



An
Coimisiún
Pleanála

Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty Implementation Strategy 2026-2028



Document Information	Details
Document Title	Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty Implementation Strategy 2026-2028
Organisation	An Coimisiún Pleanála
Document Owner	Corporate Affairs
Approved By	CEO
Approval Date	17 September 2026
Review Date	Ongoing
Version	1.0

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1. Purpose

The Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty, set out in Section 42 of the *Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014*, requires public bodies to have regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, promote equality of opportunity and treatment, and protect human rights in the performance of their functions.

For An Coimisiún Pleanála (the Commission), the Duty is an important part of good governance and organisational management. While the Commission's primary statutory role is the independent determination of planning appeals, applications and other matters assigned under planning legislation, the Duty also informs how we govern the organisation, deliver our services, develop our internal policies and procedures, support our staff and make organisational decisions.

This Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty Implementation Strategy 2026-2028 sets out how the Commission will assess, address and report on equality and human rights issues relevant to the exercise of its statutory functions. It also provides a framework for embedding equality and human rights considerations across the organisation and monitoring progress over the lifetime of the Strategy.

2. Our Equality and Human Rights Values

The Commission's approach to implementing the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty is guided by the values set out in our Strategic Plan 2026-2028.

Efficiency And Effectiveness

We are timely, professional and robust in our decision-making and our operations. We understand the impact of our role in the planning process as a decision-making body.

Integrity

We perform our functions with the highest standards of professional behaviour and ethics. We protect the independence and impartiality of our decision-making.

Transparency

We are open and accountable in our decisions, systems, and processes. We are clear and honest in our communication and actions. We are proactive in our engagements with stakeholders.

Innovation

We are agile and collaborative. We continually seek to improve our systems, processes, and how we work together and with others.

Respect

We recognise the value and dignity in everyone. We are clear on the right of fair, accessible participation for all in the planning system.

Together, these values provide the foundation for how the Commission fulfils its Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty. They inform our organisational culture, governance, service delivery and decision-making, and support our commitment to embedding equality and human rights considerations across all areas of our work.

3. Who the Duty Applies To

The Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty is relevant to everyone who engages with, works for, or is affected by the work of the Commission.

In implementing the Duty, the Commission has regard to the equality and human rights of:

- members of the Governing Board;
- current and prospective staff, including people applying for employment with the Commission;
- people who engage with, use or are affected by the Commission's statutory functions and services, including applicants, appellants, observers, members of the public and local communities;
- planning authorities, prescribed bodies, Government Departments, State agencies and other organisations that interact with the Commission; and
- consultants, contractors, suppliers and service providers working on behalf of the Commission.

Recognising the different needs and experiences of these groups helps the Commission identify barriers, promote equality of opportunity and support informed, fair and inclusive decision-making.

4. Key Areas of Focus

The Commission has identified the following key areas of focus for implementing the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty over the period 2026-2028.

Governance

Embedding equality and human rights considerations into strategic planning, organisational governance, risk management and the development and review of internal policies and procedures.

Independent Decision-Making

Supporting fair procedures, transparency, accessibility and respect for natural and constitutional justice in the exercise of the Commission's statutory functions.

Customer Service

Providing accessible, inclusive and responsive services that meet the diverse needs of the people who engage with the Commission. This work is supported through the Commission's Customer Service Action Plan 2026-2028.

Access

Ensuring, where reasonably practicable, that our offices, facilities and services are accessible and that reasonable accommodation is available to support customers, staff and visitors.

People and Culture

Promoting equality, inclusion and respect through recruitment, employment, learning and development, staff well-being and organisational culture.

Communications and Digital Services

Providing clear, accessible and inclusive information while continuing to improve the accessibility of our digital services, website and communications. This work is supported by the Commission's Official Languages Scheme and other relevant organisational policies and initiatives.

5. Implementation Strategy

Implementation of the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty is an ongoing process of assessment, action and reporting. The Commission will implement the Duty through the three stages of **Assess**, **Address** and **Report**.

Assess

The Commission will identify equality and human rights issues relevant to its statutory functions, governance, employment practices and service delivery. Assessments will be informed by organisational data, customer and staff feedback, legislative developments and engagement with the Commission's Access Team, Equality Steering Committee, Partnership Committee, Human Resources Section and other relevant stakeholders.

Address

Where equality or human rights issues are identified, the Commission will address them through its Strategic Plan, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy, Code of Conduct, Customer Service Action Plan, accessibility initiatives, staff learning and development programmes and other organisational actions, having regard to relevant national strategies, Government policy and public service guidance.

Report

The Commission will monitor progress in implementing the Duty and report on the actions taken and outcomes achieved through its governance arrangements and, where appropriate, the Strategic Plan, Annual Report and other corporate reporting mechanisms.

6. Our Workforce and Organisation

About the Commission

An Coimisiún Pleanála carries out statutory functions set out in national and European Union planning and environmental legislation. The Commission was established on 18 June 2025 under Part 17 of the Planning and Development Act 2024, replacing An Bord Pleanála (established in 1977).

Our Workforce

Understanding the profile of our workforce and the people who engage with the Commission helps us identify equality and human rights issues, assess potential barriers and inform the actions set out in this Strategy.

As of January 2026, the Commission employed 295 staff.

- 56.95% of staff were female and 43.05% were male.
- Approximately 51% of staff had less than five years' service, reflecting significant organisational change and recruitment in recent years.
- The Commission continues to meet and exceed the statutory employment target for people with disabilities, with representation exceeding 6%. This is expected to continue to increase as the organisation grows.

As part of its obligations as a public body, the Commission also completed a workforce disability survey during the first quarter of 2026, achieving a satisfactory response rate that supports compliance with the relevant legislative requirements.

Building an Inclusive Organisation

The Commission has a long-standing commitment to promoting equality, inclusion and dignity in the workplace.

The Equality Steering Committee, established in 2006, continues to support this work by promoting equality, fairness and dignity across the organisation.

Over the years, the Commission has undertaken a range of staff surveys and reviews to better understand the experiences of staff and to identify opportunities for improvement, including:

- Respect and Dignity Survey (2008);
- Equality Survey (2013) and Equality Survey Report (2019);
- Staff Climate Surveys (2023 and 2025); and
- Dignity and Respect in the Workplace Survey (2026).

The findings from these surveys have informed the actions set out in this Strategy. The most recent Staff Climate Survey demonstrated positive progress across a number of key areas of organisational culture. Perceptions of inclusivity increased by 11%, while psychological safety improved by 10%, surpassing the 75% threshold for both categories, reflecting continued progress towards creating a more inclusive, supportive and respectful workplace.

7. Equality and Human Rights in Practice

The Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty is reflected in the way the Commission carries out its statutory functions, delivers its services and supports its people. The Commission has established a range of policies, procedures and initiatives that promote equality, protect human rights and foster an inclusive organisational culture.

Delivering Services

The Commission engages with applicants, appellants, observers, members of the public, planning authorities, prescribed bodies, Government Departments and other stakeholders through the planning process. This engagement takes place through written correspondence, digital services, pre-application meetings (Pre-Apps), oral hearings and other customer interactions.

The Commission aims to ensure that everyone engaging with our services is treated fairly, respectfully and without discrimination. We seek to make our services accessible and inclusive by providing reasonable accommodation, improving accessibility and implementing the commitments set out in the Commission's Customer Service Action Plan 2026-2028, Customer Charter and Official Languages Scheme.

Supporting Our People

Creating an inclusive workplace is fundamental to delivering high-quality public services.

The Commission supports equality and human rights through its recruitment and employment practices, organisational policies, learning and development programmes and staff wellbeing initiatives. These include:

- the Dignity at Work Policy and Charter;
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) training, including the FREDIE programme;
- unconscious bias training;
- disability awareness initiatives, including the JAM Card initiative;

- reasonable accommodation procedures, including workplace and ergonomic assessments;
- flexible working arrangements, family-friendly policies and the Right to Disconnect Policy; and
- staff engagement initiatives, including the Staff Climate Survey.

The Commission maintains a zero-tolerance approach to bullying, harassment and discrimination and continues to promote a workplace where everyone is treated with dignity, fairness and respect.

8. Equality and Human Rights Action Plan 2026-2028

The following Action Plan sets out the practical measures the Commission will take over the period 2026-2028 to support the implementation of the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty.

The Action Plan builds on the Commission's existing policies, procedures and initiatives and complements other organisational strategies, including the Strategic Plan, Customer Service Action Plan, Official Languages Scheme and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy.

The Action Plan is structured around the Commission's key areas of focus and identifies the actions, responsibilities, timelines and measures that will support implementation and ongoing review.

Ref.	Strategic Action	Responsibility	Timeframe	Success Measure
1.	Promote awareness of the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty through staff communications, induction and learning and development.	Corporate Affairs	Ongoing	Staff awareness initiatives delivered and incorporated into induction and learning programmes.
2.	Develop and launch the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy, aligning it with the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty Implementation Strategy.	Corporate Affairs	Q4 2026	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy approved and published.
3.	Deliver Equality, Diversity and Inclusion training, including disability awareness, unconscious bias, the FREDIE programme and the JAM Card initiative.	Corporate Affairs	Ongoing	Training delivered annually and staff participation monitored.
4.	Review organisational policies and procedures through an equality and human rights lens.	Corporate Affairs	Ongoing	Policies reviewed and updated, where appropriate, to reflect equality and human rights considerations.
5.	Embed equality and human rights considerations into the development and review of significant organisational policies, strategies and initiatives.	EMT	Ongoing	Equality and human rights considerations are reflected in organisational decision-making and policy development.
6.	Improve the accessibility of the Commission's offices, facilities, publications, website and digital services.	Corporate Affairs / Digital Transformation	Ongoing	Accessibility improvements implemented and reasonable accommodation provided, where required.

7.	Implement the accessibility, equality and inclusion commitments contained in the Customer Service Action Plan 2026-2028.	Corporate Affairs	Ongoing	Customer Service Action Plan actions relating to accessibility and inclusion are implemented and monitored.
8.	Promote equality, diversity and inclusion throughout recruitment and employment practices.	Corporate Affairs	Ongoing	Recruitment and employment practices continue to support equality of opportunity and inclusive employment.
9.	Use the findings of Staff Climate Surveys, Dignity and Respect at Work surveys and other equality-related reviews to inform organisational improvements.	Corporate Affairs	Ongoing	Survey findings are reviewed and appropriate actions are implemented.
10.	Support an inclusive workplace through staff wellbeing initiatives, flexible working arrangements, family-friendly policies and reasonable accommodation procedures.	Corporate Affairs	Ongoing	Staff wellbeing and inclusion initiatives are maintained and reviewed on an ongoing basis.
11.	Monitor implementation of this Strategy through the Equality Steering Committee and the Commission's governance arrangements.	Corporate Affairs / Equality Steering Committee	Annual	Progress is reviewed regularly and reported through the Commission's governance structures.
12.	Report on the implementation of the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty through the Annual Report and other appropriate corporate reporting mechanisms.	Corporate Affairs	Annual	Progress is published through the Annual Report and other relevant corporate reports, as appropriate.

9. Monitoring, Reporting and Review

The Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty is an ongoing responsibility. The Commission will monitor progress in implementing this Strategy and Action Plan to ensure that equality and human rights considerations continue to be embedded across the organisation.

Progress will be monitored through the Commission's governance arrangements, including regular review of the actions set out in the Action Plan. This will include consideration of progress against agreed actions, emerging equality and human rights issues, legislative developments and, where appropriate, feedback from staff, customers and other stakeholders.

The Commission will report on the implementation of the Duty through its Annual Report and other corporate reporting mechanisms, as appropriate. Progress may also be reflected in the Commission's Strategic Plan, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and other relevant organisational reports.

This Strategy and Action Plan will be reviewed periodically during the period 2026-2028 to ensure it remains relevant, effective and aligned with legislative developments, organisational priorities and good public service practice.

Responsibility for implementing this Strategy is shared across the Commission. Successful implementation will depend on the continued support and engagement of the Governing Board, Executive Management Team, managers and staff in embedding equality and human rights considerations into the way we govern the organisation, deliver our services and support our people.

An Coimisiún Pleanála is an equal opportunities employer and seeks to provide a workplace where everyone is treated fairly, with dignity and respect.