



Comhairle Contae Thiobraid Árann  
Tipperary County Council

# PUBLIC SECTOR DUTY IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY & ACTION PLAN

January 2022



## INTRODUCTION

The Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty (PSD) is set out in Section 42 of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014.

It requires a public body, in the performance of its functions, to have regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination;
- Promote equality of opportunity and treatment of its staff and the persons to whom it provides services;
- Protect the human rights of its members, staff and the persons to whom it provides services.

Public bodies, including Tipperary County Council, are required to set out in a manner that is accessible to the public in its strategic plan an assessment of the human rights and equality issues it believes to be relevant to its functions and purpose and the existing or proposed policies, plans and actions to address those issues. Furthermore, public bodies are required to report annually on developments and achievements in that regard in its annual report in a manner that is accessible to the public.

**Guidelines issued by the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government in relation to preparation of the most recent local authority Corporate Plans stated**



*“local authorities should ensure that corporate plans are in line with its statutory obligation under Section 42 of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act, 2014 ..... Section 42(2)(a) of the IHREC Act 2014 requires local authorities to set out in its corporate plan an assessment of the human rights and equality issues it believes to be relevant to its purpose and functions and detail the policies, plans and actions in place or proposed to be put in place to address those issues”.*

Tipperary County Council's Corporate Plan 2020-2024 sets out in Appendix 1 the 3-step approach (Assess, Address and Report) to be applied within the Council to implement its PSD obligations:

**In the assessment stage we will consider:**

- What potential human rights and equality issues need to be addressed or considered;
- What structures and initiatives do we already have in place to support human rights and what improvements if any are required to be made to same to ensure their continued effectiveness;
- What human rights and equality issues need to be prioritised for action.

**In the Addressing stage we will:**

- Agree priority actions to address equality and human rights issues identified in the assessment stage;
- Determine the most appropriate implementation structure to drive the Duty;
- Consider staff capacity so as to ensure we are in a position to prevent and respond to issues as they present;
- Integrate the Duty in strategic planning i.e. development plans, procurement plans, team development plans etc;

**In the Reporting stage we will:**

- Review and monitor the collection of data, clearly defined targets arising from the assessment and addressing stages;
- Consult and engage with staff and service users;
- Detail achievements and steps taken in action plans in our annual report;
- Report on developments and achievements in a manner that is accessible to the public.

Figure 1: Extract from Appendix 1 of Corporate Plan 2020-2024




## OUR APPROACH IN DEVELOPING THE STRATEGY & ACTION PLAN

A Working Group representative of all Directorates in Tipperary County Council was established during 2021 under the direction of the Human Resources and Corporate Services Sections to guide and assist with the preparation of this high-level Public Sector Duty Implementation Strategy and Action Plan. The Council's Senior Management Team approved this Strategy and Action Plan in December 2021.

### The work of this Group included:

- Framing the Council's public sector duty values;
- Examining which of the Council's policies, strategies and plans the Duty is relevant;
- Undertaking a consultation exercise with staff & service users;
- Identifying priority issues and actions to be addressed/included in the Strategy and Action Plan;
- Preparing the final Strategy and Action Plan.

The approach taken has been based on guidance and information published by the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission and the experience of local authorities chosen as pilots in the implementation of the Public Sector Duty. The approach taken here is values-based and focused on specific outcomes to ensure the action plan will deliver effective and meaningful outcomes.

 *The approach taken has been based on guidance and information published by the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission*



## OUR PUBLIC SECTOR DUTY VALUES

This Strategy and Action Plan is based on the PSD values set out in Table 1:

Value	About the Value
Respect	People being treated in a manner that recognises their intrinsic human worth.
Fairness	People being treated equally in a manner that is reasonable and without bias.
Non-Discrimination	Difference is welcomed and valued and diversity is accommodated in accessing our services and in employment of our staff.
Transparency	Through our dealings and actions, we are open and accountable.
Collaboration	The diversity of people is recognised by providing all persons with opportunities to have a say on matters and in decisions that affect them.
Dignity	Concern for respect, care and human worth relationships in all our actions and dealings with people.

Table 1: Public Sector Duty Values of Tipperary County Council

These PSD values align and interact with the 4 core values of the Council as outlined in its Corporate Plan 2020-2024. This is illustrated in Figure 2.

	Quality Service / Customer Focus	Sustainability	Collaboration	Good Governance
	We will be <b>citizen-centred</b> and <b>customer-focused</b> in our operations and we will treat all people with <b>dignity</b> and the upmost <b>respect</b> always. We will be willing to listen and interpret the views of the citizens of Tipperary to create and deliver an <b>inclusive</b> county.	We will be committed to being good stewards of our environment by acting and ensuring all our practices are <b>consistently</b> environmentally responsible and adopting sustainable best practices. We will have an emphasis on supporting sustainable and resilient <b>communities</b> throughout the county.	We will serve as a catalyst for local economic development through <b>transparent</b> and <b>respectful engagement</b> and we will engage and <b>consult</b> with our stakeholders in the decisions that affect them to bring about positive change for the county. We will be pro-active in identifying and delivering on opportunities, embracing new ideas, new practices and technologies in order to advance and develop the county in a forward thinking way.	We will provide strong Governance, be <b>open to scrutiny</b> and be <b>transparent</b> in all our dealings. As the primary public representative body in the county we will provide clear direction in economic social and community development and we will be <b>accountable</b> and <b>responsible</b> for all our decisions. We will be committed to demonstrating a high level of <b>integrity</b> in all our dealings, particularly in the performance of our duties.
Respect	✓		✓	
Fairness	✓	✓		
Non-Discrimination	✓			✓
Transparency			✓	✓
Collaboration	✓	✓	✓	
Dignity	✓	✓		✓

Figure 2: Alignment of PSD values and Corporate Plan values

## OUR IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY & ACTION PLAN

The actions identified relate to the following broad headings:

- Service Provision;
- People Management;
- Research & Policy; Strategic Planning & Programmes;
- Corporate Activity and Procurement Processes;
- Implementation and Oversight.

These fully address the overall functional range of Tipperary County Council and focus on aspects such as:

- Service provision and interaction with external service users;
- Employment and the internal working environment;
- Corporate-wide functions including procurement, grant allocation, outsourcing and service level agreements (SLAs);
- The production and review of plans and programmes.



No.	Goal/Objective	Actions
1.	Raise overall awareness of the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty within the Council.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Awareness raising for Council elected members and staff.</li> <li>• Encourage staff to view and use online guidance tools and resources available through the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission<sup>1</sup>.</li> </ul>
2.	Training for staff to ensure they have confidence in their own abilities to perform their functions without discriminating against or infringing on human rights of colleagues and customers.	<p>Training on equality and human rights obligations and on how to equality and human rights proof the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formulation and enforcement of policies, plans and legislative standards;</li> <li>• Budgets and procurement;</li> <li>• Service provision;</li> <li>• Customer service and communications;</li> <li>• Human resources.</li> </ul> <p>Training will be rolled out on a prioritised based.</p>
3.	Consider human rights and equality obligations at every Directorate level to identify the human rights and equality issues specifically relevant to the functions of the Directorate, to the services it provides and to its employees.	Build consideration of human rights and equality obligations into business planning processes (e.g. Team Development Plans).
4.	Consultation/ participation with staff and their representative organisations on actions/issues impacting upon them.	Participation/consultation with staff and their representative organisations on actions/issues impacting upon them.
5.	Consider equality and human rights issues when introducing new or renewing existing human resources/ people management processes and procedures.	Carry out an equality and human rights assessment when introducing new or reviewing human resources processes and procedures.
6.	Promote consideration of equality and human rights throughout the procurement process.	Identify means of integrating the Duty into strategic and tactical procurement planning and procurement procedures.
7.	Understand our changing employee diversity in order to inform strategies and support programmes/activities for our workforce.	Collate information using current systems available.
8.	Understand the changing customer profile in order to gauge how our service delivery includes groups experiencing inequality and human rights issues and the impacts on those using our services.	Develop methods to evaluate outcomes for service users and potential users across the nine equality grounds and the socio-economic status ground.
9.	Promote integration of equality and human rights issues (e.g. accessibility) into all capital projects proposed by the Council.	Consider equality and human rights issues at the Appraisal and Preliminary Design stages of capital projects.
10.	Consider in the development of plans and programmes that they comply with equality and human rights standards.	Carry out an equality and human rights assessment when drafting or reviewing plans and programmes so as to adequately address identified equality and human rights issues.
11.	Consult with external groups and stakeholders under equal treatment legislation and under the socio-economic status ground and supporting their participation on issues that impact on them.	Participation/consultation with relevant groups and their organisations at key times in the development and implementation of issues impacting upon them.
12.	Opportunities will arise on an ongoing basis over the coming years where our Public Sector Duty can be promoted and implemented.	The Action Plan will not restrict/prevent the Council in promoting and implementing its Public Sector Duty when opportunities arise.
13.	Provide annual oversight on implementation of actions.	Include an update in the Council's Annual Report on progress on implementing the actions in this Action Plan.

<sup>1</sup> www.ihrec.ie



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