

**Wexford County Council: Implementing the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty**

**Assessment of Equality and Human Rights Issues and Evidence Book**

**December 2024**

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**1. Introduction**

This assessment of equality and human rights issues has been undertaken by Wexford County Council in compliance with S42 of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014: the public sector equality and human rights duty (the Duty) [[1]](#footnote-1). The Duty requires public bodies to undertake an assessment of the equality and human rights issues that are relevant to their functions and purpose. In undertaking this assessment, the guidance issued by the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission has been followed.[[2]](#footnote-2)

The assessment is evidence-based in involving a review of relevant national policies, national research, and international research and submissions made to international human rights bodies, with the evidence book presented in Appendix 2. The assessment was participative in involving a review of the draft assessment undertaken with civil society organisations representative of the identified groups for the Duty.

The assessment of equality and human rights issues involves an examination of the situation, experience, and identity of the identified groups for the Duty, where:

* **Situation** of the group in terms of their access to resources and any particular disadvantage they experience.
* **Experience** of the group in terms of the quality of their interaction with employers and service providers and the wider society.
* **Identity** of the group in terms of how they chose to give expression to their identity and the specific needs that arise from their identity.

**The groups** identified for implementing the Duty are those are covered by the grounds of gender (including gender expression, gender identity and sex characteristics), civil status, family status (including lone parents and carers), age (including young people and older people), disability (broadly defined to include all impairment groups), sexual orientation, race (broadly defined to include Black and minority ethnic groups, migrants, nationality, international protection applicants and asylum seekers), religion, membership of the Traveller community, and socio-economic status (at risk of or experiencing poverty and exclusion). This includes those at the intersections of these grounds. Rights holders under relevant human rights instruments relevant to the functions of the public body are also included.

**WCC purpose** is social, economic, and community development, with **functions** of: human resources, corporate services, housing, arts/culture/libraries, roads and transportation, planning, environment, community, integration and enterprise.

This is an assessment of the equality and human rights issues facing the identified groups for the Duty, undertaken to enable Wexford County Council to effectively implement the Duty**. It is not an evaluation of Wexford County Council or its current actions to eliminate discrimination, promote equality and protect human rights**.

The equality and human rights issues identified below relate to all of the identified groups unless otherwise indicated. In some instances, specific examples are given for particular groups where national data indicate: a unique experience for that group in regard to the issue(s); or that the group(s) experience a significant or persistent inequality or discrimination or human rights violations for the issue(s).

**2. Assessment of Equality and Human Rights Issues**

Overall, there is a need to take account of and address the systemic and structural issues of racism, ableism, sectarianism (islamophobia and anti-semitism), homophobia, transphobia, ageism, and sexism, in taking on to address the equality and human rights issues identified below.

**Situation**

The equality and human rights issues to be addressed in implementing the Duty, related to situation and relevant to the functions of Wexford County Council, are:

* Lack of housing, housing insecurity, housing deprivation, overcrowding and poor living environments across the identified groups. More specifically the data point to:
	+ High levels of housing disadvantage on the socio-economic status ground and for lone parents, Black and minority ethnic people including Roma and Travellers, and older people.
	+ Lack of provision of culturally appropriate accommodation for the Traveller community, including provision for Traveller nomadism.
	+ Disabled people confined to congregated settings for lack of alternative housing provision.
	+ Lack of age appropriate provision and supports to enable older people to retain personal independence and to ‘age in place’.
* Homelessness and hidden homelessness across the identified groups. More specifically the data point to:
	+ High levels of homelessness and hidden homelessness for young people (in particular for those in the care system or leaving the care system), Black and minority ethnic people including Roma and the Traveller community, disabled people, lone parents, and LGBTQI+ young people.
	+ Growing numbers of women and families in homeless services.
	+ Domestic violence as a causal factor for homelessness and for hidden homelessness for women and lone parents.
	+ People being required to leave direct provision accommodation centres once their status regularised but without accommodation options available to them.
* Unemployment, under-employment, lack of participation in employment, lack of onboarding processes, lack of apprenticeship opportunities, and lack of diversity in public sector staffing across the identified groups. More specifically the data point to:
	+ Low levels of employment among disabled people (31%) and in particular for people with hearing impairment and learning disabilities and people with mental health issues.
	+ Lower levels of employment for women than for men.
	+ Limited access to employment for older people.
	+ High levels of women and of lone parents in part-time work.
	+ Lack of access to informal networks to support employment and labour market progression, including for Travellers.
* Lack of progression in the workplace and promotion, across the identified groups. More specifically the data point to:
	+ Barriers in promotion across the identified groups, in particular women, disabled people, and young people.
	+ Low levels of women and lack of diversity in senior roles and in decision-making positions.
* Poverty in terms of being at risk of poverty and living in consistent poverty, and in terms of energy poverty, food poverty, in-work poverty, and cost of living issues, across the identified groups. More specifically the data point to:
	+ Area-based disadvantage and dispersed through other areas of the County.
	+ Poverty experienced on the socio-economic status ground alongside an intersectionality with poverty experienced across the other identified groups.
	+ Financial barriers to participation
	+ Failure to take account of and address the additional costs of disability.
	+ Women in low paid jobs and a gender pay gap and gender pension gap.
	+ Financial insecurity experienced by carers.
* Low levels of participation in sports and physical activity across the identified groups.
* Barriers to participating in and engaging with the arts experienced across the identified groups, as consumers and as producers.
* Lack of transport and accessible transport. More specifically the data point to:
	+ Barriers for older people and for disabled people.
* Lack of childcare, and high cost of childcare.
* Lack of home care and community care services for older people.
* Lack of respite services for carers.
* Digital inequality with digital exclusion in terms of connectivity and access to devices and digital constraints in terms of skills levels, across the identified groups. More specifically the data point to:
	+ Significant barriers for Travellers, disabled people, and older people.
* Lack of provision required for independent living with lack of appropriate supports required for self-determination.
* Lack of political participation and political representation across the identified groups. More specifically the data point to:
	+ Barriers to voter registration among Black and minority ethnic people.
	+ Low levels of political representation for women and minority groups at local authority level.
* Lack of voice in terms of lack of: presence on board and committees; channels to engage in and influence decision-making; and participation in consultations, across the identified groups. More specifically the data point to:
	+ Gender imbalance and lack of diversity on structures.
	+ Lack of awareness and information for disabled people in relation to assisted decision-making.
* Lack of steps to enable advocacy and representation by civil society organisations, across the identified groups, in a context where funding directs and confines them to service provision roles.
* Lack of effective access to awards and funding opportunities. More specifically the data point to:
	+ Issues of securing funding for the identified groups in the arts and culture field.
* Isolation. More specifically the data point to:
	+ Issues of rural isolation.
	+ Issues for older people and disabled people.
* Lack of or inadequate inter-agency coordination and collaboration.

**Experience**

The equality and human rights issues to be addressed in implementing the Duty, related to experience and relevant to the functions of Wexford County Council, are:

* Stereotyping, bias, false assumptions, beliefs in superiority of one culture over others, and generalisations made about people from across the identified groups.
* Discrimination, individual and systemic, in seeking work, in the workplace, in accessing public and private sector services, pregnancy-related, and in accessing housing, across the identified groups.
* Sexual harassment at work and in accessing services, experienced in particular by women.
* Harassment and microaggressions at work and in accessing services experienced across the identified groups.
* Community divisions on the basis of diversity and lack of interaction, where majority populations express discomfort in living alongside specific groups, in particular Black and minority ethnic people including Travellers, and people with mental health issues.
* Workplace divisions on the basis of diversity, where majority population staff express discomfort in working alongside staff from specific groups.
* Hate speech, the rise of anti-immigrant and anti-trans discourses in the public domain, and spread of misinformation about the identified groups.
* People from across the identified groups feeling unsafe in the public realm.
* Invisibility for diversity and people hiding their identity in the workspace and public spaces for fear of discrimination or harassment. More specifically the data point to:
	+ Travellers and LGBTI people feeling they have to hide their identity at work.
	+ Failure to create work and service provision environments that are welcoming to and safe for diversity across the identified groups.
* Issues of segregation and lack of access to mainstream provision.
* Issues of low self-esteem, lack of confidence and fear of dealing with public bodies as a result of experiences of discrimination and harassment.
* High levels of under-reporting of discrimination, sexual harassment and harassment, fear of reporting, and lack of knowledge of rights, across the identified groups.
* Lack of adequate procedures within organisations to address complaints and to support complainants, and failure to appropriately implement procedures when they are in place.

**Identity**

The equality and human rights issues to be addressed in implementing the Duty, related to identity and relevant to the functions of Wexford County Council, are:

* Lack of flexibility and adaptation in service provision to respond to diversity and specific needs across the identified groups. More specifically the data point to:
	+ Failure to take account cultural difference in provision for Black and minority ethnic groups including Travellers and Roma.
	+ Barriers for disabled people and failure to make reasonable accommodation for disabled service-users.
	+ Failure to make reasonable accommodation for specific needs in the provision of housing and accommodation, in particular for disabled people, older people, Travellers, and women experiencing domestic violence or gender-based violence.
	+ Barriers to access due to caring responsibilities.
* Lack of flexibility and adaptation in the workplace to take account of diversity and the specific needs across the identified groups. More specifically the data point to:
	+ Barriers for disabled people and failure to make reasonable accommodation for disabled employees
	+ Barriers for trans people when transitioning at work
	+ Barriers due to caring responsibilities and lack of flexible working arrangements and work-life balance policies in the workplace
* Inaccessible communication content and channels for the identified groups. More specifically the data point to:
	+ Lack of plain English.
	+ Lack of interpretation and translation.
	+ Failure to provide for ISL.
	+ Failure to take literacy barriers into account.
* Lack of universal design and inaccessible built environment, infrastructure, facilities, public realm, and IT systems.
* Lack of options and real choice for the identified groups. More specifically the data point to:
	+ Lack of information on options and lack of awareness of options.
	+ Lack of autonomy due to such as financial barriers and accommodation settings.
* Failure to support and enable the preservation, development and articulation of Black and minority ethnic, including Roma and Travellers, cultures.
* Failure to gather and analyse robust equality data across the identified groups.
* Lack of understanding of and response to intersectionality and the specific needs and cumulative disadvantage of those people who are members of more than one of the identified groups for the Duty.
* Lack of knowledge, awareness and experience within an organisation in responding to diversity and lack of training made available for staff.

**3. Evidence Book**

**A. National Policy Strategies**

**The** [National Disability Inclusion Strategy 2017-2022](https://www.gov.ie/pdf/?file=https://assets.gov.ie/162923/96990962-f41f-4844-b784-e9ccf8cbfa42.pdf#page=null) identifies issues of situation, experience, and identity for disabled people.

With regard to **situation:**

* 31% of disabled people are in paid employment compared with 71% of people without a disability being in employment
* 42% of disabled people live in a jobless household, at high risk of poverty

With regard to **experience:**

* Disabled people are more likely to live alone
* Disabled people living in congregated settings
* Lack of information and awareness among disabled people about their options for supported decision making
* Lack of training for staff working in sectors that interact with disabled people

With regard to **identity,**

* Access issues for disabled people in public buildings, public transport, IT systems used in service provision, and outdoor facilities, absence of universal design of built environment
* Lack of provision for Irish Sign Language users when accessing public services with free interpretation needed when accessing/availing of services\

**The** [Arts Council Equality, Diversity & Human Rights Strategy](https://www.artscouncil.ie/uploadedFiles/EHRD%20Policy%20English%20version%20Final.pdf) identifies issues of situation across the identified groups.

In relation to **situation**:

* There is a need to ensure recipients and beneficiaries of awards and funding programmes better reflect the population profile of contemporary Ireland, inclusive of the most disadvantaged groups.
* There is a need to ensure that boards, staff, advisers and panellists, best reflect and represent the diversity of contemporary Ireland.

In relation to **experience**:

* As evidenced by movements such as Waking the Feminists, Sounding the Feminists and Fair Plé, women artists across a range of artistic disciplines continue to encounter serious impediments to advancing their careers and repertoire in a way that equates with their male peers.
* The Arts Council are deeply aware that, within the arts in Ireland, many inequities still exist and that there is a substantial number of people who continue to experience barriers to engaging with and participating in the arts because of their socio-economic background, their ethnicity or religion, their sexual orientation or gender identity, their family status, their age, their membership of the Traveller Community, or through lack of accommodation of a disability.

**B. National Research**

**The** ESRI and IHREC 2017 ‘[Who Experiences Discrimination in Ireland](https://www.ihrec.ie/app/uploads/2017/11/Who-experiences-discrimination-in-Ireland-Report.pdf)’ report identifies issues of situation and experience across a number of the identified groups.

In relation to **situation**:

* Discrimination in recruitment may mean certain groups are systematically assigned lower quality jobs or remain unemployed. Discrimination in the workplace may lead to lower pay and promotions, lower job satisfaction and a higher risk of redundancy.
* The higher levels of discrimination found in housing when compared to other services signals, yet another negative consequence of the severe pressures associated with a housing stock that is inadequate to meet demand. In private services, being assigned poorer housing or failing to get a bank loan or mortgage may affect living conditions.
* Unfair treatment can have damaging effects on self-esteem, well-being and health.

In relation to **experience**:

* In 2014, 12 per cent of the population in Ireland reported experiencing some form of discrimination in the previous two years. Discrimination rates were highest in relation to seeking work (7 per cent), followed by the workplace (5 per cent), private services (5 per cent), and public services (3 per cent).
* Women report higher discrimination in the workplace than men, though we find no gender differences in other areas.
* Those with a disability experience higher rates of discrimination than those without a disability in all areas – in the workplace, while seeking work, in private services and public services
* Older workers (45–64 years) perceive more discrimination than younger workers in seeking work, but in private services, older adults experience less discrimination, particularly those aged 65 years and over.
* Compared to White Irish respondents, Black respondents report higher discrimination in the workplace, in public services and in private services. Asian respondents report more discrimination than White Irish in private services.
* In 2014, White Non-Irish do not differ from White Irish respondents in reported discrimination in any domain: the workplace, seeking work, or in relation to public or private services.
* Irish Travellers report very high rates of discrimination in seeking work, where they are ten times more likely than White Irish to experience discrimination, and extremely high rates of discrimination in private services, where they were over 22 times more likely to report discrimination, particularly in shops, pubs and restaurants. The number of Travellers among survey respondents was too low to examine workplace discrimination. Given the very low rate of employment among the Traveller population, these results suggest that discrimination may play a role in accounting for these differences, along with low levels of education and other factors.
* Compared to Catholics, members of minority religions report somewhat higher discrimination rates in the workplace and in public and private services.
* Never-married lone parents are more likely to experience discrimination in public and private services than single childless adults.
* The recent rise of far-right groups and growing support for anti-immigrant policies in Europe and the US highlight that civil rights for minority groups and freedom to live and work without threats of racist or sexist behaviour cannot be taken for granted.

**The** IHREC, 2018: [Discrimination and Inequality in Housing, IHREC & ESRI, 2018](https://www.ihrec.ie/app/uploads/2022/08/Discrimination-and-Inequality-in-Housing-in-Ireland..pdf) identifies issues of situation and experience across a number of the identified groups.

In relation to **situation**:

* The youngest individuals (under 30 years) are particularly disadvantaged. Young people are more likely to experience housing deprivation than the oldest age group. Young people are more likely to experience housing deprivation, to live in a neighbourhood with poor environmental conditions, and to live in an over-crowded household.
* Studies have shown that adverse housing circumstances are consistently associated with membership of a minority ethnic group. Non-Irish nationals are substantially more at risk of living in over-crowded conditions. Roma Community across the island of Ireland has identified extremely high levels of housing deprivation and over-crowding- 40% of respondents lacked hot water and 66 per cent could not afford adequate heating.
* Fifty-six per cent of Travellers were faced with over-crowding compared to just 9 per cent of the non-Traveller Community. Only 45 per cent of Travellers in the Republic of Ireland had access to drinking water, 33 per cent reported problems with rats in their immediate surroundings, and 45 per cent said that they lacked access to a main road. Over one-in-three Travellers reported living in ‘very unhealthy’ and ‘very unsafe’ homes.
* Those with a disability are 1.7 times more likely to experience housing deprivation and likely to be living in an area with environmental problems than those without a disability. Individuals with a disability are 1.4 times more likely to be living in over-crowded households.
* Socio-economic status, proxied by household income, is also strongly associated with housing deprivation, environmental deprivation and over-crowding. There is a negative linear relationship between housing income position and the experience of over-crowding, with people on the bottom income quintile four times more likely than those in the top quintile to live in such accommodation. Those who receive Rent Supplement are twice (1.96) as likely to be living in over-crowded conditions and more likely to experience housing deprivation as those who do not.
* Lone parents, who are predominantly female, experience higher levels of housing deprivation and environmental deprivation. Lone parents living in multi-generational households are likely to be at a greater risk of over-crowding.
* Females are more likely than males to experience environmental deprivation (crime/ vandalism/ pollution/ grime) but are less likely to be homeless.
* Age is associated with homelessness- the most at-risk groups are young adults, in particular men aged 20-39, and very young children (aged 0-4).
* Black people, compose 11 per cent of the homeless. African migrants are over-represented among the homeless. 6% of the Roma population in Ireland is homeless, and almost 45 per cent has previous experience of homelessness.
* Members of the Traveller Community are the most at risk of being homeless – while they represent less than 1 per cent of the Irish population they make up 9 per cent of the homeless population.
* The prevalence of disability is twice as high among the homeless as among the population in general. In addition, while people with a disability represent about 13 per cent of the Irish population, they make up 27 per cent of homeless people.
* Lone parents are a particularly disadvantaged group. 60% of homeless family units are lone mother families.
* Three major religious communities – Protestants, Muslims and Orthodox Christians – are more at risk of homelessness.
* There are a number of restrictions in place to limit provision of social housing to non-Irish nationals.
* Only 24 per cent of Traveller households had access to the internet compared to 82 per cent of non-Traveller households.

In relation to **experience**:

* Lone parents, who are predominantly female, experience higher levels of discrimination in access to housing. Lone parents are 2.4 times as likely to report discrimination in access to housing.
* People with a disability experience high risks of discrimination and are more than twice as likely as people without a disability to report discrimination in access to housing.
* Travellers are almost ten times as likely to report discrimination in access to housing as the White Irish population, even after education and labour market status are held constant.
* Our results show that people with lower socio-economic backgrounds, i.e. low-educated and unemployed individuals, are more likely to experience discrimination in access to housing.
* Black respondents were five times as likely as White respondents to report discrimination. Similarly, people of ‘other ethnicity’ are 1.7 times more likely to be discriminated against as the White Irish group.
* Age is strongly and negatively associated with discrimination, the youngest group (18-34) are six times more likely to report housing discrimination compared to the oldest group (65 years old or older).
* Irish people are least comfortable with sharing a community with Travellers, with an average comfort score of 7.5 out of 10, followed by people with mental health difficulties, and people from Black and minority ethnic backgrounds, at 8.8 each.

**The** CSO [Women and Men in Ireland](https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-wamii/womenandmeninireland2019/education/) 2019 report identifies issues of situation for women.

In relation to **situation**:

* Men have a higher employment rate (75%) than women (64%) in Ireland.
* On average female employees were paid 14.4% an hour less than male employees in 2017.
* In 2019, women held just 26% of senior roles in large Irish enterprises. They occupied just 11.5% of CEO positions, 28.3% of Senior Executive roles, 19.6% of Board of Director positions, and 7.4% of Chairperson roles.
* In 2019, men out-numbered women in all regional decision-making structures in Ireland. Regional Assembly members had a female membership of just 17.5% and 23.9% for Local Authority members.
* In 2017, the Arts Council awarded 698 grants to artists. Women represented more than half (56%) of recipients. The average grant awarded by the Arts Council to men was €13,155 compared with €10,800 for women. Grants of €15,000 or over were awarded to 46% of men and 32% of women.

**The** Central Statistics Office: [Equality and Discrimination](https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/er/ed/equalityanddiscrimination2019/) release July 2019 identifies issues of situation and experience across a number of the identified groups.

In relation to **situation**:

* CSO data for 2019 indicate that irrespective of their knowledge of their rights, just 3% of persons who experienced discrimination made an official complaint (such as to the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (IHREC), Workplace Relations Commission (WRC), Residential Tenancies Board (RTB), Garda Síochána Ombudsman Commission (GSOC), etc.) or took legal action.

In relation to **experience**:

* CSO data from 2019 indicates that while similar numbers of males and females experienced discrimination while looking for work, women are twice as likely as men to report that they had experienced workplace discrimination in the previous two years (7.3% vs 4.6%). For women who experienced in-work discrimination, the types of discrimination/relevant issues were (in order of prominence) harassment or bullying (34.3%), work conditions (19.4%) and promotion (17.2%). For men who experienced in-work discrimination, the types of discrimination experienced were (in order of prominence) harassment or bullying (30.4%); promotion (21.6%).
* CSO data from 2019 indicates the following: 4% of people aged 18-24 reported that they had experienced age-related discrimination in the workplace, in the previous two years, and 4.9% had experienced such discrimination while looking for work; and Comparing different age groups, those aged 18 to 24 years experienced the highest levels of discrimination in accessing accommodation (5.6%), when compared with those aged 45 to 64 (1.7%) and those aged 65+ (.5%).
* CSO data from 2019 indicates that 24% of adults with a disability reported discrimination compared to 16.7% of non-disabled adults: 18% of persons with a disability had experienced discrimination accessing services and 12.3% experienced employment-related discrimination.
* CSO data from 2019 indicates that: non-Irish nationals were twice as likely to have experienced discrimination in the workplace, and when seeking work, in the previous two years, compared to Irish nationals (9% vs 5%) and (8% vs 4%); People with an Asian, Black ethnicity were more than three times more likely to have experienced discrimination in the workplace, and more than twice as likely to experience discrimination when seeking work, than those with a white ethnicity (17% vs 5%) and (11% vs 4.5%); and Of people in Ireland who have experienced in-work discrimination in the previous two years, the Race ground is the third most common ground cited (22.6%) for this type of discrimination.
* CSO data from 2019 indicate that LGBTI people were almost twice as likely as non-LGBTI people, to have experienced discrimination in the workplace and when seeking work, in the previous two years: (11% vs 6%) and (8% vs 5%).
* CSO data for 2019 indicate that 1 in 5 (20%) of unemployed persons experienced discrimination while looking for work in the previous two years.

**The** Central Statistics Office: [Survey on Income and Living Conditions](https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-silc/surveyonincomeandlivingconditionssilc2022/keyfindings/) (SILC). 2022identifies issues of situation across a number of the identified groups.

In relation to **situation**:

* 2022 CSO data indicates the following: 13% of the population are at risk of poverty (an increase of 2% from 2021) and 5.3% of people were living in consistent poverty (up from 4% in 2021); 1 in 3 unemployed persons are at risk of poverty; 17.7% of the population were defined as living in enforced deprivation, i.e. experienced two or more of the eleven types of deprivation (compared with 13.8% in 2021).
* 2022 CSO data indicates that 19% of people aged 65 and over in Ireland are at risk of poverty (up significantly from 11.9% in 2021)

**The** CSO Census of population 2016: [Profile 8 Irish Travellers](https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-cp8iter/p8iter/p8itseah/) identifies issues of situation and identity for Travellers.

In relation to **situation**:

* Census 2016 data indicate: 45% of Traveller households are renting from a local authority; 21% are renting from a voluntary housing body; 21% are in private rented housing; 20% own their own home outright or have a mortgage; and 12% live in a trailer/mobile home (Census 2016 indicates an increase in the numbers of Travellers residing in a trailer/mobile home between 2011 and 2016).
* Census 2016 data indicate that 60% of Traveller households are without internet access.

In relation to **identity**:

* Census 2016 indicates that almost 1 in 5 (19%) of Travellers have a disability (this is an increase from Census 2011 (17.5%).

**The** ESRI and IHREC report (July 2019) [Caring and Unpaid Work in Ireland](https://www.ihrec.ie/app/uploads/2019/07/Caring-and-Unpaid-Work-in-Ireland_Final.pdf) by Russell, H., Grotti, R., McGinnity, F., and Privalko, I., identifies issues of situation and identity for carers.

In relation to **situation**:

* Data on unpaid ‘caring’ (defined as childcare, care of older adults or those with a disability, and housework) found that:
* 45% of women and 29% of men provide care for others on a daily basis (childcare and/or adult care). Overall, 55% of those regularly providing care are in employment: 45% in the case of women and 72% in the case of men.
* supports for caring are comparatively low; combining paid work and caring remains challenging; and policies to encourage men to take on caring responsibilities are underdeveloped.
* Caring responsibilities are a key component of gender inequality in the labour market, in terms of access to employment, hours of work, promotion prospects, wages and working conditions.
* Employer policies are crucial in allowing individuals to combine work and care; previous research has shown that men’s access to flexible working arrangements is low.

In relation to **identity**:

* Gendered allocation of unpaid work (caring, housework and other work in the home) is a key component to gender inequality for women, in employment, pay, poverty and lifetime income.
* While time on housework is related to hours of employment for both women and men, at each level of paid work, women do significantly more housework than men.

**The** Oireachtas, 2017: [Report of the Joint Committee on Social Protection on the Position of Lone Parents](https://data.oireachtas.ie/ie/oireachtas/committee/dail/32/joint_committee_on_social_protection/reports/2017/2017-06-15_report-on-the-position-of-lone-parents-in-ireland_en.pdf) identifies issues of situation and identity for lone parents.

In relation to **situation**:

* Unemployment has remained consistently higher for lone parents than for parents in couples. Of lone parents, 14.4 per cent were unemployed compared with 11.8 per cent of couples. Only 42.5 per cent of lone parents were in employment, compared with 69.3 per cent for heads of two-parent families.
* Lone parents undertake a higher proportion of part- time work when compared to parents in couples. With lone parents having a proportion above 50% part-time work consistently since 2006.
* One parent families have the highest consistent poverty of 26.2% rate of any group in Irish society. Lone parents suffer higher rates of deprivation at 57.9% compared to 25.5% in the general population. Children in one-parent families are three times as likely (26.2%) to live in ‘consistent poverty’ than families with two adults with one to three children (7.7%).
* Accessible, affordable and high-quality childcare is central to enable those with children, in particular lone parents, to achieve their full potential and for the wellbeing of families.
* Domestic violence is a causal factor in homelessness for lone parent families. In a study carried out by Focus Ireland, 11 of 70 lone parent respondents cited domestic violence as the main cause of their current homelessness, and a further five reported that domestic violence had been a factor in reducing their housing stability in the past

In relation to **identity:**

* Lone parents devote more of their time to caring responsibilities which impinge on their availability for work.
* 86.4% of lone parents were female and 13.6% were male.

**The** National Disability Authority (June 2023) [Final Review of Progress on Indicators of the National Disability Inclusion Strategy](https://nda.ie/publications/mid-term-review-of-progress-under-the-national-disability-inclusion-strategy-indicators) identifies issues of situation, experience and identity for disabled people.

In relation to **situation**:

* The disability employment gap increased from 39.8% to 41.3% between 2014 and 2021.
* The proportion of apprentices with a disability is only 2.7%.
* A study commissioned by the Department of Social protection (2021) examined the additional costs of disability and highlights there is an annual average additional cost of disability ranging from €11,734 to €16,284, depending on a persons’ degree of limitation.
* Poverty rates for persons who self-report a disability are among the highest in Europe. People with disabilities report higher rates of consistent poverty compared to non-disabled people.
* The transition of people living in congregated settings to the community remains behind target partially accounted for by the lack of housing supply.
* The number of households with a person with a disability requiring social housing has reduced in recent years. However, the reductions in overall social housing waiting list numbers have been far greater. This has resulted in an increase in the share of households with a social housing need that have a person with disability.
* People with disabilities report less participation in physical activity compared to non-disabled people.

In relation to **experience**:

* The most recent data examining discrimination and people with disabilities is the CSO’s 2019 Equality and Discrimination survey conducted as part of the General Household Survey. This study found that 24.1% of adults with a disability reported discrimination compared to 16.7% of those without. 18.3% of persons with a disability reported they had experienced discrimination accessing services compared to 10.9% of persons without a disability. This gap was narrower when considering workplace discrimination, with 12.3% of adults with a disability experiencing discrimination in the workplace and/or while looking for work compared to 9.0% of those without a disability.

In relation to **identity**:

* Having more robust equality data will benefit the disability sector.
* There are gaps in the operationalisation of the ISL Act and in knowledge and understanding of the responsibilities of public bodies under the Act.
* As the National Monitoring Body for the EU Web Accessibility Directive, the NDA reviewed a range of public sector websites and mobile applications. The reviews conducted demonstrated that there is large variance in levels of compliance with the Directive across public sector websites and mobile apps in Ireland

**The** **2018** report [Disability and Discrimination in Ireland, IHREC & ESRI, 2018](https://www.ihrec.ie/app/uploads/2018/09/Disability-and-Discrimination.pdf) identifies issues of situation and experience for disabled people.

In relation to **situation**:

* The labour market participation of people with disabilities remains far lower than participation rates in the general population, even when controlling for age and other personal characteristics. For those aged 15 and over, 22 per cent of people with a disability were at work compared with more than half, (53 per cent) of the overall population.
* People with disabilities are over 1.6 times more likely to live in poor housing or neighbourhood conditions (e.g. leaking roof, damp walls, no central heating, crime/vandalism in the area, etc.).

In relation to **experience**:

* People with disabilities are among the most likely of all minority groups to experience discrimination.
* When people with disabilities are looking for work, or in the workplace, the odds of experiencing work-related discrimination was twice as high compared to those without disabilities.
* People with disabilities were three times more likely to experience discrimination by public services compared to those without disabilities.
* People with disabilities are more than twice as likely to report discrimination related to housing.
* The experience of discrimination varies by disability type, with blindness having the greatest risk of discrimination, followed by psychological/emotional conditions.
* The majority of people with disabilities are afraid to report discrimination.

**The** 2015 report [Educational and Employment Experiences of People with a Disability in Ireland:](https://www.esri.ie/publications/educational-and-employment-experiences-of-people-with-a-disability-in-ireland-an) an analysis of the National Disability Survey by Watson, D., Banks, J., and Lyons, S. of ESRI, identifies issues of situation for people with disability.

In relation to **situation**:

* Only 29% of working age disabled people who had early onset disability, were in employment. Young adults with a disability more likely to be in employment: 43% of those aged 18-34 vs 21% aged 45+.Of those not in work, 47% would be Interested In a job if circumstances were right. 85% were equally likely to be in employment at some point and also have left employment because of disability.
* People with hearing disability and those with learning disability most likely to be employed and employment was lowest for people with mobility, dexterity, pain disability and emotional, psychological and mental health disabilities.
* The level of difficulties connected with the disability Is significantly associated both with being in employment. Those whose disability caused a moderate level of difficulty = 43 % in employment compared with 22% of those whose disability caused a lot of difficulty and 16% who cannot do certain things.
* Barriers to participation in employment: lack of reasonable accommodation to address specific needs (e.g. aids/ technology; flexible work arrangements etc.); fear of losing needed social protection benefits; for some disabled people, the main barrier was getting first job; some had to leave employment because of impact of disability.

**The** [National Disability Authority (NDA) (2017) National Survey of Public Attitudes to Disability in Ireland](https://nda.ie/publications/2017-public-attitudes-to-disability-in-ireland-survey) identifies issues of situation and experience for disabled people.

In relation to **situation**:

* Respondents with a disability were significantly less likely to access the internet (66% vs. 88%) or own a mobile phone (85% vs. 96%) although mobile phone ownership was high overall.
* 32% of people with a disability are at risk of being socially isolated versus 22% of people without a disability.

In relation to **experience**:

* 36% of respondents agreed that ‘people with disabilities are treated fairly in Irish society. 18% of respondents believed that people with disabilities receive equal opportunities in terms of employment.
* Respondents reported highest comfort levels for working with people with physical disabilities (8.9 out of 10). Respondents reported lowest comfort levels for working with people with mental health difficulties (8.2 out of 10).
* Comfort levels working with people with disabilities were slightly lower compared to other minority groups apart from Travellers.
* Highest comfort levels were for living close to people with physical disabilities or vision and hearing disabilities (9.3 out of 10), and lowest comfort levels were for living close to people with mental health difficulties (8.8 out of 10).

**The** National Youth Council of Ireland (2024). [State of our Nation: A report into the lives of Irish 18-29 year-olds](https://www.youth.ie/documents/state-of-our-young-nation-a-report-into-the-lives-of-irish-18-29-year-olds/) identifies issues of situation and identity for young people.

In relation to **situation**:

* There is general dissatisfaction felt amongst young people in Ireland in relation to their ‘current home’. The challenges that young people in Ireland face regarding housing even appears to be a trigger for some to shift their focus away from Ireland, putting emigration on the map as an option. 52% of 18 to 29-year-olds live with their parents/ family with this figure being highly correlated to age; reaching 74% among 18 to 22-year-olds, 45% amongst 23 to 26-year-olds, and 26% amongst 27 to 29-year-olds. 34% of 18 to 29-year-olds have never moved out of home, with the highest amongst 18 to 22-year-olds for whom 52% have never moved out of home. Participants who were in the process of building cabins at the end of their family home. 31% of young people wished for more affordable housing.
* 17% state unemployment as a key issue. In particular, 18 to 22-year-olds appear to be more concerned about unemployment.
* Only the assessment of ‘relationships with your work colleagues’ reached over 60% satisfaction, with the most critical assessments related to: ‘your benefits’ (49% satisfaction), ‘your salary/ pay’ (46% satisfaction) and particularly ‘opportunities for promotion’ (43% satisfaction).
* The cost of living is having a significant impact on this generation. In terms of the daily spending, 1 in 4 (25%) are having at least some ‘difficulty coping’ with rising prices, with 43% outlining that they are ‘somewhat coping’.

In relation to **identity**:

* Compared with young men, young women reported worse mental and financial wellbeing, lower satisfaction with pay and conditions, were coping worse with the cost-of-living, are more likely to have made cutbacks in spending and to feel they are worse off than their parents’ generation.
* Concern about unemployment also peaks amongst ‘non-white’ young people in Ireland, with 26% outlining unemployment as a key issue.
* Young people with a disability tend to be more dissatisfied with ‘promotion opportunities’ in their workplace; 70% are dissatisfied with this compared to average of 57%.

**The** Pavee Point & Department of Justice and Equality (2018). [Roma in Ireland: A national needs assessment](https://www.paveepoint.ie/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/RNA-PDF.pdf) identifies issues of situation, experience and identity for Roma.

In relation to **situation**:

* Only 16.7% of working age Roma were in employment, with a number of barriers to their ability to access employment such as: high levels of discrimination; language and literacy barriers; denied a PPS Number (20% of respondents reported that they did not have a PPS number).
* Many Roma are living in situations of extreme deprivation and hardship, including: 45% living in overcrowded conditions; sub-standard accommodation (12.4% did not have a kitchen, 9.6% did not have a cooker, and 13.5% did not have a fridge).
* 46% of Roma have been homeless at some stage. Application of the Habitual Residency Condition and interpretation by local authorities of the Departmental Circular 41/2012, prevents Roma accessing state-funded supports and homeless services/accommodation.

In relation to **experience**:

* Roma community experience very high levels of discrimination, racism, and social exclusion. The highest rates of perceived discrimination were reported in accessing accommodation (93%) and social protection (84.3%).

In relation to **identity**:

* Many Roma adults have literacy issues in their mother tongue as well as a lack of knowledge of English. Lack of access to Interpreters when accessing these services. The research shows a low proportion of respondents are accessing professional interpreters, with the majority of respondents relying on friends and children to interpret for them.

**The** Pavee Point Traveller and Roma Centre (October 2021) [The Traveller Community and Homelessness: Advocacy Paper](https://www.paveepoint.ie/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/Pavee-Point-Traveller-Homelessness-Advocacy-Paper-Oct2021.pdf)identifies issues of situation, experience and identity across a number of the identified groups.

In relation to **situation**:

* The 2018 Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission report, Discrimination and Inequality in Housing in Ireland states that ‘members of the Traveller Community are the most at risk of being homeless’.
* According to census 2016, in a 5-year period, there was a 12% increase in the numbers of Travellers living in temporary accommodation, and Travellers were seven times more likely than the general population, to be living in over-crowded dwellings.
* Lack of delivery of Traveller-specific accommodation coupled with the lack of provision for affordable housing /over-reliance on the private sector was effectively pushing Traveller families into homelessness.
* Despite a slow increase in the Traveller accommodation budget, a significant portion of Traveller accommodation budgets remain unspent by Local Authorities every year.
* Among the pathways, factors and reasons for the disproportionate number of Travellers experiencing homelessness, research to date and the work of Pavee Point has highlighted and indicated the impacts of site evictions.
* CBL system is completely inappropriate and inaccessible for the majority of Travellers, greatly reducing their chances of securing Local Authority accommodation, given digital inequality and educational disadvantage.

In relation to **experience**:

* The 2018 Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission report found that Travellers experienced the highest levels of racism and discrimination in relation to accommodation, with Travellers almost ten times as likely to report discrimination in access to housing as the general population, even after education and employment status are held constant.
* Among the pathways, factors and reasons for the disproportionate number of Travellers experiencing homelessness, research to date and the work of Pavee Point has highlighted and indicated the impacts of racism and discrimination.

In relation to **identity**:

* Among pathways, factors and reasons for the disproportionate number of Travellers experiencing homelessness, research to date and the work of Pavee Point has highlighted and indicated the impacts of lack of culturally appropriate accommodation and lack of accommodation for larger family sizes.
* Currently units for social housing tend to be two or three bed units, as far more of this unit type are available on the property market. This often excludes Traveller families from accessing suitable accommodation due to larger family sizes.
* Gaps in equality data, and need for ethnic equality monitoring, including the introduction of a standardised ethnic identifier in line with the census.

**The** 2017 report [A Social Portrait of Travellers in Ireland](https://www.esri.ie/publications/a-social-portrait-of-travellers-in-ireland), by Watson D., Kenny O., & McGinnity F. of ESRI. identifies issues of situation and identity for Travellers.

In relation to **situation**:

* The labour market participation rate was 61% for Travellers and 79% per cent for non-Travellers; just 11% of Travellers were in employment, compared to 66% of non-Travellers and Travellers were more likely to be engaged in home duties than non-Travellers (24% vs 10%). The main difference between Travellers and non-Travellers in employment terms is their very high levels of unemployment.
* Travellers living in trailers/mobile homes experience more severe living conditions: they are more likely to lack central heating (13%), piped water (19%) and sewerage facilities (29%), and to be experiencing overcrowding (84%).
* 53% of Travellers living in standard accommodation experience overcrowding and 74% lack internet access (rising to 91% for Travellers living in a trailer/mobile home).

In relation to **experience**:

* Travellers face exceptionally strong levels of prejudice.
* Other barriers that operate within the labour market include direct discrimination and generalised prejudice.

In relation to **identity**:

* 12% of Travellers were unable to work due to illness or disability (compared to 5% of non-Travellers)

**The** research by Mullen, R., Kelly, B., and Crowley, N. (2021) [Mincéir Misl’er a Tom Tober – Travellers in the Mainstream Labour Market: Situation, Experience and Identity](https://www.ssgt.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/SSGT_Travellers_in_the_Mainstream_Labour_Market-FINAL-to-print.pdf), St Stephens Green Trust, identifies issues of situation and experience for Travellers.

In relation to **situation**:

* An identified barrier to Travellers access to employment is a lack of family and community networks and connectors to get a foothold into employment. Such networks and connectors are more readily available to non-Travellers.

In relation to **experience**:

* Travellers often feel compelled to hide their ethnic identity in the workplace and in schools and colleges, due to fears of racism, discrimination and social exclusion.
* Travellers in employment report experiencing microaggressions as well as more direct identity-based harassment by other colleagues in the workplace.

**The** Age Action Ireland (2022): [Reframing Ageing: the State of Ageing in Ireland 2022](https://www.ageaction.ie/sites/default/files/reframing_ageing_state_of_ageing_in_ireland_2022_published.pdf) report identifies issues of situation, experience and identity for older people.

In relation to **situation**:

* Ageism in the labour market makes it hard for older people to access work. A person in their 60s who is unemployed is more likely than not to be long-term unemployed. Most people in their 70s are not in paid work. Some persons in their 80s are economically active, involved in voluntary activities, and/or on boards of management.
* More than one in ten people in their 70s provides care work on a regular basis.
* The average income of older persons tends to decline over time, reflecting fewer people working or being otherwise economically active. There is effectively nothing individuals can any longer do if their income from all sources is insufficient to keep them from poverty. More than a sixth (17.3%) of older people are at risk of poverty or social exclusion.
* At least 48% of older persons do not have adequate housing, as defined by the UN standard. The largest issue is that half of older persons’ homes have a Building Energy Rating of E, F or G.
* Housing costs are an issue, especially for people renting in the private sector in their 60s.
* An estimated 20% of older person households cannot afford maintenance or repairs in their home. Age Action estimates that at least 10% of households cannot afford adaptation of their home to increase accessibility for a person with a disability or impairment.
* More than one in eight persons aged 65+ (13.3%) live “in a dwelling with a leaking roof, damp walls, floors or foundation, or rot in window frames or floor”
* Many older people in their 70s are struggling with how to meet capital costs such as home repairs, home insulation, or a replacement car.
* Two-thirds (65%) of all persons aged 65 or older are either not using the internet or have below basic digital skills. Digital exclusion - Assisted digital supports should not be used to create relationships of dependency where people accessing public services lose their privacy or autonomy. Offline alternatives to digital public services should be adequately staffed and clearly visible.
* Transportation issues may arise where older people cannot drive independently due to ill health or are unable to maintain a car.
* Energy poverty and food poverty are issues for some older people who do not have access to proper financial resources.
* Older people value access to nature for walking and other leisure pursuits, which are also shown to have health benefits. All local authorities and other public agencies controlling accessible land should have a duty to ensure that older persons have equitable access to these facilities

In relation to **experience**:

* Ageist stereotypes persist in society. Many people and institutions wrongly assume that the number of years a person has lived can reliably predict their health status, preferences, ambitions or capabilities. Older persons are highly diverse in their capacities and circumstances. We should use more appropriate ways of measuring or predicting a person’s capabilities that don’t rely on age.
* Most Irish people will be healthy and active well into our seventies and eighties. However, many of us face unjust barriers and discrimination that can limit our ability to age healthily and independently.
* Almost all those in their 70s want to “age in place” in the communities where they have built their lives. Retaining personal independence and avoiding abuse becomes a concern for many in their 80s, including independent living at home or maintaining autonomy in a care setting. At age 80, 6.2% of older persons are living in a residential care setting such as a nursing home or hospital. At 89 years of age, 22.4% are in such communal establishments. The majority of people in their 90s still live at home.
* There is also a greater proportion in their 80s who experience poor health, frailty, disability or impairment at this age, and the intensity of care needs increases. A greater proportion of people in their 80s have care needs, including the need for professional home care or residential care.

In relation to **identity**:

* Older women are more at risk of poverty than older men.
* The incidence of disability steeply rises, from 25% of 70-year-olds to 43% of 79-year-olds.
* Absence of universal design of built environment and communication channels.

**The** IHREC (2017) [Submission to the Citizens Assembly on: How we respond to the challenges and opportunities of an ageing population](https://www.ihrec.ie/app/uploads/2017/05/Submission-to-the-Citizens-Assembly-in-its-consideration-of-How-we-respond-to-the-challenges-and-opportunities-of-an-ageing-population-19-May-2017-003.pdf) identifies issues of situation and experience for older people.

In relation to **situation**:

* In 2014 the age at which the State pensions are, in practice, paid was increased from 65 to 66, and will increase to 67 in 2021 and 68 in 2028. The law does not adequately protect workers from compulsory retirement at an age before they are entitled to receive a State pension.
* Access to the State Pension (Non-Contributory) is subject to the habitual residence condition, which also applies to returning Irish emigrant.
* Home and community-care services remain under-developed in some Western European countries, including Ireland.
* Access to information (in particular online) is a key barrier to older people’s access to services.
* Women tend to live longer than men, and, therefore, more older women than men live alone. Living alone can lead to social exclusion and isolation, particularly for older people living in rural areas.

In relation to **experience**:

* 3 in 10 older people said they felt unsafe walking in their local area at night, … older people who live in an unsafe environment, or in areas with many physical barriers, are less likely to get out, and therefore can be more prone to isolation, depression, reduced fitness and increased mobility problems.
* In 2013 the National Positive Ageing Strategy reported that the prevalence of elder abuse in Ireland was 2.2% but may be greater than reported.

**The** 2018 ESRI and IHREC report by McGinnity, F., Grotti, R., Russell, H., and Fahey, E., [Attitudes to Diversity in Ireland](https://www.ihrec.ie/app/uploads/2018/03/Attitudes-to-diversity-in-Ireland.pdf) identifies issues of experience across the identified groups.

In relation to **experience**:

* While 58 per cent of Irish-born people report they would allow many or some immigrants from members of the same ethnic group as most Irish people to come to Ireland, the equivalent figures for Muslim and Roma migrants are 41 per cent and 25 per cent respectively.
* Just under half of adults born in Ireland believe some cultures to be superior to others, and 45 per cent that some races/ethnic groups were born harder working. A much lower proportion, 17 per cent, believes that some races/ethnic groups were born less intelligent.
* Negative social contact was linked to more negative attitudes to the effects of immigration and was more negative as contact became more frequent.

**The** GLEN, BeLonGTo. (2016). [The LBGTIreland Report: national study of the mental health and wellbeing of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex people in Ireland](https://www.belongto.org/app/uploads/2023/07/lgbt-ireland-pdf.pdf), GLEN, BeLonGTo, TCD and the HSE, 2016 identifies issues of experience for LGBTI people.

In relation to **experience**:

* In one study, transgender and intersex people report:
	+ Negative experiences and bullying (in the workplace) related to their gender identity, was higher for transgender and intersex people (than for lesbian, gay and bisexual respondents): 24% and 36% respectively.
	+ 25% of intersex respondents and 12.5% of transgender respondents skipped work in order to avoid negative treatment due to their TI identity. 9.4% of transgender participants reported leaving employment due to negative treatment about their gender identity, from colleagues.
	+ Transgender participants reported the highest incidence of self-harm among LGBT respondents (49%).
	+ Transgender people were more risk of discrimination, victimization, and internalized stigma, than LGB respondents.
* Almost half of the transgender respondents in one Irish study, said they would feel unsafe or very unsafe to express their gender identity publicly
* In a study on the mental health and wellbeing of LGBTI people:
* 75.2% reported that over their lifetime they had experienced being verbally hurt, with approximately one fifth of participants having experienced physical attacks due to being LGBTI. Gay males reported the highest incidence of being physically attacked (29.3%)
* 53% felt unsafe or very unsafe when showing public affection.
* 21% had witnessed LGBTI bullying at work and 17% reported negative experiences and bullying, in work, related to their LGBTI identity. 6% reported that they missed or skipped work to avoid receiving negative treatment due to being LGBTI. 13% considered leaving work and 4.5% did leave employment due to negative treatment.
* Findings in one suggest that there may be misinformation in the public domain about sexual orientation and gender identity.

**The** Focus Ireland and BelongTo (2020) [A Qualitative Study of LGBTIQ+ Youth Homelessness in Ireland](https://www.focusireland.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/LGBTQI-Youth-Homelessness-Report_FINAL-VERSION.pdf) by Quilty, A. and Norris, M., identifies issues of situation, experience and identity across a number of the identified groups.

In relation to **situation**:

* There is a strong consensus in the international research that LGBTQI+ youth face significant risks of homelessness and are overrepresented in the population of homeless young people.
* While triggers of LGBTQI+ youth homelessness are common to the entire youth homeless population, there are triggers of homelessness that are specific to LGBTQI+ youth, such as coming out and/or transitioning (there was significant evidence to link the process/act of coming out within intimate family spheres with subsequent homelessness).
* LGBTQI+ young people living in rural areas and from some minority ethnic and religious backgrounds are at particularly high risk of becoming homeless when they come out or transition.
* There is likely to be a significant cohort of young LGBTQI+ people living without a permanent home and surviving by sleeping on friends’ sofas, squatting or staying in other insecure or unsafe places, who are even more difficult to identify and consequently are often referred to as the ‘forgotten homeless’ or ‘hidden homeless’.

In relation to **experience**:

* The LGBTQI+ community is often subject to homophobia and transphobia by other users of homeless services, and this acts as a deterrent to LGBTIQ people using these services.

In relation to **identity**:

* There is a dearth of research on the specific experiences and needs of young Irish LGBTQI+ people who are experiencing homelessness.

**C. International Submissions and Research**

**The** IHREC: [Submission to the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women on Ireland’s combined sixth and seventh periodic reports, IHREC, 2017](https://www.ihrec.ie/app/uploads/2022/08/Ireland-and-the-Convention-on-the-Elimation-of-All-Forms-of-Discrimination-Against-Women.pdf) identifies issues of situation, experience and identity for women and the diversity of women.

In relation to **situation**:

* Women, especially women from already marginalised groups, have been particularly susceptible to entrenched poverty, social exclusion and gender-based violence.
* The gender pay gap of 14 per cent and the gender pension gap of 38 per cent remain to be addressed.
* Concentration of women in part-time and low paid work.
* Women are concentrated at middle management in the civil service.
* Women with a disability are less likely than men with a disability to be active in the labour market and, when in employment, women in this group are more likely to be working on a part-time basis, which has been linked to caring responsibilities.
* 81.2 per cent of Traveller women are unemployed. Traveller women face dual discrimination within their own community for engaging in work outside the home.
* Migrant women workers face barriers accessing this right to work.
* Care work remains gendered in Irish society, with women in the majority of care roles.
* Homelessness in Ireland is becoming increasingly gendered with growing numbers of women and families presenting as homeless. Paths to homelessness for women and their families have been shown to be often triggered by experiences of domestic violence. Gaps in policy and practice in relation to aftercare provision render young women leaving care vulnerable to homelessness.
* The State’s failure to recognise Traveller ethnicity has led to the lack of culturally appropriate accommodation to Travellers.
* Many women participating in the Commission’s consultation highlighted the impact of rural isolation on their lives, in particular with reference to limited rural public transport. Not owning land was a critical barrier to aspiring female farmers because it made them invisible when decisions were being taken about issues such as agricultural education.
* Women in Ireland do not enjoy equal treatment in sport. State funding practices, a lack of female representation in sports governance, and poor representation by the media of women in sport were cited as the key barriers to gender equality in sport.
* While women's political representation has increased in parliament and local government, it remains below EU averages. Barriers to female political participation identified by a parliamentary committee examining women’s participation in politics, namely childcare, cash, confidence, culture and candidate selection procedures. It has also been suggested that the perpetuation of gender stereotypes in care work can act as an inhibitor. Women living in rural areas face practical barriers, such as the time spent travelling to meetings, as well as more conservative attitudes and different cultural expectations about the role of women in politics.
* The low levels of women’s participation in public life are particularly acute in relation to Traveller and migrant women

In relation to **experience**:

* Pregnancy-related discrimination increased and women in Ireland may now be more likely to face multiple discrimination, with discrimination faced by particular groups of women, including women with disabilities, Traveller women and trans women. Discrimination of women based on sex and gender is inextricably linked with other factors that affect women, such as race, ethnicity, religion or belief, health, status, age, class, caste and sexual orientation and gender identity.
* Muslim women are three times more likely than men to experience violence in public spaces.
* Stereotyping, traditional gender roles and prejudice impacted adversely on women’s lives. The social construction of gender stereotypes, prejudices and expected roles, … have created obstacles to the equal fulfilment of economic, social and cultural rights.

In relation to **identity**:

* The range of situations where deaf women met with difficulty, including: accessing emergency services following domestic and sexual violence; negative responses on account of their need to be provided with an interpreter when accessing education, health and legal services; and maintaining relationships with children in foster care which was insensitive to their family’s cultural background.

**The** IHREC 2021 report [Ireland and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights](https://www.ihrec.ie/app/uploads/2022/01/Ireland-and-the-International-Covenant-on-Economic-Social-and-Cultural-Rights.pdf) identifies issues of situation and experience across a number of the identified groups.

In relation to **situation**:

* The ‘consistent’ poverty rate was 5% in 2020, the ‘at risk of poverty’ rate was 13.2% and 15.6% of the population experienced enforced deprivation. By household composition, individuals living in households where there was one adult and one or more children aged under 18 had the highest consistent poverty rate at almost 22%.
* Persistent housing discrimination and disadvantage is evident among particular groups in Ireland, including lone parents and their children, minority ethnic groups including Travellers, migrants, and disabled people - all of whom experience multiple barriers in meeting their right to adequate housing. This housing deprivation was reported across housing tenures, including homeownership, private rental, and Local Authority housing.
* 38% of those living in local authority housing experience housing deprivation and 28% of local authority houses are overcrowded.
* Ireland continues to have amongst the lowest employment rates for disabled persons in the EU (32.2% compared to 50.6% in the EU in 2017). Over 33% of people who are unable to work due to illness or disability are at risk of poverty.
* Disabled people are significantly over-represented among the homeless population, with more than one in-four homeless people having a disability
* Persistent underspending of budgets by local authorities on culturally appropriate housing for Travellers.
* Women, lone parents, young people, migrants, ethnic minorities, including Travellers, and disabled persons experience significant barriers in meeting their right to decent work.
* Systemic shortcomings in childcare infrastructure and high costs of childcare.
* Women are significantly over-represented amongst employees who avail of reduced hours in order to facilitate the combination of care and paid work, contributing to gender inequality in the labour market.
* The gender pay and pension gaps stand at approximately 14%, and 38%.
* Lowest employment rates for disabled persons in the EU (32.2% compared to 50.6% in the EU in 2017). Over 33% of people who are unable to work due to illness or disability are at risk of poverty.

In relation to **experience**:

* Significant reform is required for the State’s legislative and policy framework to abandon ableism. Significant barriers to the enjoyment of equal rights for disabled persons remain, pointing to structural and institutional ableism across Irish society. Disabled persons experience significant marginalisation and discrimination in housing.
* There is persistent and overt racism against Travellers in Ireland. Travellers continue to experience systemic discrimination in employment, education, health, and housing, with many living in poverty. The analysis additionally highlights that Irish Travellers continue to experience high rates of housing discrimination and racism in accessing housing.
* Travellers and Black people experience particularly high rates of labour market discrimination, both when seeking work and in the workplace. Minority ethnic women in Ireland face cumulative discrimination, including in relation to pay and promotion.
* Both women and men may be subject to harassment and harmful communications, these attacks often take a gender-based form, such as sexist commentary, sexual harassment and even threats of sexual violence, including threats of rape.
* Stereotypical attitudes towards the role of women.

In relation to **identity**:

* There is a challenge to preserve and develop Traveller culture and identity.
* Need to recognise intersectionality and layers of discrimination experienced by Traveller women, migrant women and disabled women.
* Racism is experienced in different ways and to different degrees, often intersecting on multiple grounds of discrimination, including religion, age, disability, gender, sexual orientation and socioeconomic status.

**The** FRA (2014) [Being Trans in the European Union Comparative analysis of EU LGBT survey data](https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra-2014-being-trans-eu-comparative-0_en.pdf) identifies issues of experience and identity for trans people.

In relation to **experience**:

* In the year preceding the survey more than half of all trans respondents (54 %), compared with 47 % of all LGBT respondents, felt personally discriminated against or harassed because they were perceived as trans. Those respondents who were young, not in paid work or from a low income class were more likely to feel discriminated against because of being trans.
* One in three trans respondents felt discriminated against because of being trans when looking for a job (37 %) or at work (27 %) in the 12 months before the survey, which is more than twice the equivalent percentage of lesbian, gay and bisexual respondents.
* In the 12 months preceding the survey, hate-motivated violence was mostly likely among trans women (16 %), male cross dressers (14 %) and transgender respondents (11 %).
* Of all indoor locations, hate-motivated violence happened most often at home, whereas hate-motivated harassment happened most often at the workplace. One in 10 of the most recent incidents of harassment took place on the internet or by email, including Face-book and Twitter..
* One out of five trans respondents reported the most recent hate-motivated incident (21 %) and one in four the most serious one (24 %) to the police. A breakdown by identity groups shows that trans men are the least likely to report incidents of violence to the police for both the last and the most serious incident. Female cross dressers are the most likely to report the last hate-motivated incident of violence of the previous year (37 %). Trans women are the most likely to report the most serious incident of violence of the previous five years (32 %).
* More than three in five trans respondents did not report the incident of discrimination because they were convinced that nothing would happen or change, and half of them because they thought it was not worth reporting it.
* Stereotypes and ignorance about the reality of the daily lives and rights of trans persons perpetuate negative public attitudes and maltreatment of varying intensity; from idiotic jokes and offensive language to serious harassment and exclusion.

In relation to **identity**:

* Of all trans respondents, 46 % indicate that they often or always hide or disguise their trans background at work.

**The** 2019 IHREC submission to the UN Committee on Racial Discrimination: [Ireland and the Convention on Racial Discrimination](https://www.ihrec.ie/app/uploads/2022/08/IHREC_CERD_UN_Submission_Oct_19.pdf) identifies issues of situation, experience and identity for Black and minority ethnic people.

In relation to **situation**:

* The State, as an employer and service provider, must better reflect the diversity of Irish society.
* Travellers, Roma, and people of African descent experience significant barriers to accessing employment. In addition to the barriers faced in accessing employment, minority ethnic groups are often confronted with issues in the workplace such as precarious contracts, a lack of progression, unequal treatment, and exploitation. More generally, there is a lack of representation of people from minority ethnic groups across the public sector.
* Only 10.1% of Traveller women and 12.6% of Traveller men list their principal economic status as ‘at work’ in 2016. Black people also experience particularly high rates of labour market discrimination and disadvantage in Ireland. The employment rate of ‘African nationals’ is 45%, compared to an average of 70% for other minority national groups.334 The employment rate of African women is 38%, 17% below the average female employment rate in Ireland.
* The application of Circular 41/2012 to EEA and non-EEA nationals’ access to social housing and homeless services could amount to discrimination on the ground of race, where it is being unlawfully applied.
* Minority ethnic groups can face particular barriers to accessing social assistance. The HRC is an extra qualifying condition requiring applicants to demonstrate a connection to Ireland to access a range of social welfare benefits, and state-funded supports including- social housing, homeless accommodation, employment-related schemes and supports.
* Non-EU nationals are more likely to live in overcrowded accommodation compared to Irish nationals, even when they are within the same income group.
* People whose nationality is other than Irish, and Irish Travellers are significantly overrepresented among the homeless population.
* Travellers face high levels of discrimination, overcrowding, and higher risks of homelessness. In the area of housing, provision by local authorities of culturally appropriate accommodation for Travellers has been characterised by discrimination and inertia. The lack of provision of Traveller-specific accommodation, the persistent underspend of the Traveller accommodation budget, the conditions of many Traveller accommodation sites.
* Discrimination against Roma in accessing accommodation, severe overcrowding, poor quality accommodation, a lack of security of tenure, homelessness, and lack of access to social housing and rent supplement within the Roma community
* Living in direct provision accommodation can have a very negative impact on the physical and mental health of adults and children and people living in such provision often have difficulty in accessing health, education and employment, in particular in rural areas.
* The high cost of childcare in Ireland and the inequitable access to childcare facilities for people living in rural areas is also a particular challenge faced by women from minority ethnic groups seeking to access the labour market.
* Non-Irish nationals who are eligible to vote experience barriers to registering to vote including: access to information about voting rights and the complexity of the registration process, including electoral registration forms.
* Minority ethnic women face additional barriers to political participation, including due to language and gender-based discrimination, sexist stereotyping, political inexperience, limited access to campaign funding, work commitments, and the lack of childcare provisions.
* To an increasingly large extent, the relationship between the State and civil society organisations is focused on arrangements relating to the subcontracting and delivery of services. However, the advocacy role of such organisations in democratic discourse and in the promotion of human rights needs to be fully recognised and protected.

In relation to **experience**:

* Minority ethnic groups also face significant disadvantage across multiple arenas, including in access to labour, access to services, housing, education, and health.
* The Commission has produced extensive research demonstrating consistent and significant levels of discrimination against minority ethnic groups in Ireland.
* The persistence of systemic institutional racism against Travellers and the continued and widespread existence within Irish society of discriminatory attitudes towards Travellers remain among the most significant areas where the State is failing to meet its obligations under the Convention. Travellers continue to experience chronic racism and systematic discrimination. 90% of Travellers have experienced discrimination over their lifetime, while 77% experienced discrimination in the previous year. Travellers are almost ten times more likely to experience discrimination in seeking work.
* Compared to 16.3% of Irish persons 26.7% of persons of other nationalities and 33.1% of persons from Non-white ethnic backgrounds experienced discrimination between 2017-2019.
* People of African descent and particularly women of African descent face growing and cumulative discrimination and racism.
* Black Irish are three times more likely to experience discrimination in access to public services. Black people of Irish nationality were twice as likely to experience discrimination when seeking employment and 3.4 times as likely to experience discrimination in the workplace. Black people of other nationalities were five times more likely to experience discrimination when seeking employment, and over 2.5 times more likely to experience discrimination in the workplace. Furthermore, women are almost twice as likely as men to report discrimination in the workplace. ‘Black’ respondents are more than five times more likely to report housing discrimination than ‘White Irish nationals’.
* Roma face high level of discrimination. Roma women are particularly vulnerable to on-street racism, because of their identifiable traditional dress.
* An increase in public figures dehumanising migrants and other minority groups, including for their political gain, and the discrimination and inequality faced by minority ethnic groups take place within the broader context of anti-immigrant and anti-refugee discourses relating to access to housing.
* Victims of racism in Ireland report experiencing both physical and mental health issues, including anxiety, depression, and nausea. They also report a lack of confidence in occupying public spaces and engaging with strangers, as well as fears for their other family members.
* Negative stereotypes of Travellers in public discourse reinforce barriers to public services and exacerbate the disadvantages they face.

In relation to **identity**:

* Public services in Ireland are not yet sufficiently responsive and sensitive to the needs of minority communities.
* Access to state services and supports for those whose first language is not English, is impeded by the inadequate provision of quality and regulated interpreting services: In recent research conducted with 158 adults whose first language was not English or Irish, 91% had never used a professional interpreter in Ireland, and 79% had previously acted as an interpreter for family or friends, including in hospitals. Such informal interpretation arrangements raise serious issues relating to privacy, confidentiality, informed consent, and empowerment.
* A range of reports and research reiterate that staff in frontline state services are not often adequately trained to understand and respond to the needs of service users arising from cultural and ethnic diversity, including an absence of training for staff on anti-racist practice.
* There continue to be significant gaps in the national survey and administrative data available on minority ethnic groups, and concerns about its availability, quality, and use.
* Ireland does not have sufficient disaggregated data to allow an adequate and regular assessment of the extent to which it is meeting its obligations under international law across a range of sectors.
* The failure of the State to take adequate measures to support the tradition of horse ownership and its central role in Traveller culture and identity.

**4. Validation Meeting**

An online validation meeting was facilitated with a range of civil society organisations to review a draft of the assessment of equality and human rights issues on 5 December 2024. A pre-meeting to brief the civil society representatives on the Duty was facilitated on 27 November 2024. The review meeting addressed questions of:

* Are the equality and human rights issues we have identified relevant and of priority for the group(s) that your organisation represents?
* Are these issues correctly formulated?
* Are there any important gaps in regard to the equality and human rights issues for the identified group(s) that that your organisation represents?

All amendments proposed at the validation meeting were accepted by the working group and included in the final assessment of equality and human rights issues.

1. [Section 42](https://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2014/act/25/section/42/enacted/en/html), Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. [Tool for an Evidence Based Assessment of Equality and Human Rights Issues](https://www.ihrec.ie/app/uploads/2022/08/IHREC-Tool-for-an-Evidence-Based-Assessment-of-Equality-and-Human-Rights-Issues.pdf), Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (2020). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)