in these cases, the State had breached the equality provision under Article 40.1 of the Constitution.

Outcome: Judgment in the case was reserved.

Equality Reviews and Equality Action Plans

Equality Reviews are carried out under section 32 of IHREC Act 2014. We hold the statutory power to invite public or private undertakings to carry out a review of equality of opportunity generally, or a particular aspect of discrimination under Ireland’s anti-discrimination legislation, namely the Employment Equality Acts 1998-2015 and/or the Equal Status Acts 2000 - 2018.

We can also invite public or private bodies to prepare and implement Equality Action Plans to focus on specific areas emerging from equality reviews.

We take a sectoral approach to achieve systemic improvements in advancing equality, having regard to the exercise of other powers and functions. This year we focused on rights relating to disability and housing.

An account of each of these Equality Reviews and Equality Action Plans is published on our website.

Equality Review: Equality of Opportunity in a Sporting Organisation

In 2024, we invited Gymnastics Ireland to carry out an equality review, consisting of an audit of the level of equality of opportunity that exists in relation to Gymnastics Ireland’s provision of services, under the Equal Status Acts 2000 to 2018.

An account of the Equality Review was published on our website in April.

Equality Review and Equality Action Plan: State Examinations Commission – Provision of Reasonable Accommodation in Education settings

In 2024, we invited the State Examinations Commission to carry out an Equality Review to address the issue of accessibility of State exams for candidates with a visual impairment, and specifically to address the provision of accessible modified papers, provision of additional time arrangements, and digital paper delivery and form.

The Commission received the Equality Review in April. Having considered the findings of the Equality Review, the Commission has formally invited the State Examinations Commission to prepare and implement an Equality Action Plan.

An Equality Action Plan is a programme of actions designed to further the promotion of equality of opportunity within an organisation and to address barriers experienced by individuals and groups protected under equality legislation. In inviting the preparation of the Equality Action Plan, the Commission has identified a number of priority areas to be addressed, including the design of modified examination papers, the provision and delivery of digital examination papers, the accessibility of application procedures, consistency of treatment for all students with visual impairments, and the accessibility of information published by the State Examinations Commission.

The Commission has also requested that the Equality Action Plan be developed in consultation with students with visual impairments, representative organisations, schools and other relevant stakeholders, and that it set out specific, measurable and time-bound actions with clear responsibility for implementation.

As of December, this work is ongoing.

Equality Review: Access to employment for individuals with a visual impairment in the public service

We invited two private recruitment agencies, Sigmar Recruitment Consultants Limited and Staffline Recruitment Limited, to carry out an Equality Review to address the issue of accessibility of the recruitment process of public jobs for individuals with a visual impairment. Under the Public Service Management (Recruitment and Appointments) Act 2004, the Commission for Public Service Appointments can grant licenses to public bodies to enable them to undertake their own recruitment. Those public bodies can in turn can seek the assistance of a private sector recruitment agency with the tasks associated with the recruitment processes.

As of December this work is ongoing.

Equality Review: Irish Rail – Provision of Reasonable Accommodation

We invited Irish Rail to conduct an Equality Review of its practices and procedures on the provision of reasonable accommodation for disabled passengers using or intending to use its

services. We received Irish Rail's equality review in July. The Commission subsequently decided to follow up with the Irish Rail in relation to the equality review received.

As of December this work is ongoing.

Equality Review: Provision of ISL interpretation

We invited six organisations to each carry out an Equality Review on access to services for individuals who are deaf and use Irish Sign Language.

The organisations invited are: Wexford General Hospital; Beaumont Hospital; Our Lady of Lourdes, Drogheda Hospital; AA Ireland; Permanent TSB plc; and Intreo Centres run by the Department of Social Protection. All of the six organisations have accepted this invitation.

As of December, this work is ongoing.

Appendix 2: Corporate Governance and Structure

The Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission is an independent statutory body, established on 1 November 2014 under the *Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014*. Our statutory mandate is to protect and promote human rights and equality in Ireland and to build a culture of respect for human rights, equality and intercultural understanding. We are Ireland’s National Human Rights Institution and National Equality Body.

Commission

The Commission has fifteen Members, one of whom is the Chief Commissioner (see Appendix 1). The provisions of the Act are designed to ensure the independence of the Commission in its work. Members of the Commission are appointed by the President, following a resolution by both Houses of the Oireachtas.

The Commission is a body corporate. It accounts directly to the Oireachtas for its statutory functions and the Members independently determine its policy and activities. Decision-making at Commission level is conducted, where possible, on the basis of consensus. Where there is a diversity of opinions on a given matter, a majority vote may be taken. The structural independence of the Commission, in accordance with the Paris Principles, has been recognised in its “A” Status accreditation as an NHRI with the United Nations.

The Commission holds as many meetings as may be necessary for the fulfilment of its functions, but each year it must hold not less than one meeting in each period of three months.

The Commission held 8 ordinary plenary meetings, on the following dates: 30 January, 6 March, 1 May, 12 June, 24 July, 17 September, 23 October, and 10 December.

1 extraordinary meeting also took place, to facilitate the recording of time sensitive decisions in between the scheduled ordinary meetings.

The extraordinary plenary meeting took place on 28 January 2025.

A schedule of 2025 Attendance, Fees and Expenses is set out in Appendix 7.

The Commission must publish, on a three-year basis, its strategy statement setting out key objectives and related strategies, including use of resources of the Commission. The strategy statement must be laid before the Houses of the Oireachtas. The Commission also approves an annual work plan and budget. The Commission agreed its fourth three-year Strategy Statement 2025-2027 which was laid before the Oireachtas in December 2024.

The Commission takes strategic decisions on statutory functions, including on Commission policy statements and on the use of its legal powers, except where specifically delegated.

The Commission has delegated its power to provide legal and other assistance under section 40 of the *Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014* to the Head of Legal. Its powers under section 32 of the Act in regard to Equality Reviews and action plans are delegated to the Head of Legal in consultation with the Director.

The day-to-day management of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission is the responsibility of the Director. The Director acts as a direct liaison between the Commission and senior management. The role and responsibilities of the Director are set out in sections 20-23 of the Act.

The Director and senior management follow the strategic direction set by the Commission. The Director provides the Commission with information in relation to the performance of their functions, including information in respect of those functions in so far as they relate to the financial affairs of the Commission, as the Commission may require. In addition, the Director ensures that all Commission members have a clear understanding of key activities and decisions, and of any significant risks likely to arise.

Committees

The Commission has established a number of Committees to assist in governance and in progressing the work of the Commission in relation to its strategic priorities. These include the Audit and Risk Committee, Legal Casework Committee and Policy and Research Committee.

Membership of each of these Committees, and attendance during the year is included in Appendix 5.

Audit and Risk Committee

The purpose of the Audit and Risk Committee is to consider the adequacy and effectiveness of our internal control systems, control environment and control procedures; oversee the work of the Internal Audit and to provide advice and professional guidance in relation to the systems of risk management and internal control to the Director as Accounting Officer and to the Commission.

There were 4 meetings held: 3 March; 26 June; 11 September; and 26 November.

Legal Casework Committee

The purpose of the Legal Casework Committee is to advise the Commission on strategy in respect of legal casework and to develop guidelines, for adoption by the Commission, for the performance of the litigation/casework function of the Commission – *amicus curiae*, own name proceedings, Workplace Relations Commission proceedings and legal assistance schemes.

There were 8 meetings and 2 extraordinary meetings held: 20 January, 21 February, 22 April, 3 June, 14 July, 8 September, 17 September, 13 October, 10 November and 1 December.

Policy and Research Committee

The purpose of the Policy and Research Committee is to advise the Commission on strategy in respect of mandates delivered through the Policy and Research Department (legislation, policy, research, data, international reporting and international engagement) and the Monitoring and Compliance Department (National Rapporteur on Trafficking in Human Beings, Independent Monitoring Mechanism on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Co-ordinating National Preventative Mechanism for the Optional Protocol of the Convention Against Torture, Gender Pay Gap Reporting and Article 77 body under the EU AI Act).

There were 4 meetings held: 14 February; 19 May; 22 September; and 24 November.

Advisory committees

Section 18 of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Act 2014 provides that for the purpose of establishing and maintaining effective co-operation with representatives of relevant agencies and civil society, we may appoint Advisory Committees, as we see fit, to assist and advise us on matters relating to our functions.

These include a Disability Advisory Committee and a Worker and Employer Advisory Committee.

Disability Advisory Committee

Following the ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, in 2018 the Commission established a Disability Advisory Committee under Section 18 of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014.

The role of the DAC is:

- to assist and advise the Commission on matters related to its function of keeping under review the adequacy and effectiveness of law and practice in the State relating to the protection of people with disabilities; and
- to advise the Commission on the fulfilment of its independent monitoring role under the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).

In its work has considered a range of disability rights issues, including:

- Establishment of the Independent Monitoring Mechanism for the UNCRPD, including data collection systems, indicators and benchmarks, participation of disabled people in monitoring, communicating about the UNCRPD and priority focus areas.
- Access to justice for disabled people.
- Participation of disabled people in political and public decision-making.
- Assisted decision-making.
- National equality strategies.
- The cost of disability.

- Intersectional analysis and international reporting process.
- IHREC strategic planning process for 2025-2027 strategic cycle.

The DAC heard from a number of external speakers and organisations in the course of considering these issues, including the Ombudsman Ger Deering, the Disability Commissioner of Malta, Rhoda Garland, and Disability Activist Dr Patrick Malone.

There were 5 meetings held: 10 February, 28 April, 23 June, 8 October and 8 December.

Worker Employer Advisory Committee

The Worker Employer Advisory Committee (WEAC) was established by the Commission in 2017 under section 18 of the Act.

The role of the Committee is to advise the Commission on:

- › Employment equality and workplace issues.
- › Equal status in service provision.
- › Human rights in the workplace and service provision.
- › Diversity and interculturalism, and
- › Such other matters as are referred to it by the Commission.

The Advisory Committee includes worker and employer representatives nominated by the Irish Congress of Trade Unions ('ICTU') and by the Irish Business and Employers Confederation ('Ibec').

A huge part of the Committee's work during the year was to give input to developing and delivering our 'Equality at Work – Promoting Socio-Economic Equality in Employment' conference. This was the fourth conference in a series focused on 'Equality at Work.'

Representatives of employers and trade unions took an active part in the conference which was very well attended by three hundred public and private sector employers, and civil society organisations working on inclusive employment policy and programmes. The Committee also reviewed a draft of the 'Guide for Employers on Inclusive Employment for Travellers and Roma' due to be published in 2025.

There were 2 meetings held: 14 March and 27 June.

Governance

The overall governance and control framework within the Commission is guided by:

- › Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014;
- › Corporate Governance Standard for the Civil Service, with which the Commission is required to comply as funded by an Exchequer Vote;
- › Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies 2016;
- › Ethics in Public Office Act 1995;
- › Standards in Public Office Act 2001;
- › The Role and Responsibilities of Accounting Officers;
- › Public Financial Procedures 2012.
- › Public Spending Code 2013.

The Commission has a Corporate Governance Assurance Agreement in place with the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth.

Staff of the Commission

In accordance with section 24 of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Act 2014, the Commission is the employer of its staff who are civil servants in the service of the State.

The executive, led by the Director, implements the strategy and policies of the Commission.

As at 31 December, we had 88 staff (see Appendix 6). The National Shared Services Office ('NSSO') provides HR, pensions and payroll administration shared services to the Commission. The Commission utilises ePMDS (Performance Management Development System) to monitor and support the performance and development of its staff. The Commission facilitates regular communication on key issues between management and recognised staff trade unions.

The organisation consists of six teams:

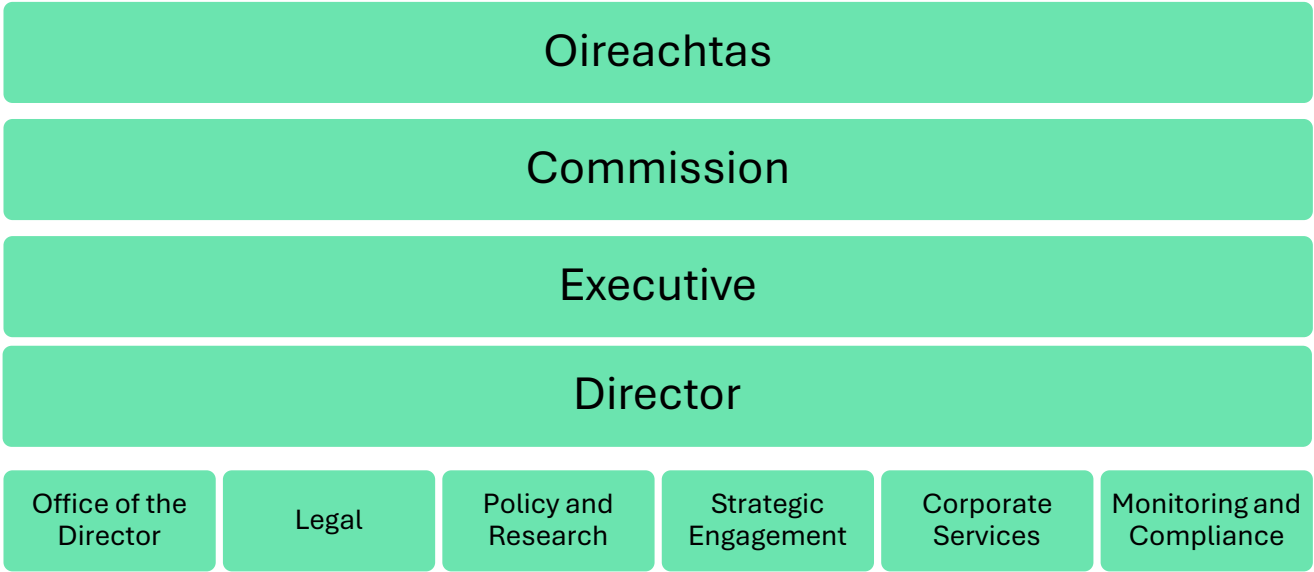
- › Legal
- › Policy and Research

- › Strategic Engagement
- › Corporate Services
- › Anti-Human Trafficking
- › Office of the Director

Senior management

Senior management at 31 December:

- Director: Deirdre Malone;
- Head of Legal: Michael O’Neill;
- Head of Policy and Research: Dr Iris Elliott;
- Head of Strategic Engagement: Caoimhe De Barra;
- Head of Corporate Services: Ailish Farrelly.
- Head of Monitoring and Compliance: Rebecca Keatinge



Funding and financial management

The Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission is funded through a Vote of the Oireachtas. The Director is the Accounting Officer for the Commission’s Vote and this responsibility is separate to the governance responsibilities of the Commission members.

Each year the Accounting Officer must prepare the Appropriation Account for the Commission Vote for submission to the Comptroller and Auditor General. The Accounting Officer may then be called to appear before the Committee of Public Accounts of the Dáil to give evidence about the Account.

The Appropriation Account for the year ended 31 December 2025 was submitted to the Comptroller and Auditor General on 11th March 2026.

As required, this included the Accounting Officer's statement on the Commission's systems of internal financial control. In accordance with the Comptroller and Auditor General (Amendment) Act 1993, the audited account will be published by September in the Report on the Accounts of the Public Services. The account will be published and available at www.audgen.gov.ie. As such, the financial information referred to within this report is provisional and will be finalised on completion of the audit of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Appropriation Account by the Comptroller and Auditor General.

The 2025 gross estimate provision, for Vote 25 Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission was €9,810k of which €6,086k was allocated for pay related expenditure, and €3,724k of which was allocated to non- pay expenditure. The provisional (prior to audit) expenditure outturn was €9,115k of which €5,611k was pay and €3,504k was non-pay. At year end, a surplus of €697k was liable for surrender to the Exchequer.

The Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies 2016 requires that bodies make a number of additional disclosures in relation to certain categories of expenditure. These are set out in Appendix 5.

Protected disclosures

As a public body, the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission is required under section 22 of the *Protected Disclosures Act 2014* to publish an annual report in relation to the number of protected disclosures made to it in the preceding year, and the action taken in response to any such protected disclosures.

No protected disclosures were made to the Commission in the period 1 January 2025 – 31 December 2025.

Disability Act 2005

Under Part 5 of the *Disability Act 2005*, public sector bodies are required to report on their level of employment of people with disabilities. The results of a self-reporting Staff Census showed that 19% of our staff have a disability, exceeding the 4.5% target for employment of people with disabilities. This information was provided to the National Disability Authority in March.

Willing Able Mentoring Programme

We continued to engage with the AHEAD Willing Able Mentoring ('WAM') programme, a paid work placement programme that aims to promote access to the labour market for graduates with disabilities. At year end we had 1 WAM participant.

Disability Liaison/Access Officer

We have five Access Officers, who assist with accessibility under the areas of:

- › Access to the Physical Building
- › Access to our Website
- › Access to our Legal Services
- › Access to Your Rights
- › Access to Human Resources for staff joining IHREC

This is in addition to two Disability Liaison Officers to assist staff with reasonable accommodations.

Climate Action Mandate

In October we published a Climate Action Mandate Roadmap addressing GHG emissions, implementation of the mandate, sustainability activities report and compliance with Circular 1/2020: Procedures for offsetting the emissions associated with official air travel. All public bodies, including IHREC, are required to report energy data annually using the SEAI's online monitoring and reporting (MandR) system. Our Fossil CO₂ levels were zero in the year, and at the baseline. Total CO₂ emissions was 36.0% percent below the baseline of 67,995 kgs CO₂.

To achieve the 2030 target total CO2 must reduce by another 66.1% from 2024 levels within the next six years. Through the Green Team and Facilities and Governance teams in Corporate Services, we will develop further actions in 2026 in relation to energy efficiency.

Freedom of Information Act 2014

We continue to meet our obligations in relation to responding to Freedom of Information (FOI) requests. FOI Decisions and Types of Requests are outlined below:

FOI decisions

Granted	11
Part Granted	5
Refused	7
Withdrawn/Held Outside FOI/Closed	2 withdrawn, 3 closed.
Total	28

3 Internal Reviews were received.

Category of requestor

Journalist	12
Business Interest Group	6
Client	0
Oireachtas	0
Other	10
Total	28

Appendix 3: Commission Member Profiles

Chief Commissioner Liam Herrick

Liam Herrick leads the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission in its mission to build a just and inclusive society that protects and promotes human rights and equality. Liam was appointed Chief Commissioner in November. Prior to this, he held the role of Executive Director of the Irish Council for Civil Liberties since 2016. He worked as Advisor to President Michael D. Higgins. He was Executive Director of the Irish Penal Reform Trust (IPRT) between 2007 and 2014. He also worked as the first Head of Legislation and Policy at the former Irish Human Rights Commission and with the Law Reform Commission. He is a former member of IHREC (2013-2017) and sat on the Minister for Justice and Equality's Strategic Review Group on Penal Policy (2012-2014).

Term of Office: 25 November 2024 – 24 November 2029.

Jim Clarken

Jim Clarken is the CEO of Oxfam Ireland and an Executive Director of Oxfam International. He has extensive leadership and corporate governance experience, working at senior management and board level in the corporate sector and international NGO sector for almost thirty years. A passionate advocate for the rights of women, Jim has driven a gender-focus at Oxfam and has led the Irish Consortium on Gender Based Violence. He has been involved in the foundation of the Irish Refugee and Migrant Coalition, Stop Climate Chaos, the Irish Coalition for Business and Human Rights and is a former chair of Dóchas.

Term of Office: 31 July 2020 – 30 July 2025

Michael Finucane

Michael Finucane is a solicitor and human rights activist based in Dublin. He is Principal Solicitor at his Dublin-based law firm, which specialises in criminal defence and human rights litigation. He is a Human Rights Committee Member in the Law Society of Ireland, which he also chaired from 2012 to 2014 and is a consultant and trainer with the SUPRALAT Project at Dublin City University/ Law Society of Ireland.

Term of Office: 31 July 2020 – 30 July 2025

Adam Harris

Adam Harris is the Founder and CEO of AsIAM, Ireland's National Autism Charity. Adam founded the organisation based on his own experiences growing up on the autism spectrum. Today, AsIAM provides support to the autism people and their families, advocates on behalf of the community and works to support public and private sector organisations and communities in becoming inclusive and accessible.

Term of Office: 31 July 2020 – 30 July 2025

Reappointed:

Professor Kathleen Lynch

Professor Kathleen Lynch is a sociologist and has devoted her life's work to promoting equality, human rights, and social justice through education and research. She has published eight books and three-hundred articles on all types of equality issues. She played the lead role in establishing the Equality Studies Centre in UCD in 1990 and the School of Social Justice in 2004/5. She also led the development of the M.Sc. and Diploma in Equality Studies in UCD in 1990, developed several Outreach Equality Studies programmes in collaboration with Community Groups over a thirty-year period, and pioneered the development of the BCL (Law and Social Justice) with the UCD Law Faculty in 2013/14.

Term of Office: 31 July 2020 – 30 July 2025

Dr Salome Mbugua

Dr Salome Mbugua is a researcher, gender equality activist and human rights advocate. She is the founder and former CEO of AkiDwA -The Migrant Women's Network and has over 20 years' experience of working with under-represented groups in particular women, children, and the youth, in Europe, Africa and internationally. Since 2015 she has been supporting the development of Wezesha, an African Diaspora led development organisation supporting women and children who are affected, or are likely to be affected by conflicts, violence, war

and poverty, with piloting projects in Kenya and the DRC. Salome is the chairperson of European Network of Migrant Women and sits on the EU Expert group on Economic Migration.

Term of Office: 31 July 2023 – 30 July 2028

Dr Rosaleen McDonagh

Dr Rosaleen McDonagh is a Traveller woman with a disability. Originally from Sligo, she is the fourth eldest in a family of twenty children. She worked in Pavee Point Traveller and Roma Centre for ten years, managing the Violence Against Women programme, and remains a board member. She is a regular contributor to the Irish Times and has written within the framework of a Traveller feminist perspective. Rosaleen's work as a playwright includes *Mainstream*, *The Baby Doll Project*, *Stuck*, *She's Not Mine*, and *Rings*.

Term of Office: 31 July 2020 – 30 July 2025

Sunniva McDonagh

Sunniva McDonagh is Senior Counsel who practices mainly in the areas of fundamental rights, administrative and constitutional law. She has acted in many leading cases including in the area of immigration and fair trial rights in historical abuse cases. Sunniva has a particular interest in human rights and the Rule of Law. She is the Vice President of the Management Board of the Fundamental Rights Agency, a former Chair of the Refugee Appeals Tribunal and a current Chair of the Mental Health Commission. She is a Member of the Strategic Human Rights Advisory Committee of An Garda Síochána, and a Member of the Press Council of Ireland. Sunniva is serving her second term, having been first appointed to serve from November 2014 – October 2019.

Term of Office: 31 July 2020 – 30 July 2025

Dr Lucy Michael

Dr Lucy Michael is a sociologist in practice and consultant on equality and integration issues. Her work particularly addresses racist discrimination and violence, experiences of victims, and the roles of statutory institutions and civil society in combating hate crime and exclusion. Lucy has conducted research with a wide range of public and private sector bodies including

the International Organisation for Migration, UK Home Office and European Network Against Racism. She is co-author with INAR of the iReport.ie racist incident reporting system used to map racism in Ireland. She previously held lecturing posts at Ulster University and University of Hull and is a former President of the Sociological Association of Ireland.

Term of Office: 31 July 2020 – 30 July 2025

Professor Ray Murphy

Professor Ray Murphy is a professor at the Irish Centre for Human Rights, NUI Galway. In addition to his position at the Irish Centre for Human Rights, he is on the faculty of the International Institute for Criminal Investigations. He was the EU Fundamental Rights Agency Senior Expert for Ireland and a member of the Executive Committee of the Association of Human Rights Institutes. Ray is a former member and Vice Chair of the Executive Committee of Amnesty International (Ireland). He has also conducted training on behalf of the ICRC, No Peace without Justice, Amnesty International, the UN, and the International Institute for Humanitarian Law and the Pearson Peacekeeping Centre (Canada). Ray is serving his second term, having been first appointed to serve from November 2014 – October 2019.

Term of Office: 31 July 2020 – 30 July 2025

Dr. Andrew Forde

Dr Andrew Forde is Assistant Professor of European Human Rights Law at Dublin City University (DCU) and Commissioner on the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (IHREC) since 2023. Over the past 20 years he has worked for the Council of Europe and the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe including as Human Rights Advisor to the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights and Political Advisor with a particular focus on human rights in conflict zones. During this time he led Council of Europe operations in Kosovo for 5 years as well as confidence-building measures in Bosnia and Herzegovina. He spent six years as a Principal Officer in the Irish civil service before becoming a full-time academic. He is a member of Ireland's election observation roster and on the Advisory Board of the Campaign to Uphold Rights in Europe. His first book *European Human Rights Grey Zones - The Council of Europe and Areas of Conflict* was published in 2024 by Cambridge

University Press and his second, co-authored book on Russia's relationship with the Council of Europe was published in February 2025. Dr Forde is currently a member of IHREC's Policy and Research Committee and the Commission Reform Working Group. Term of Office: 31 July 2023 – 30 July 2028

Caoilfhionn Gallagher KC

Caoilfhionn Gallagher KC is a human rights lawyer and barrister at Doughty Street Chambers, and in February 2023 she was appointed as Ireland's Special Rapporteur on Child Protection. She has acted in many landmark cases before the European Court of Human Rights, international tribunals and the UK, including representing bereaved families and survivors of the 7/7 London Bombings and the Hillsborough disaster and acting in test cases which have changed the law on issues including the rights of children in police custody, State obligations to victims and survivors of domestic abuse and child sexual abuse, and abortion in Northern Ireland.

Term of Office: 31 July 2023 – 30 July 2028

Professor Colin Harvey

Colin Harvey is a Professor of Human Rights Law at Queen's University Belfast and Director of the Human Rights Centre. Professor Harvey has served as a Commissioner on the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission, has taught human rights law for almost 30 years and has written and engaged extensively on human rights law locally and globally.

Term of Office: 31 July 2023 – 30 July 2028

Eoin Ronayne

Eoin Ronayne is the current Chairperson of Waterford area Partnership Company and Special Projects Adviser in Fórsa. Eoin has an extensive background as a senior trade union official and was engaged by Fórsa on a range of operational projects and policy delivery for the Irish Congress of Trades Union (ICTU). Eoin has been a member of the ICTU Executive for many years and is also the Ireland Executive Committee member of the European Federation of Public Service Union (EPSU).

Term of Office: 31 July 2023 – 30 July 2028

Noeline Blackwell

Noeline Blackwell is a solicitor, litigator advocate and manager with a wide experience of human rights standards, operations, practices and challenges. Noeline is the current CEO of Dublin Rape Crisis Centre since 2016. She was Director General (CEO) of FLAC between 2005 and 2016. Noeline's previous board memberships include the International Federation of Human rights, Front Line Defenders, Immigrant Council of Ireland, and Amnesty International Ireland.

Term of Office: 31 July 2023 – 30 July 2028

Appendix 4: Attendance at Commission Meetings

The Commission held 8 ordinary plenary meetings. 1 extraordinary meeting of the Commission also took place, to facilitate the recording of time-sensitive decisions between the scheduled ordinary meetings. Commission members receive an annual fee of €7,695.

1 member did not receive any fee under the One Person One Salary principle.

Ordinary meetings:

Commission Member	Meetings Attended
Liam Herrick	8 of 8
Noeline Blackwell	7 of 8
Jim Clarken*	4 of 5
Michael Finucane*	4 of 5
Dr Andrew Forde	5 of 8
Caoilfhionn Gallagher KC	5 of 8
Adam Harris*	5 of 5
Prof Colin Harvey	6 of 8
Prof Kathleen Lynch*	5 of 5
Dr Salome Mbugua	5 of 8
Dr Rosaleen McDonagh*	5 of 5
Sunniva McDonagh SC*	4 of 5
Dr Lucy Michael*	5 of 5

Commission Member	Meetings Attended
Prof Ray Murphy	3 of 5
Eoin Ronayne	7 of 8

*The terms of 8 Commission Members concluded on 30 July 2025

Extraordinary meetings

Commission Member	Meetings Attended
Liam Herrick	1 of 1
Noeline Blackwell	1 of 1
Jim Clarken	0 of 1
Michael Finucane	1 of 1
Dr Andrew Forde	0 of 1
Caoilfhionn Gallagher KC	0 of 1
Adam Harris	1 of 1
Prof Colin Harvey	0 of 1
Prof Kathleen Lynch	0 of 1
Dr Salome Mbugua	0 of 1
Dr Rosaleen McDonagh	0 of 1
Sunniva McDonagh SC	0 of 1
Dr Lucy Michael	0 of 1

Commission Member	Meetings Attended
Prof Ray Murphy	1 of 1
Eoin Ronayne	1 of 1

Appendix 5: Attendance at Committees

Legal Casework Committee

Member	Meetings Attended
Michael Finucane (Chair)*	5 of 5
Liam Herrick	10 of 10
Noeline Blackwell	9 of 10
Caoilfhionn Gallagher KC FRSA	3 of 10
Prof Colin Harvey	4 of 10
Prof Ray Murphy*	4 of 5
Dr Andrew Forde**	4 of 5
Eoin Ronayne**	2 of 5

*Terms concluded on 30 July 2025

**Joined the Committee on interim basis on 24 July 2025

Policy and Research Committee

Member	Meetings Attended
Dr Lucy Michael (Chair)*	2 of 2
Liam Herrick	4 of 4
Noeline Blackwell	2 of 4
Dr Andrew Forde	3 of 4
Prof Colin Harvey (Chair)**	4 of 4

Member	Meetings Attended
Dr Salome Mbugua	0 of 4
Eoin Ronayne***	1 of 2
Caoilfhionn Gallagher KC FRSA***	0 of 2

*Term concluded on 30 July

**Agreed as chair at meeting of 19 May

***Joined the Committee on interim basis on 24 July

Audit and Risk Committee

Member	Meetings Attended
Aisling McKeon (External Member)	4 of 4
Jim Clarken	1 of 2
Eoin Ronayne	4 of 4
Kathleen Lynch	0 of 2

Disability Advisory Committee

Member	Meetings Attended
Gary Allen	3 of 3
Jacqui Browne	1 of 2
Adrian Carroll	3 of 3
Dr John Bosco Conama	2 of 3
Michelle (Shelly) Gaynor	3 of 3
Eliona Gjecaj	3 of 3
Dr Vivian Rath	1 of 3
Fiona Anderson	5 of 5
James Cawley	2 of 3
Peadar O'Dea	5 of 5
Aoife Price	4 of 5

Member	Meetings Attended
Michael Seifu	2 of 3
Dr Rosaleen McDonagh	3 of 3
Adam Harris	2 of 3
Kevin Stanley	2 of 2
Gáibhin McGranaghan	2 of 2
Shiloh Duffy	2 of 2
Amanie Issa	2 of 2
Amy Whelan	2 of 2
Emma Rogan	2 of 2
Ursala Barry	2 of 2
Emma Ward	1 of 2
Fionn Angus Crombie	2 of 2
Dr Caroline Jagoe	2 of 2

Worker and Employer Advisory Committee

Member	Meetings Attended
Prof Kathleen Lynch (Vice-chair)*	1 of 2
Dr Salome Mbugua	0 of 2
Jim Clarken (Chair)	2 of 2

Member	Meetings Attended
Eoin Ronayne	2 of 2
David Joyce (ICTU)	2 of 2
Deirdre O'Connor (INTO)	1 of 2
Harry Wall (Ibec)	2 of 2
Ethel Buckley (SIPTU)	0 of 2
Seamus Dooley (NUJ)	0 of 2
Dr Kara McGann (Ibec)	2 of 2
Aisling Campbell (Accenture)	1 of 2
Jonathan McDade (Small Firms Association),	2 of 2
Vivienne Kavanagh (Dublin Bus)	1 of 2
Katie Morgan (Fórsa)	1 of 2

Appendix 6: Commission staff

The staff complement of the Commission as at 31 December was 88, with the grading structure as follows:

Grade	Number of staff per grade
Chief Commissioner	1
Director	1
Principal Officer	5
Assistant Principal Officer	21
Higher Executive Officer	18
Administrative Officer	10
Legal Executive	3
Executive Officer	18
Clerical Officer	10
Service Officer	1
Total	88

Appendix 7: Additional financial disclosures

The Commission is funded through a Vote of the Oireachtas. The Director is the Accounting Officer for the Commission's Vote. The Appropriation Account 2025 for Vote 25 Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission was submitted to the Comptroller and Auditor General for audit on 11th March 2026.

The Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies 2016 requires that bodies make a number of additional disclosures in relation to certain categories of expenditure and remuneration and these are set out below:

Employee short-term benefits breakdown

The number of Department employees whose total employee benefits (including basic pay, allowances, overtime; excluding employer PRSI, employer pension costs) for the financial year fell between €20,000 and €59,999 and within each band of €10,000 from €60,000 upwards are as follows.

Short-term employee benefits €	Number of Employees in Band	
	2024	2025
60,000-69,999	5	13
70,000-79,999	10	2
80,000-89,999	5	8
90,000-99,999	3	2
100,000-109,999	1	3
110,000-119,999	1	1
120,000-129,999	1	2
130,000-139,999	1	1
140,000-149,999	-	-
150,000-159,999	-	-
160,000-169,999	-	1

Short-term employee benefits €	Number of Employees in Band	
	2024	2025
170,000-179,000	-	-

Note: For the purposes of this disclosure, short term employee benefits in relation to services rendered during the reporting period include salary, overtime allowances and other payments made on behalf of the employee, but exclude employer's PRSI.

Key management employee benefits	2024 €	2025 €
Commission Member Fees	97,408.00	64,865
Salary (Including Chief Commissioner)	542,152	796,772
Allowances	14,790	21,032
Termination benefits	-	
Health Insurance	-	
	676,230	882,669

Key management personnel in the Commission consists of the members of the Commission, including the full-time Chief Commissioner, the Director and the members of the Senior Management Team. Figures represent actual remuneration for the period.

Chief Commissioner Salary	2024 €	2025 €
Basic Pay	51,046	166,404
Health Insurance	-	
Total	51,046*	166,404

Mr Liam Herrick was appointed as Chief Commissioner on 25th November 2024. Chief Commissioner role was vacant for part of the year.

*Includes partial year salaries for both outgoing Chief Commissioner and current Chief Commissioner.

Director salary	2024 €	2025 €
Basic Pay	123,274	130,490
Health Insurance	-	-
Total	123,274	130,490

Consultancy costs	2024	2025
	€	€
Advisory	135426	106306
Total	135426	106306

Travel and subsistence – Domestic	2024	2025
	€	€
Commission	3575	1,690
Employees	7602	8,903

Travel and subsistence – International	2024	2025
	€	€
Commission	624	3200
Employees	9734	9,979
Total	21535	23,772

Hospitality costs	2024	2025
	€	€
Staff Hospitality	0	0
Third Party Hospitality	0	2,634
Total	0	2,634

Appendix 8: Publications

Title	Date
Letter to DCEDIY on the General Scheme of the Equality (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill 2024	January
Letter to the Legal Services Regulatory Authority regarding the consultation on the admission policies of the legal professions	February
Letter to the Minister of Justice on provisions relating to Strategic Litigation Against Public Participation in the General Scheme of the Defamation (Amendment) Bill 2023	February
Submission to the European Commission on the European Semester 2025	February
Strategy Statement 2025-2027 – Easy to Read	February
Strategy Statement 2025-2027	February
Protected Disclosures Policy	March
Adjusting Estimates of Poverty for the Cost of Disability	March
Amicus Curiae Submission	March
Letter to the Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, regarding the State's accession to the Optional Protocol to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities	April
Account of Equality Review carried out by Gymnastics Ireland	April
Letter to the Chair of the National Emergency Coordination Group regarding concerns on the impact that recent climate related emergencies have had on disabled people	April
Civil Society Guide to Reporting under the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women	April
Child Related Leave: Usage and Implications for Gender Equality	April
Easy-to-Read Guidance for civil society on the reporting process under the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities	April

Title	Date
Ireland and the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women	April
Guidance to civil society on the reporting process under the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities – the ‘List of Issues’ stage	May
IHREC Grant Scheme 2025-26 Guidance	May
Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty – Civil Society Guidance	May
Letter to An Taoiseach regarding the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (‘IHRA’) definition of antisemitism	May
Submission on the development of UNCPRD General Comment to Article 29	June
Correspondence to the Department of Justice regarding the human rights oversight and monitoring of pre-deportation detention and deportation flights	June
Ireland and the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) 2025	June
CEDAW Factsheets- All	June
CEDAW Factsheet – Health	June
CEDAW Factsheet – What is CEDAW?	June
CEDAW Factsheet – Education	June
CEDAW Factsheet – Public Participation	June
CEDAW Factsheet – Institutional Abuse	June
CEDAW Factsheet – Climate	June
CEDAW Factsheet – Poverty	June
CEDAW Factsheet – Hate-Speech	June
CEDAW Factsheet – Employment	June
CEDAW Factsheet – DSGBV	June

Title	Date
Correspondence from IHREC to the Department of Justice regarding the human rights oversight and monitoring of pre-deportation detention and deportation flights 2	June
Ireland and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities – List of Issues Submission to the Committee Prior to Reporting	July
Observations on the General Scheme of the International Protection Bill 2025	July
Submission to the consultation on the successor to the Roadmap for Social Inclusion 2020 - 2025	July
Letter to Minister Harris re Participation of national human rights institutions in the work of the Commission on the Status of Women	July
Letter to Tánaiste on the Occupied Palestinian Territory (Prohibition of Importation of Goods) Bill 2025	August
Ireland and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities	August
Submission to GRETA on the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings Fourth Evaluation Round	August
Policy Statement on Core Components of National Equality Strategies	September
IHREC Poll 2025	September
Key Developments in Human Rights and Equality for Ireland	September
Leadership on Human Rights and Equality Opening Speech	September
Letter from Dr. Ammar Al-Dwaik of Palestine Independent Commission of Human Rights	September
Opening Statement from Chief Commissioner to the Joint Committee on Justice, Home Affairs and Migration to discuss the General Scheme of the International Protection Bill 2025	October

Title	Date
Correspondence from IHREC to the Department of Public Expenditure, Infrastructure, Public Service Reform and Digitalisation regarding guidelines for the responsible use of AI in the Public Service and the Public Sector Human Rights and Equality Duty	October
Meeting of the Joint Committee on Key Issues affecting the Traveller Community on Advancing Traveller and Roma Rights - legislative and policy imperatives	October
Letter to Darragh O’ Brien, TD, Minister for Transport, Department of Transport Re: Action plan for accessible transport	October
An Chait Seirbhísí do Chustaiméirí	October
Traveller and Roma Inclusive Employment Employer Guide	November
Request for Quotation for the Preparation of IHREC’s Report Contribution to the Sixth Report on the progress made in the European Union in the fight against trafficking in human beings.	November
Correspondence to Minister Butler on the Mental Health Bill	November
Equality and Human Rights on the Island of Ireland after Brexit	November
Review of Section 19 of the Intoxicating Liquor Act	November
Letter to Deputy Liam Quaide T.D., in response to correspondence on the proposed mental health facility at St. Stephen's Hospital, Cork.	November
Pre-Legislative Scrutiny of the Equality (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill 2024	November
Gender Pay Gap Report	November
Analysis of the International Protection Bill 2025 for Committee on Justice, Home Affairs and Migration	November
Letter to Department of Enterprise, Tourism and Employment on EU Interpretative Note (Art 77 bodies) and Digital Omnibus	December
Letter to Ministers McEntee and O’Callaghan on potential changes to the European system of human rights protections	December

Title	Date
Submission to the Public Consultation on the Development of the Priorities and Policy Programme for Ireland’s Presidency of the Council of the European Union 2026	December
Annual Report 2024	December
Letter to Ministers McEntee and O’Callaghan on the European Convention on Human Rights	December

Appendix 9:2025-26 Human Rights and Equality Grants Scheme

In 2025, we provided €350,000 for projects under our Human Rights and Equality Grants Scheme.

Twenty-three projects from a range of organisations were awarded grant support, under three strands:

- Applying the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty to combatting disinformation, misinformation, and hate, and building community solidarity and belonging
- Applying the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty in challenging the structural causes of poverty, its impact on people and communities and the effectiveness of the State's responses; and,
- Applying the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty to ensure a human rights and equality led approach to climate and environmental justice and a just transition.

Set out below are grant projects awarded under the 2025-26 Human Rights and Equality Grants Scheme. They are due for completion in September 2026.

Strand A: Applying the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty to Combatting disinformation, misinformation, and hate, and building community solidarity and belonging.

Clare Public Participation Network (PPN)

Project Title: Fact or Fiction: Recognising and countering disinformation in your daily life.

The aim of this project is to deliver interactive workshops empowering community leaders to recognise and counter disinformation and mal information targeting minority and marginalised groups. The workshops will be co-designed and delivered with people from communities targeted including people seeking international protection, beneficiaries of temporary protection, women, LGBTQIA+ people, Traveller community members, and people with disabilities, among others. The workshops will be delivered in a variety of communities in

County Clare (minimum of 6). They will equip participants to critically assess media including social media and to engage with public bodies including Clare County Council under the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty, advocating for policies that combat disinformation and promote equality. Leaders among the groups targeted will deliver workshops in partnership with facilitators to public sector staff. The initiative will strengthen community advocacy and contribute to more inclusive, evidence-based public discourse, policy making and delivery. As part of the project, Clare PPN will document their learning and create an easily readable resource which can be shared online and in hard copy that helps people evaluate information sources.

Irish Network Against Racism

Project Title: Artivism: Communities Creating Change

The aim of this project is to enable rights holders from racialised communities and rights holders from majority white settled communities to dialogue, using a rights-based approach. Through a series of workshop, participants will discuss the impact of racism, hate speech and a delay in institutional response to meet community need. By creating a respectful dialogue on experiences, participants will explore how Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty can bring about meaningful change and realise rights.

Hope and Courage Collective

Project Title: Greater than Fear: Voices of Solidarity

The aim of this project is to gather and share the experiences of people directly affected by hateful narratives and those organising against it. Through interviews, video stories and case studies, it will build a grounded picture of what is happening in communities across Ireland, and how solidarity takes shape in response. The project will offer practical, accessible tools and recommendations to support public bodies in meeting their responsibilities under the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty. It will ultimately help shift the narrative away from fear and division, and toward a more connected, rights-based approach to inclusion and public accountability.

Southwest Mayo Development Company

Project Title: Communities Connected

The aim of this project is to strengthen and empower the community in Mayo to recognise, resist and respond to disinformation, misinformation, and hate, whilst promoting inclusion, trust, and mutual support across diverse groups. The project will work with local and new communities including international protection applicant residents. Through education, dialogue and collaborative media, the project will foster confidence and agency within communities to speak up and act against hate and falsehoods. The project will promote long-term cultural change whereby narratives move away from polarization towards understanding, and collaboration and belonging. Within the framework of the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty, the project learnings will be shared locally, regionally, and nationally including to inform the approach of the Local Authority Integration Team, the Community Safety Team as well as the National Integration Workers Forum.

Galway City Partnership

Project Title: Strengthening Solidarity: Community-Led Action on Disinformation and Belonging

The aim of this project is to support settled communities in Galway by building their capacity to understand and support migrant integration and be equipped to combat misinformation and foster solidarity using the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty. Through training, participatory research, a rights-based toolkit, and structured engagement with public bodies, it aims to strengthen civil society and communities' ability to respond to hate and exclusion.

ACET (AIDS Care, Education and Training) Ireland and Dublin Interfaith Forum

Project Title: Applying the Public Sector Duty in Dublin North-East Inner City and Faith Communities

The aim of this project is to combine expertise and connections to bring together public bodies and civil society, in particular the rights-holders of local faith communities in the

North-East Inner City of Dublin (NEIC), to leverage the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty to address hate, misinformation, and disinformation. Through a total of five workshops that directly address the above themes, the project will strengthen civil society's engagement and increase awareness of public bodies' role in addressing these issues in the NEIC.

Donegal Travellers Project

Project Title: Roma in Europe: A History of Persecution, Resilience, and the Challenge for Achieving Human Rights

The aim of this project is to develop, in partnership with the Roma community, an educational response to the rise of anti-Roma and anti-migrant discourse in Ireland. An exhibition series and educational tools will be designed and produced that trace the history of Roma communities in Europe, highlighting the deep roots of anti-Gypsyism and how this has created a system of structural and accepted racism against Roma today. This initiative will inform public bodies about their Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty obligations to address systemic discrimination, combat hate and misinformation and inform public policy responses to strengthen public solidarity.

Sexual Health Centre, Cork

Project Title: Analysing the impact of the persistent rise in hate, intolerance, and discrimination towards the LGBTQ+ community in Ireland.

The aim of this project is to conduct peer-led, human rights-based research into the impact of rising hate and intolerance on the LGBTQ+ Community, with a specific focus on the Transgender community. It will document lived experiences, identify community-led responses, and highlight gaps in current equality legislation and policy that falls short in protecting of this Community. The resultant findings and recommendations will provide a clear evidence-base to inform legislation, policy, and service providers in applying their Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty in combatting misinformation and hate, contributing to a more inclusive and equitable society rooted in community solidarity and belonging.

Mayo Pride

Project Title: Trans Inclusion in Practice: Empowering Public Bodies in County Mayo

The aim of this project is to build the capacity of public bodies in County Mayo to promote the rights, inclusion and dignity of trans and gender-diverse people under the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty. Through tailored training, community engagement, and co-produced resources, it will address misinformation, strengthen inclusive practice, and strengthen community solidarity.

National Youth Council of Ireland

Project Title: Navigating Discomfort

The aim of this project is to ensure that youth work responses to counter the growing influence of disinformation and harmful narratives—such as racism, transphobia, and misogyny—within youth spaces are grounded in the realities and voices of young people, with a focus on safeguarding, inclusion, belonging and open dialogue. Through training, facilitation, and reflective practice, the project aims at equipping youth workers with the skills and confidence to engage in challenging conversations. By building collective understanding across the youth sector, it will create opportunities to influence policy and practice within the context of Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty obligations.

Strand B: Applying the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty in challenging the structural causes of poverty, its impact on people and communities and the effectiveness of the State’s responses.

Ballymun Community Law Centre

Project Title: Fight for Your Rights: A Guide to Human Rights and Equality in Practice

The aim of this project is to co-produce, with legal experts and community rights-holders, a new human rights guide localised to Ballymun, to support rights-holders in their interactions with public services, focusing on those most affected by poverty and inequality. The revised guide will include clear, accessible information on human rights, modern design, and real

case examples. It will highlight how the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty can be used in challenging systemic inequality and poor service outcomes. Through community outreach, training events, and partnerships, the project will build awareness of rights and empower rights holders and the community to effectively engage with public bodies in the context of the Duty.

Mercy Law Resource Centre

Project Title: Nothing About Us Without Us: Lived Experience, Human Rights, and the Public Sector Duty, in access to Social Housing and Homeless Services.

The aim of this project is to produce legal and participatory research to examine what the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty means for housing authority staff and whether they meet their obligations in delivering homelessness and housing services. The research focuses on people experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness, particularly those facing intersectional inequalities such as migrants, members of the Traveller community and racialised groups. Drawing on legal casework and lived experience, it aims to expose systemic gaps, highlight good practice, and identify rights-based standards. The findings will be targeted at local authorities and relevant public bodies to support compliance with their Duty obligations.

National Women's Council of Ireland

Project Title: Rethinking Care: Addressing Gender and Poverty in Ireland's Home Support System

The aim of this project is to deliver a gender equality analysis of Ireland's home support system, focusing on how poverty and gendered life-course inequalities affect older women's access, experiences, and outcomes. Through research, stakeholder engagement, and policy analysis, the project will identify service gaps and propose evidence-based, gender-responsive reforms. It will inform and support the relevant public bodies to meet their obligations under the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty.

Longford Roma Community Development Project (Longford Community Resources LTD)

Project Title: Understanding the Needs of the Roma Community in Longford: A Peer-Led Assessment to Inform Inclusive Public Services

The aim of this project is to conduct a peer-led needs assessment that will map the Roma community in Longford and will explore their lived experiences, priorities, and challenges. Through participatory research, Roma community members will be trained and supported to co-design the research, collect data, and develop recommendations to guide public bodies in delivering more inclusive, rights-based services. The project supports the implementation of the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty by providing public bodies with rights-based local data. Its findings will also inform the delivery of the National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy recommendations.

SWAN Youth Service, Northeast Inner City, Dublin

Project Title: Human Rights and Equality in Youth Work

The aim of this project is to build awareness of the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty, using participatory and creative approaches, among young people experiencing inter-generational socio-economic disadvantage and youth workers. It will create understanding of the Duty as a lever to engage with public bodies to address the structural causes of poverty and its impact on young people. The project will highlight how the Duty relates to youth work policy, strategies and the rights of the child and inform the relevant stakeholders.

Irish Traveller Movement

Project Title: Traveller Accommodation Public Sector Duty Toolkit Training

The aim of this project is to raise awareness amongst Traveller Organisations and representatives of the Public Equality and Human Rights Duty as a tool to improve the living conditions of Travellers in Traveller accommodation. Through the rollout of a training programme on the Traveller Accommodation Public Sector Duty Toolkit, the project will ultimately carry out participatory capacity building and training that support the development of leadership and advocacy skills.

Threshold and National Youth Council of Ireland

Project Title: Building Better Housing: Youth Experiences and the Public Sector Duty

The aim of this project is to understand the structural causes of housing poverty and its well-being impacts in Ireland's private rental sector. By researching young adults (18-30) reliant on housing support, it will document young peoples lived experience of accessing and residing in the Irish Private Rental Sector. Evidence based policy recommendations will be produced to enhance legislation, policies, and services, driving more effective State responses to housing poverty. A human rights-based advocacy toolkit will also be developed to empower public bodies, including Local Authorities to proactively meet their Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty obligations regarding housing.

National Advocacy Service

Project Title: Have things moved on? Examining the lived experience and quality of life of people with disabilities who continue to live in congregated settings and potential rights violations under Article 19 of the UNCRPD

The aim of this project is to examine the lived experience of people with disabilities in congregated settings to understand the impact on their quality of life and their rights under the UNCRPD. These insights will inform the development of a social policy report to refocus government attention on the de-congregation policy. This report will be used to inform the obligations of relevant public bodies under the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty. It will strengthen the voice of people who communicate differently to enhance their quality of life, decrease poverty levels, and inform policy, strategy, and programmes. A toolkit will be developed to support groups to engage effectively with public bodies on the Duty in these contexts.

Rialto Community Network

Project Title: Realising the Promise of Public Sector Duty and the Collective Complaint Protocol for Local Authority Resident Rights Holders

The aim of this project is to develop a nascent Tenant's representative body and resident's charter, with residents of regeneration areas, other civil society organisations, trade unions

and human rights and housing rights experts. It will also engage the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty to address the recommendations of the European Committee of Social Rights of the Council of Europe for action by the State to remedy poor housing conditions for local authority residents set out in the FIDH v. Ireland collective complaint. It will also explore applying the Duty obligations in relation to other relevant policies, programmes and funding decisions.

Strand C: Applying the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty to ensure a human rights and equality led approach to climate and environmental justice and a just transition.

Age and Opportunity in partnership with BOLD Climate Action, and Straight Forward Research

Project Title: A Better World for all Older Citizens: Applying the Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment to Ireland’s policy for international development.

The aim of this project, led by older rights-holders, is to up skill a group of older people to apply the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty and specifically it’s Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment to Ireland’s international development policy as it relates to older people and climate change. This group of older people, as peer researchers, will also gather evidence highlighting the differential impact of climate change on older people globally. The group will engage with the Department of Foreign Affairs to share the evidence and recommendations produced to inform the Department’s Public Sector Duty obligations in future iterations of Ireland’s policy for international development as it relates to older people and climate change.

Centre for Environmental Justice at Community Law and Mediation

Project Title: Advancing Climate and Environmental Justice through Human Rights and Equality

The project will create six resources clarifying public bodies’ obligations under the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty in relation to climate and environmental justice. These resources will support duty-bearers in implementing the Duty and support rights-

holders to understand its potential to hold government accountable to its national and EU climate and environmental obligations. They will further explain Section 15 of the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021, which mandates public bodies to act consistently with Ireland's climate obligations, and the Public Body Biodiversity Duty under section 5 of the Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2023. This requires listed public bodies to have regard to the statutory National Biodiversity Action Plan. This project aims to strengthen civil society's capacity to engage public bodies on their legal climate and environmental obligations. We hope to increase public sector accountability and civil society leadership in advancing environmental and climate justice.

Friends of the Earth

Project Title: Pathways to Participation: Empowering underrepresented communities in the climate movement to be active global citizens in the Just Transition

The aim of this project is to develop community tools kits to empower underrepresented communities to act and apply the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty to engage County Councils to ensure that new Climate Action Plan's achieve climate and environmental justice and a just transition in fulfilment of their obligations under the Duty. By engaging community rights holders (older people, and Roma) in workshops, and train community work and youth work practitioners to engage community rights holders that they work with to support communities and practitioners to take action and identify the ways in which local climate action plans can be strengthened to ensure no one is left behind.

Youth Work Ireland, Galway

Project Title: Our Shared Future: Young Voices for Environmental Justice

The aim of this project is to investigate from a youth-led perspective how climate and environmental issues affect different groups of young people in their communities. Specifically, it will support young people from marginalised communities to have their voice heard including young migrants and refugees, young Travellers, and young people with disabilities. As these young people are underrepresented in forums on climate action. Through peer-led storytelling, intergenerational dialogue, and engagement with local

decision-makers, the project will support the application of the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty by public bodies in Galway and beyond by ensuring that climate action is informed by inclusive, lived experience, with the meaningful involvement of young people who face the greatest inequalities, recognising their lived experience as a crucial expertise that informs actions to have environmental justice.

Appendix 10: Your Rights data

The Your Rights Information Service is undergoing a period of transition of service delivery to maximise service impact and end user engagement. During this transition period, the Your Rights Information Service has ceased taking queries by email and phone and has moved to digital methods of information provision as complimentary forms of service delivery to ensure accessibility are designed. This follows a comprehensive independent review of the Your Rights Information Service in 2024. The independent review of the Your Rights Information Service found a number of shortcomings of the previous method of service delivery, providing information primarily by responding to queries by email, telephone and post, which restricted the potential impact of the service.

Following the appointment of a new dedicated Your Rights Manager, a workplan to address these shortcomings by redesigning the service has been developed. The objective of the redesign is to establish proactive and sustainable methods of providing information about legal rights in accessible formats; which empowers individuals, in particular marginalised and vulnerable communities, to understand their rights, and how to vindicate those rights. Crucially, a core aim of this process is to deliver the Your Rights Information Service in a way that not just meets our legislative responsibility but also addresses real need and adds value.

Below is the data recorded before the service closed.

Protected Ground	Equal Status Acts	Employment Equality Acts	Intoxicating Liquor Act	Total
Age	22	13	1	36
Civil Status	3	0	0	3
Disability	95	75	0	170
Family Status	4	6	0	10
Gender	16	14	0	30
Housing Assistance	17	0	0	17

Protected Ground	Equal Status Acts	Employment Equality Acts	Intoxicating Liquor Act	Total
Race	36	18	0	54
Religion	4	5	0	9
Sexual Orientation	3	5	0	8
Traveller Community	3	0	4	7
Ground not stated	19	54	2	75
Total	222	190	7	419

Human Rights Topics	Number
Immigration General	42
Housing	42
Asylum/International Protection	35
Asylum Seekers/ Direct Provision	31
Health Services (incl. mental health)	29
Accommodation for International and Temporary Protection Applicants	21
Temporary Protection	18
Prisons (conditions of prison)	17
Family Law, Child Protection (including custody)	17
Homelessness/Social Housing, Living Conditions	14
Accommodation for IP Applicants/Direct Provision	14
Homelessness	13
Discrimination on Other Grounds (e.g. appearance)	10
Private, Family Life, Home and Correspondence	9

Human Rights Topics	Number
General/Miscellaneous	9
Historical Institutional Abuse/Redress	9
Children's Rights	8
Decent Work/Right to Work	5
Immigration/Family Reunification/Right to Remain	5
Access to Justice (except for crime)	4
Freedom of Expression	3
Access to Education	3
Environment/Climate	3
Social Welfare (including Appeals)	3
Fair Procedures/Fair Trial	3
Equality/non-discrimination	3
Freedom of Thought, Conscience and Religion	3
Gender Based Violence	2
EU Freedom of Movement	2
Inhuman, Degrading Treatment and Punishment	2
Freedom of Assembly and Association	1
Protection of Property	1
Employment General/Industrial Relations	1
Executive Detention	1
Human-Trafficking/Forced Labour	1
Unlawful Detention/Conditions of Detent	1
Rights Relating to Health, Bodily Integrity	1
Total	386

Appendix 11: Monitoring Implementation of the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty

Overview

In January 2026, the Commission re-opened the compliance-monitoring portal to facilitate the monitoring of compliance levels among public bodies with Section 42 (2) of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014

In total, 289 public bodies were invited on to the portal to review data gathered by the Public Sector Duty monitoring and compliance team. Public bodies were requested to submit a response to our findings via the portal outlining any clarifications or supplementary data relevant to their compliance with the Duty over the year ending 31 December 2025.

The monitoring process aims to ascertain whether public bodies have published, as required by Section 42 of the IHREC Act:

- An equality and human rights assessment.
- Policy plans and actions in place or proposed to be in place to address issues in that assessment.
- A yearly progress report covering achievements in addressing issues identified in the above.

All this information must be set out in a manner that is accessible to the public in the public body's strategic plan (howsoever described) and annual report.

Results returned from the portal demonstrate a reasonable increase in progress on implementation of the publishing requirements outlined in Section 42(2) of the IHREC Act 2014 since the Commission commenced monitoring in 2023. For the first time the headline figure has moved closer to half of all public bodies (48%) having met their obligations under Section 42 (2) in part or in full, while 94 (33%) are fully compliant with their obligations.

The information presented in this report reflects progress by public bodies on their compliance with Section 42 (2) of the IHREC Act only – namely the requirement to publish relevant information. 289 public bodies were deemed to come into scope of Section 42 of the

IHREC Act 2014 for the purposes of this reporting year. Public bodies were divided into 14 thematic sectors for statistical purposes.

Total publication rates

Figure 1 shows that in 2025, **94** (33%) of the 289 public bodies were meeting their obligation under Section 42(2) in full, while **45** (15%) of public bodies had partially met those obligations. This demonstrates a headline figure of **139** (48%) of public bodies meeting their publication obligations in part or in full.

The figures will be presented in a manner which details: Total publication rates which is broken down per publishing status (Published, Partially Published and Not Published) as recorded on our monitoring system and separately broken down for publication of (1) an assessment; (2) policies, plans, actions; (3) reports.

Figure 1

Sector	Number of public bodies	Number Published	%	Number Partially Published	%	Number Not Published	%
Cultural Institution	15	0	0	2	13	13	87
Education	48	24	50	8	17	16	33
Environment and Energy	12	2	17	1	8	9	75
Financial and Economic Bodies	18	5	28	4	22	9	50
Government Department	18	7	39	7	22	4	39

Sector	Number of public bodies	Number Published	%	Number Partially Published	%	Number Not Published	%
Health and Wellbeing	23	6	26	2	9	15	65
Housing and Property	12	3	25	1	8	8	67
Justice and Legal	39	15	38	2	5	22	56
Local Authority	31	15	48	9	29	7	23
Other State Agency	26	6	23	5	19	15	58
Research and Advisory	8	5	63	1	13	2	25
State Company	20	2	10	2	10	16	76
Support and Development Bodies	9	3	33	0	0	6	67
Transport Bodies	10	1	10	1	10	8	80
Overall Totals:	289	94	33	45	16	150	52

Publishing status in Figure 1 is arrived at based on whether a public body has published the equality and human rights assessment, policies, plans, actions and report required under Section 42.

Equality and Human Rights assessment publication rates

Figure 2 shows that 115 (40%) public bodies completed and published an equality and human rights assessment.

Figure 2

Sector	Number of public bodies	Number Published	%	Number Partially Published	%	Number Not Published	%
Cultural Institution	15	0	0	2	13	13	87
Education	48	24	50	8	17	16	33
Environment and Energy	12	2	17	1	8	9	75
Financial and Economic Bodies	18	5	28	4	22	9	50
Government Department	18	7	39	7	22	4	39
Health and Wellbeing	23	6	26	2	9	15	65
Housing and Property	12	3	25	1	8	8	67
Justice and Legal	39	15	38	2	5	22	56
Local Authority	31	15	48	9	29	7	23

Sector	Number of public bodies	Number Published	%	Number Partially Published	%	Number Not Published	%
Other State Agency	26	6	23	5	19	15	58
Research and Advisory	8	5	63	1	13	2	25
State Company	20	2	10	2	10	16	76
Support and Development Bodies	9	3	33	0	0	6	67
Transport Bodies	10	1	10	1	10	8	80
Overall Totals:	289	94	33	45	16	150	52

Equality and Human Rights Policy/plans/action publication rates

Figure 3 shows that 134 (46%) of public bodies had set out policies, plans or actions in place or proposed to be put in place to address the issues identified in the assessment in 2025. This is notably higher than the rate of assessments published and by extension the fully published figure for 2025. This is due to a number of bodies setting out detailed action plans while failing to publish an assessment.

Figure 3

Sector	Number of public bodies	Number Published	%	Number Partially Published	%	Number Not Published	%
Cultural Institution	15	0	0	2	13	13	87
Education	48	24	50	8	17	16	33
Environment and Energy	12	2	17	1	8	9	75
Financial and Economic Bodies	18	5	28	4	22	9	50
Government Department	18	7	39	7	22	4	39
Health and Wellbeing	23	6	26	2	9	15	65
Housing and Property	12	3	25	1	8	8	67
Justice and Legal	39	15	38	2	5	22	56
Local Authority	31	15	48	9	29	7	23
Other State Agency	26	6	23	5	19	15	58
Research and Advisory	8	5	63	1	13	2	25

Sector	Number of public bodies	Number Published	%	Number Partially Published	%	Number Not Published	%
State Company	20	2	10	2	10	16	76
Support and Development Bodies	9	3	33	0	0	6	67
Transport Bodies	10	1	10	1	10	8	80
Overall Totals:	289	94	33	45	16	150	52

Equality and Human Rights report publication rates

Figure 4 represents the total of public bodies who published a report on their progress. This was slightly higher than the total full compliance rate as a small number of bodies who had published detailed progress reports on actions either didn't publish their assessment or actions in advance.

Figure 4

Sector	Number of public bodies	Number Published	%	Number Partially Published	%	Number Not Published	%
Cultural Institution	15	0	0	2	13	13	87
Education	48	24	50	8	17	16	33
Environment and Energy	12	2	17	1	8	9	75

Sector	Number of public bodies	Number Published	%	Number Partially Published	%	Number Not Published	%
Financial and Economic Bodies	18	5	28	4	22	9	50
Government Department	18	7	39	7	22	4	39
Health and Wellbeing	23	6	26	2	9	15	65
Housing and Property	12	3	25	1	8	8	67
Justice and Legal	39	15	38	2	5	22	56
Local Authority	31	15	48	9	29	7	23
Other State Agency	26	6	23	5	19	15	58
Research and Advisory	8	5	63	1	13	2	25
State Company	20	2	10	2	10	16	76
Support and Development Bodies	9	3	33	0	0	6	67
Transport Bodies	10	1	10	1	10	8	80
Overall Totals:	289	94	33	45	16	150	52

Sub-sector breakdown



36%

bodies under the aegis of a Governmental Department are meeting their publication obligations under Section 42(2).



84%

third-level educational institutions fully or partially published.



74%

Education and Training Boards fully or partially published.



46%

Regulatory and Oversight bodies fully or partially published.

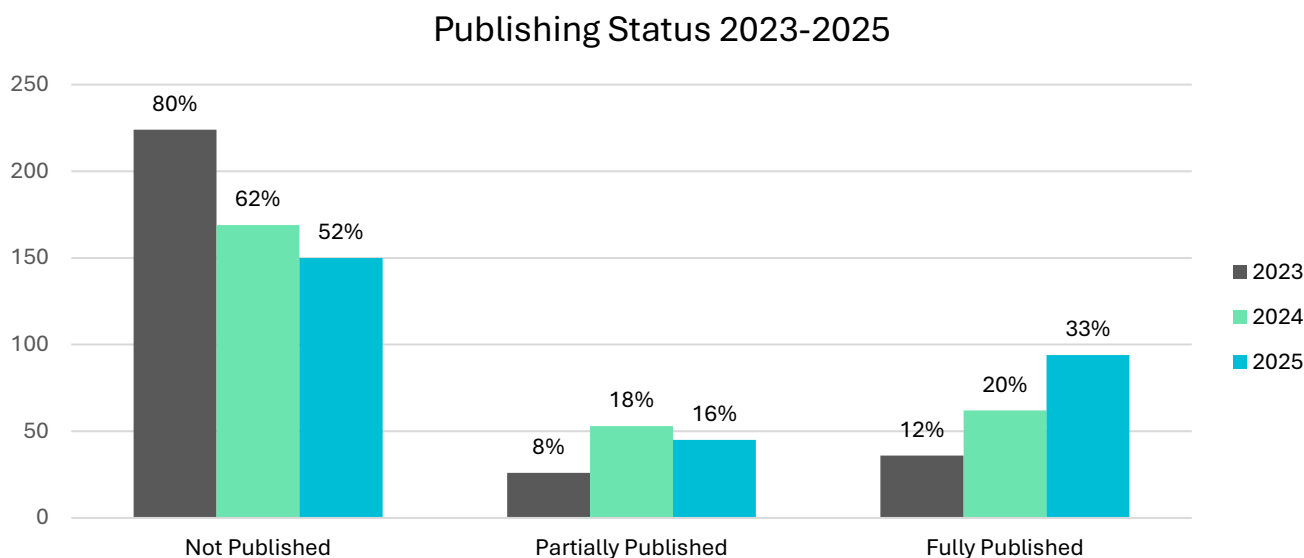
Year on year compliance comparative

There has been a noticeable increase in public bodies publishing some or all the information required under Section 42(2). 94 of the 289 public bodies met their publishing requirements in full (Assess, Address and Report) an increase of 35 from 2024. The percentage of compliant bodies increased by 12% from 20% in 2024 to 33% in 2025. Notably however when compliance rates from 2023 are compared to those from 2025 the rate has risen from 12% to 33 which is a 166% increase since the launch of the compliance monitoring system.

A further 45 (16%) had partially met the publishing requirements (Assess and/or Address only) down 7 (2%) from 2024 which is a result of a number of public bodies improving their position from partially to fully published over the period.

Overall, a headline figure of 139 (48%) of public bodies have taken steps to meet their publishing obligations under Section 42(2). This represents an increase from 110 (38%) in 2024, a 10% increase in total number of bodies meeting the requirements in part or in full. Notably, this figure was 64 (20%) in 2023, showing that there was a rise of 28% in the headline figure. This demonstrates a 117% increase since the launch of the compliance monitoring system.

Figure 5



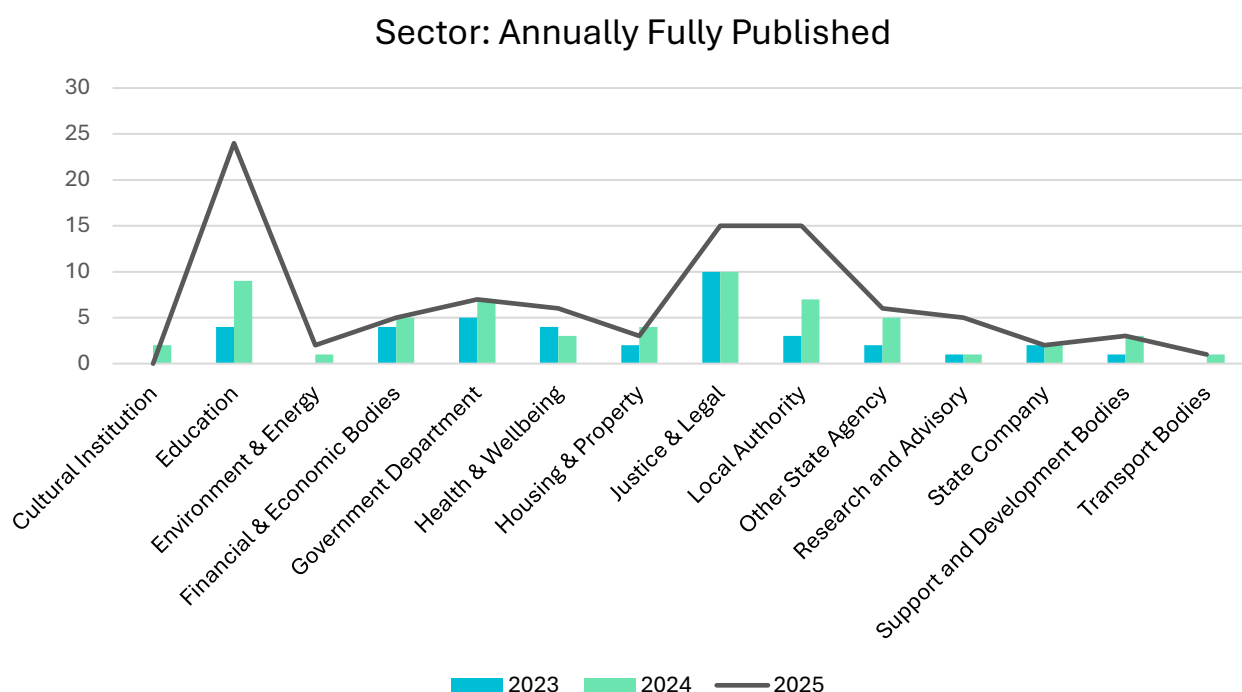
Progress highlighted in this report belies the fact that 150 (52%) public bodies remain uncompliant with publishing requirements, albeit down 10% from 177 in 2024. It is

noteworthy that 57 of the 150 who were recorded as not published did submit a response to the portal, setting out that they were in the process of taking steps to meet their obligations under Section 42. One would expect the publication figures to move in the direction of 68% over the next 2 years. This is a much healthier forecast than would have been predicted at commencement of the compliance monitoring system in 2023. However, it still demonstrates a compliance deficit and non-engagement from 82 (28%) public bodies who have failed to meet any of their obligations or to engage with the Commissions queries.

Sector Spotlight

The statistics further support the effectiveness of training in specific sectors by the Public Sector Training Unit and other equality consultants. The most significant increase since 2023 was in the education and local authority sectors. Looking at the education sector, the increases were primarily from third-level institutions and Education and Training Boards (ETBs). Taking the combined figure of fully and partially published, third-level educational institutions went from 8% up to 84%, while ETBs went from 31% to 74%. If we look at the same criteria for local authorities, we see a rise in compliance from 23% in 2023 to 77% in 2025.

Figure 6



Key Findings

Evidence of compliance with the requirements of the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty continues to improve annually. 48% of all public bodies had met some or all the requirements under Section 42(2) of the IHREC Act, namely, to have conducted an assessment, identified actions to be taken on foot of that assessment, and reported on progress against those actions. There continues to be strong improvements in Government Departments, Local Authorities and the Education Sector which has been influenced by direct supports provided either by the PSD training unit or other equality consultants. However, there remains slow progress in other sectors and very limited evidence of compliance by State Companies. It was noted that only 36% of all bodies under the aegis of a parent department had published anything under Section 42.

In 2023 we reported that many public bodies are producing Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policies and that it was important that clarity is maintained as to the statutory obligations on a public body under Section 42 of the IHREC Act, and that relevant actions are taken to meet those obligations. We reported in 2024 that a shift was noticeable as public bodies began to use Section 42 as a framework for implementing Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policies. This became more prominent in 2025 as many public bodies reorganized their policies to ensure that Section 42 was the primary framework. This is important as EDI policies alone are not an indicator that a public body is compliant with the requirements of Section 42(2) of the IHREC Act.

There were 184 submissions received on the Commissions monitoring portal in 2025. This equates to a 24% annual increase in engagement with the portal indicating a growing recognition of the statutory obligations amongst public bodies.

There is evidence from submissions to the portal of an intention by 57 non-compliant bodies to address future compliance. Taking this figure as evidence of intention to act we can safely arrive at a headline figure of 68% of public bodies who have either met publication requirements or have given details of their plans to implement the Duty.

Overall, a rate of full compliance at 33% remains low for a statutory obligation. It is encouraging however that, as laid out above, for the first time the headline figure of those who are considered to be fully or partially published has moved closer to half of public bodies - an

increased rate from 20% to 48% - which demonstrates that there is a growing recognition and understanding of the statutory requirements on public bodies under the Duty.



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