

Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty

Assessment and Action Plan 2025 - 2027

1. Introduction

The [Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014](#) (the Act) establishes a Public Sector Human Rights and Equality Duty, which requires public bodies, such as the Charities Regulator, in the performance of their functions, to have regard for the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination
- Promote equality of opportunity and treatment of its employees and those they provide services to
- Protect the human rights of its members, employees and those to whom they provide services

2. Our Purpose and Functions

The Charities Regulator is the independent statutory body responsible for registering and regulating charities operating in Ireland, and operates under the aegis of the Department of Rural and Community Development. Our key functions include maintaining a public register of charitable organisations operating in Ireland and promoting high standards of governance and accountability in charities. We also deal with concerns about charities and have the power to investigate the affairs of any charity.

Additionally, we provide services to certain charities, including authorising appointments of new charitable trustees, and disposition of charity property where a charity does not have the power to do so itself.

There is a full list of the Charities Regulator's functions in [Section 14 of the Charities Act 2009](#).

The Charities Regulator maintains a working environment that encourages and supports the right to dignity at work, equitable treatment and respect for our individuality and diversity. This inclusive culture is supported by policies and initiatives such as Dignity at Work, Grievance Procedure, Training and Development, and our Employee Wellness Programme.

3. Our Values

We are a values driven organisation, as set-out in our Statements of Strategy. These values represent a set of guiding principles and fundamental beliefs which shape how we work. They also underpin our commitment to our employees to create a positive working environment. We understand the value and contribution of diverse voices and experiences within our organisation and across the charity sector as a whole.

The Charities Regulator Values are:

- Accountability
- Proportionality
- Respect
- Impartiality

4. Assessment of actions to date

Since our establishment, the Charities Regulator has sought to promote equality of opportunity and treatment of our employee and stakeholders to eliminate discrimination and protect their human rights. Some of these actions taken are outlined below:

- Stakeholder engagement and consultation

We recognise the diverse and complex nature of the charity sector and the challenges it faces. A key part of our Public Sector Duty is to understand the views of our stakeholders. Every two years we commission independent research of the charity sector to track and assess issues of importance to Ireland's charities and their engagement with the Charities Regulator. In recent years we have expanded our engagement with our stakeholders to include pulse surveys and in-person informal meetings with groups of charities trustees, the volunteers who are ultimately responsible for the governance of a charity.

Additionally, we engage with charity trustees through a stakeholder forum, a formal public engagement process that we established on a pilot basis in 2023, and which is being continued on a more permanent basis in 2025. This direct channel of communication with charity trustees helps to ensure the views and feedback of volunteers from across the sector, are considered when the Charities Regulator is developing policies, guidance and regulatory materials. Our Stakeholder forum has helped to improve our understanding of our service users and the communities we serve and how to enhance our support of them.

- Accessibility project

The Charities Regulator website was audited for compliance with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG 2.1) Level-AA in May 2022 by independent accessibility consultants using the Website Accessibility Conformance Evaluation Methodology (WCAG-EM). In 2024 we completed a significant project to address the recommendations of the accessibility consultants. Recognising the diversity of our stakeholders, this project improved the accessibility of the portal, making it easier for people, especially those with additional needs, to

access and use the portal. It also allowed the Charities Regulator to make important updates to our [accessibility statement](#) on our website. This highlights our commitment to supporting compliance and best practice in charities making it easier for them to access information and interact more easily with the portal.

As of November 2024, the majority of recommendations in these reports have been implemented. Outstanding issues are noted in [our accessibility statement](#).

- Communication with stakeholders

As an organisation we are committed to communicating clearly with our stakeholders. In 2023 all employees in the Charities Regulator received plain English training. For certain guidance documents the Charities Regulator has also worked with the National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA) to ensure the information we are providing is easy to understand. All documents are checked for accessibility before being published on our website.

- Internal training

We are committed to providing development opportunities for our employees. In recent years employees have received training on a range of topics, such as Fraud and Corruption Awareness, Public Procurement, Protected Disclosures, Data Protection, Cyber Security Awareness, Climate Action and Neurodiversity in the Workplace. The Neurodiversity in the Workplace workshop helped to raise awareness among our employees of diversity in all its forms.

- Employee wellbeing

The Charities Regulator recognises that our employees are central to fulfilling our statutory functions. As an organization we are committed to fostering a workplace in which each employee is enabled to reach and maintain their full potential in the workplace by ensuring their work ability through the promotion of mental, physical, emotional and psychological health and wellbeing.

We believe both the physical and psychological wellbeing of our employees is very important. We aim to provide appropriate support and information to help individuals deal with any issues they may face in their day to day lives. Employees are encouraged to discuss any problems and seek support either from their manager or through the Employee Assistance Service.

- Equality, diversity and inclusion

The Charities Regulator promotes diversity and inclusion and equality of opportunity in all our employment practices. Awareness and education is key to ensuring our employees are equipped with the knowledge and skillset to create an environment where all are treated equally, without bias, feel confident within their workplace and bring their whole selves to work. The Charities Regulator will promote the positive behaviours we expect of all our people for an inclusive culture which is intolerant of discrimination, bullying and harassment.

All employees can be confident that their rights under the Employment Equality Acts are guaranteed and that no one will receive less favourable treatment because of gender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religious belief, age, disability, race or membership of the Traveller community. Our commitment to equality is not limited to these grounds. All decisions will be made objectively and fairly, without consideration of extraneous matters.

All members of staff have a responsibility to create a working environment in which differences are respected and in which all people – employees, clients and customers – are valued as individuals. As an employer, the Charities Regulator strives to foster real equality of opportunity, diversity and inclusion by continually monitoring our employment practices to ensure that they do not perpetuate any existing inequalities.

- Access policy

Our Access Policy, which is reviewed annually, outlines the Charities Regulator’s policy with respect to providing accessible services and facilities for all our stakeholders.

- Customer Service Charter and Action Plan

We have a publically available [Customer Service Charter and Action plan](#) where we set out how we are committed to providing our stakeholders with an effective and efficient service in accordance with the 12 Principles of Quality Customer Service as outlined by the Department of An Taoiseach. Within this document, we state that we are committed to equality and diversity and will ensure that stakeholders’ rights to equal treatment under equality legislation are upheld when delivering services. We set out an Action Plan on how we are achieving this.

5. Action Plan

We will continue to promote equality of opportunity and protect the human rights of our employees and stakeholders as part of delivering our Statement of Strategy (2025-27). In addition, we will

consider the impact of our actions on the equality and human rights of employees and stakeholders. Issues identified are being addressed by the actions and plans below which will continue to be monitored on an ongoing basis.

Charities Regulator’s Public Sector Duty Action Plan

Number	Area Identified	Action	Status / Expected Completion Date
1	Socially Responsible Procurement	The Charities Regulator’s Procurement Policy incorporates the process of considering green public procurement.	Ongoing
2	Green Team	The Charities Regulator leads, models and promotes high standards of environmental and social practice in line with the public sector climate action mandate. The Green Team is in operation to drive ongoing sustainability initiatives	Ongoing
3	Accessibility	The Charities Regulator’s website’s Accessibility Statement, which describes the website’s compliance with the accessibility requirements and provides helpful information to anyone who may need, will be updated at least annually. It was last updated in November 2024.	Ongoing

4		Annual accessibility training is provided in-house for all employees	Ongoing
5	Official Languages (Amendment) Act 2021	Ensure the Charities Regulator continues to be compliant with the Official Languages Act.	Ongoing
6	Appropriate use of Language/ Plain English	We will continue to work towards ensuring that our publications meet the requirements of people with additional needs in terms of accessibility and official languages.	Ongoing
7	External Stakeholder Engagement	We will continue to actively engage with stakeholders to increase awareness and understanding of charity regulation and the role and approach of the Charities Regulator.	Ongoing
10	Corporate Governance Framework	The Charities Regulator will continue to lead, model and promote high standards of Corporate Governance internally as per our Corporate Governance Framework.	Ongoing
11	Policies and Procedures	Updated Employee handbook to be launched in 2025 in line with our new Statement of Strategy and reviewed on an ongoing basis in line with legislative changes.	2025
12	Organisation values	New values have been defined as part of our	2025

		new Statement of Strategy 2025-2027. Training will be provided to employees in relation to these new values.	
13	Dignity at work training	Planned for all employees	2025
14	Internal training programmes	We are committed to providing development opportunities for our employees and will continue our regular internal training programme throughout 2025 and beyond.	2025
15	Health and Safety	We continue to promote a safety -first culture through the update and review of our health and safety policies and procedures.	Ongoing
17		Create and define the role of Equality Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Officer within the Office. Examine EDI role in other public sector bodies for guidance.	2026
18		Provide updated human rights training for all employees. All employees to complete the revised IHREC PSD training module through OneLearning.	2025
19		Consider the development of a transition year policy and programme which would include partnering schools in the	2026

		local community (Dublin 1) to facilitate work experience for transition year students.	
20	Workplace Wellness	Re-constitute Social and Wellbeing Committee. Provide enhanced Employee Assistance Service to employees.	2025
21	Reasonable Accommodation policy	Create a policy dedicated to Reasonable Accommodation	2025