



Bord Oideachais agus Oiliúna Chabháin agus Mhuineacháin
Cavan and Monaghan Education and Training Board

Implementing the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty

Action Plan

CUMHACHTÚ TRÍ FHOGHLAIM AGUS
DUL CHUN CINN DO CHÁCH

EMPOWERMENT THROUGH LEARNING
AND PROGRESSION FOR ALL

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Cavan and Monaghan Education and Training Board Equality and Human Rights Values Statement

Cavan and Monaghan Education and Training Board (CMETB) has developed this equality and human rights values statement to support our work in promoting equality, preventing discrimination and protecting human rights.

Our Equality and Human Rights Values Statement is a tool that allows CMETB to apply a values lens to embed a coherent and consistent approach to promoting equality, preventing discrimination, and protecting human rights across all of our services and encompassing our roles as a service provider and employer.

Applying our Equality and Human Rights Values Statement

In applying our Values Statement, we are focused on the identity, situation and experience of people experience who inequality and disadvantage across the grounds of gender, civil status, family status, age, disability, sexual orientation, race, religion, membership of the Traveller community and socio-economic status.

- **Situation** refers to the social and economic status of the group and its members including education status.
- **Experience** refers to nature and quality of the interactions of the group and its members with public institutions and the wider society.
- **Identity** refers to the way the group and its members give expression to their identity and the specific needs that arise from this.

Our policies, procedures, practice, and processes will reflect our approach to building this organisational culture.

In implementing this values statement, we respect the boundaries set by broader legislative requirements, national policy, and funding availability.

Our Values



Social Justice

Social justice is about ensuring equality of outcome by providing access to opportunities and resources to enable full participation by all in economic, social, political and cultural life. It involves prioritising a focus on individuals and groups experiencing inequality and those who are marginalised.

Our Priority

Cavan and Monaghan Education and Training Board strives to break cycles of disadvantage and to remove the barriers experience by individuals and groups who are marginalised, to enable more equal outcomes.

Our Approach

Cavan and Monaghan Education and Training Board will provide services and programmes aimed at alleviation of economic, social, cultural and physical disadvantage and ensuring equality of access and participation to employment with CMETB, and to our services and programmes.



Inclusion

Inclusion is about recognising, valuing and harnessing the richness of difference. It involves a recognition that diversity brings opportunities for innovation that enrich the learning environment and workplace

Our Priority

Cavan and Monaghan Education and Training Board strives to be inclusive in employment and service provision and to reflect the diverse communities we serve. We give particular focus to being inclusive of those who are most marginalised and who experience inequality and discrimination. We seek to harness the potential of a diverse workplace and learning environment.

Our Approach

Cavan and Monaghan Education and Training Board will build and embed an inclusive culture and environment. We will operate in an accessible and flexible manner and will strive to remove barriers to participation in the workplace and in our services.



Participation

Participation is important in empowering individuals and groups and is essential in the fight to eliminate marginalisation and discrimination in our communities. The right to participate holds ties closely to the vital human rights of education, information and expression.

Our Priority

Cavan and Monaghan Education and Training Board strives to provide opportunities for, and facilitate meaningful participation in education and training, to include the voice of all our stakeholders in the planning and development of our services and programmes.

Our Approach

Cavan and Monaghan Education and Training Board will build and embed a culture that is open and inclusive to communities in their participation in education and training. We will endeavour to facilitate participation and act in an engaging manner in reducing marginalisation and discrimination for staff, students and learners.

1 The Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty (the Duty)

Section 42 of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014 states that

(1) A public body shall, in the performance of its functions, 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 and
- Protect the human rights of its members, staff and the persons to whom it provides services.

Section 42 (a) and (b) established three key steps that public bodies should follow, in regard to implementing the Duty: **Assess, Address and Report**

(2) (a) set out in a manner that is accessible to the public in its strategic plan (howsoever described) an assessment of the human rights and equality issues it believes to be relevant to the functions and purpose of the body and the policies, plans and actions in place or proposed to be put in place to address those issues, and

(b) report in a manner that is accessible to the public on developments and achievements in that regard in its annual report (howsoever described).

The Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (IHREC) guidance identifies the following groups as the main focus regarding implementing the Duty:

“Keep the focus on people across the nine grounds included in the equality legislation and on the potential impact of those at risk of poverty or social inclusion”¹.

The nine grounds in the equality legislation are: gender (including gender identity); civil status; family status (including lone parents and carers); age; disability; sexual orientation; race (encompassing race, colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins); religion; and membership of the Traveller community.

¹ Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (2019), Implementing the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty, p. 17

2 CMETB and Equality and Human Rights

CMETB continues to implement a strategic vision that is underpinned by a commitment to deliver equality and human rights outcomes for our students, learners, staff, and wider community stakeholders.

This ambition, set out in our [Strategy Statement 2022-2026](#), is shaped by our core values of: Excellence; Learner-Centred; Community; Respect; Integrity and Inclusive.

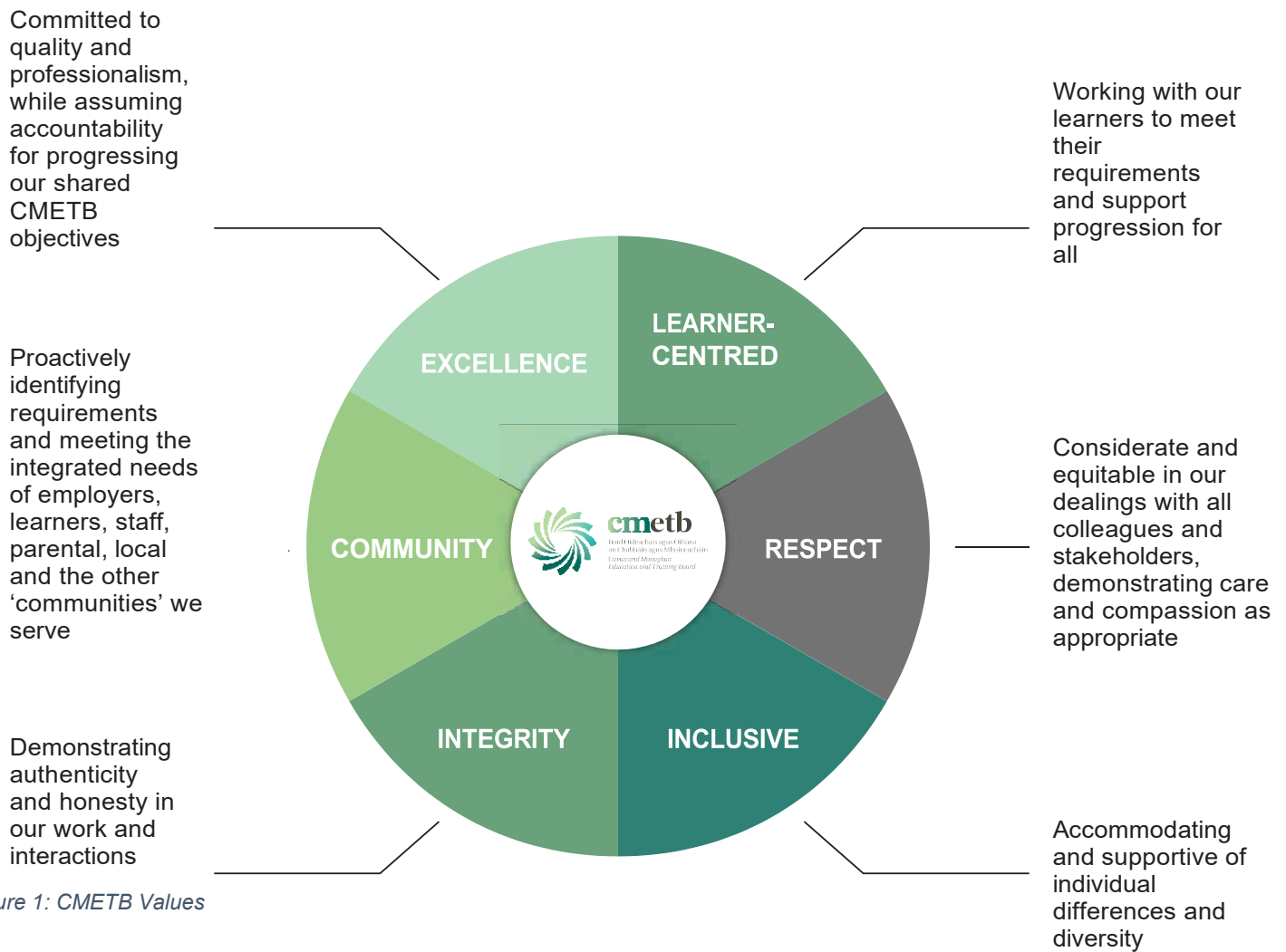


Figure 1: CMETB Values

Delivering on our statutory obligation to implement the Duty allows CMETB to build on this work through the development of a planned and systematic, values-led approach to equality and human rights for our stakeholders and across all of the CMETB organisation.

CMETB desired outcomes from implementing the Duty:

- CMETB is known for our strong commitment to equality and human rights: striving to eliminate discrimination, remove barriers, and ensure equality and human rights outcomes for our students, learners and staff.
- Addressing our equality and human rights obligations is embedded in organisational culture, from the planning level, through to our day-to-day operations.
- An open, accommodating universal learning environment is in place, reflected in the removal of barriers to access and participation, to ensure equality of outcome, and
- An increase in staff capacity with the diversity of the communities we serviced reflected in the CMETB staff team.

3 The Framework for Implementing the Duty

3.1 The values-led approach

CMETB will implement the Duty using a values-led approach. This aligns with:

- Our organisational strategic approach and our core values of: Excellence; Learner-Centred; Community; Respect; Integrity and Inclusive to underpin the work of CMETB and
- The IHREC guidance on implementing the Duty: “Implementation of the Duty can assist an organisation to define the give expression to equality and human rights values related to its purpose and key public sector values”¹.

In 2022, staff members from across the organisation were involved in developing CMETB’s Equality and Human Rights Values Statement. The values of Participation, Inclusion and Social Justice were identified a motivating our commitment to equality and human rights.

The Values Statement enables us to be explicit about our equality and human rights values. This is a foundation for a values-led approach to implementing the Duty. It is also valuable in underpinning an organisational culture concerned for equality and human rights.

3.2 A planned and systematic approach

The legislation envisages that three key steps for implementation of the Duty: Assess, Address and Report, are located within the planning cycle of an organisation.

The IHREC guidance states

“The Duty is an ongoing obligation on public bodies, which must be incorporated as part of an organisation’s overall strategic planning cycle”².

² IHREC (2019), p.2

Implementing the Duty, therefore, should become an integral part of the planning cycle of CMETB. This enables a planned and systematic approach to addressing equality and human rights concerns relevant to the functions of CMETB. A planned and systematic approach to implementing the Duty will allow CMETB to build on and deepen out current work on equality and human rights.

This approach is underpinned by the following:

- An institutional structure with a mandate to drive, support, and monitor implementation of the Duty.
- Senior management leadership to ensure the Duty is integral to organisational planning, review and monitoring, and organisational culture and
- Formal policies for equality and human rights in employment and service provision which set out the standards to be achieved and the steps that will be taken where such standards are not met for staff and service users, and
- A staff capacity to implement the Duty, using a values-led approach.

4 Steps to Implementing the Duty in CMETB

4.1 Key planning and review moments

The steps taken by CMETB to implement the Duty will align with key moments in our planning cycles. We can ensure that the process of implementing the Duty becomes embedded in our current planning, delivery and review processes, structures and systems.

The key moments in the planning of CMETB which may include a focus on implementing the Duty are:

- Preparation of CMETB' Strategy Statement 2022-2026
- Preparation of annual Service Plans and Annual Reports
- Preparation of the Strategic Performance Agreement with SOLAS
- Preparation of the CMETB FET Strategy 2021-2024 and Implementation Plan
- Preparation and review of the FET division's frameworks and action plans
- Preparation of FARR and PLSS to SOLAS
- Preparation of the Youthwork Plan 2022+
- Implementation of quality improvement planning procedures
- Development and review of internal policies and procedures
- Development of Service Level Agreements with funded organisations
- Development and review of Local Community Development Plans through the LCDC

The preparation of the CMETB Strategy Statement, annual Service Plans and Annual Reports are of particular importance in embedding a specific focus on implementing the Duty that has reach across the whole organisation. The development and review of internal policies and procedures have an importance in securing implementation of the Duty in our employment and corporate affairs (including procurement, funding and commissioning) functions.

4.2 Ensuring an institutional capacity to implement the Duty

Equality and human rights have been and will continue to be the responsibility of all staff in CMETB. Leadership in equality and human rights and implementation of the Duty will continue to be provided by senior management. Senior management will:

- Assess key decisions at a senior management level for the manner in which they reflect the Duty and the Equality and Human Rights Values Statement.
- Monitor and review progress on implementing the Duty on a regular basis at senior management meetings, and
- Encourage staff engagement with the Duty and its potential, including, the steps required for the Duty.

CMETB's Public Sector Duty (PSD) Implementation Group will act as a key driver to commencing, driving and monitoring the work of CMETB to implement the Duty.

The role of the PSD Implementation group regarding the Duty will be to:

- Prepare and keep under review an annual implementation plan for the Duty based on this action plan.
- Support and ensure implementation of the Duty at the identified key moments for CMETB.
- Establish and communicate good practice in CMETB in implementing the Duty and in addressing equality and human rights issues.
- Promote action to give visibility to, and engage our equality and human rights values among students, learners and staff.
- Engage relevant expertise to build staff capacity to implement the Duty.

Reporting to the PSD Implementation Group will be the Equality, Diversity and Access (EDA) working group. This working group will be focused on the delivery of the Action Plan across the organisation and report to the PSD Implementation Group focusing on:

- Undertaking and keeping under review an assessment of equality and human rights issues within CMETB, as per the Assess step.
- To review and assess accessibility, reasonable accommodation, and equality values throughout CMETB.

4.3 Assess Address, Report

Assess: This step is foundational in ensuring the Duty drives a planned and systematic approach to equality and human rights in CMETB. It establishes the areas of change to be pursued by CMETB, if equality and human rights outcomes are to be advanced for the diversity of students, learners, staff and wider community stakeholders through the work of CMETB.

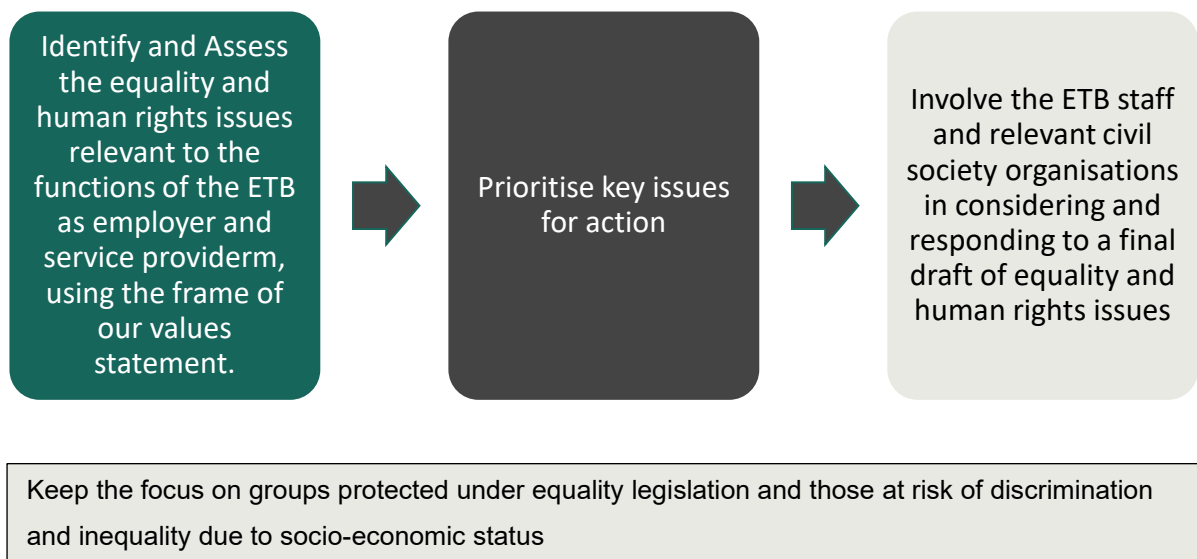


Figure 2: Process of Assessing, Addressing and Reporting

Address: The core step in implementing the Duty is to identify and plan for actions to address the equality and human rights issues assessed and prioritised. This is the step where current actions by CMETB to address equality and human rights concerns are noted and any further actions required are identified for inclusion in place, programmes, policies and procedures.

At each of the key planning / review moments, outlined above, CMETB will:

- Test plans close to final draft stage to assess if they include adequate and sufficient actions to address the relevant issues assessed and if they contribute appropriately to the statement of priority for each value, outlined in our equality and human rights values statement.
- Test policies and procedures close to final draft stage to assess if they include adequate and sufficient processes to address the relevant issues assessed and if they contribute appropriately to the statement for process for each value.

Report: the legal requirement to publicly report on progress made, regarding actions undertaken to address issues prioritised under the Assess step, is an important moment for accountability and reflection on implementation of and impact from the Duty.

We will ensure that our reporting under the Duty will be integral to our reporting mechanisms across the three directorates of the organisation.

The reporting will address:

- The steps taken by CMETB during the year to implement the Duty.
- The progress made in relation to the equality and human rights issues assessed and prioritised.

4.4 Engage our Equality and Human Rights Values

The organisational culture of CMETB will be influenced in implementing the Duty and will equally be influential in securing the full and effective implementation of the Duty.

The Equality and Human Rights Values Statement is a valuable resource in this regard. Staff, students, and learners will need to be engaged with these values if the organisation is to realise this potential.

This will involve action led by the working group to:

- Promote debate on the values in staff meetings and in learner and student spaces.
- Include discussion on the values in internal communication material and in curricula for students and learners.
- Find opportunities to make the statement and the values visible for all our stakeholders.

5 2022 Action Plan for Implementing the Duty in Cavan and Monaghan Education and Training Board

5.1 Ensuring an institutional capacity to implement the Duty:

- CMETB will convene the following working groups to support the implementation of the Duty:
 - Public Service Duty Implementation Group
 - Equality, Diversity and Access Group
- We will ensure that these groups are supported by the Senior Management Team (Chief Executive and Directors).
- We will ensure that there are representatives of the three operational divisions involved in the work of the Working Groups to implement the Duty.
- We will ensure that the Working Groups have agreed and documented Terms of Reference.

The PSD Implementation Group will:

- Ensure that working group representative from each of the three pillars are facilitated to participate in training on implementing the Duty.
- Agree the final CMETB Values Statement draft and circulate to all staff, particularly to those staff that attended the focus group meetings with Values Lab.

5.2 Duties of Equality, Diversity and Access Group

- Progression of the delivery of the CMETB Action Plan on the Duty.
- Conduct equality and human rights assessments for new programmes / policies / plans within CMETB.

- Ensure accessibility is considered in the planning stages of buildings, websites and so on. This may include:
 - Physical accessibility in CMETB buildings
 - Accessibility in CMETB communications
 - Digital accessibility
- To review and assess accessibility, reasonable accommodation, and equality values throughout CMETB.
- Report progress and key indicators to the Public Sector Duty Implementation Group.

5.3 Assess

The PSD Implementation Group will undertake an evidence-based assessment of equality and human rights issues. As part of this process, the organisation will facilitate the following:

- Participation of staff and civil society organisations representing service users and policy beneficiaries from the identified groups, in checking the final draft of the assessment.

5.4 Address

Following the assessment of equality and human rights issues, the Equality and Human Rights Working Group, the PSD Implementation Working Group will:

- Identify actions currently being taken by the organisation that address the equality and human rights issues identified in the assessment.
- Identify gaps in the issues identified that could usefully be addressed by CMETB.
- Prioritises actions to be addressed in forthcoming plans and programmes.
- Map current organisational policy and planning landscape to:
 - Identify key planning, review, reporting moments to include prioritised actions.
 - Identify current or proposed plans / policies / procedures that could be subject to an equality and human rights impact assessment to address the gaps identified in the assessment.

5.5 CMETB Strategy Statement 2022-2026 - Objectives and Actions

In Quarter 1 2022 CMETB finalised the CMETB Strategy Statement 2022-2026. The Duty underpins the strategic priorities for CMETB. Specific objectives and actions are included in the Implementation Action Plan and include some of the following:

- **Objective:** Ensure adherence to the public sector equality and human rights duty in the planning, development, and review of the initiatives set out under this strategic goal.
 - **Action:** In planning and implementation of programmes and initiatives consideration will be given to equality, inclusion and diversity issues.

- **Objective:** Continue to work in collaboration with communities to develop and support initiatives aimed at mitigating against educational disadvantage.
 - **Action:** Continue to build on this initiative in 2022 through Learner Assistance Fund and a range of community-based projects.

- **Objective:** Review and assess emerging issues / challenges for young people and collaborate with relevant partners and stakeholders to ensure needs are advocated for and addressed in a collective and inclusive manner.
 - **Action:** Work to identify needs and issues and proposals to address these and seek to secure resources for these proposals.

- **Objective:** Develop a diverse and progressive Outdoor Education programme into Schools, Centres and Services that provides equality of access as well as the personal, physical and mental well-being benefits of Outdoor Education.
 - **Action:** Continued development and delivery of programmes at Tanagh OETC and ongoing integration of outdoor education and CMETB schools and centres.

- **Objective:** Ensure leadership, systems, and structures are in place and functioning effectively, to address relevant equality and human rights issues and comply with the public sector equality and human rights duty.
 - **Action 1:** Carry out an assessment of equality and human rights issues and develop an implementation plan to address relevant issues.
 - **Action 2:** Organise Equality, Diversity and Inclusion awareness training and CPD for staff across the ETB.

6 Actions for 2022

- Assessment of Public Sector Equality and Human Rights completed and implementation and working groups are established.
- Development and promotion of accessibility across the organisation, including digital and physical accessibility being taken into account in planning and design decisions.
- Engagement in training for schools / centres / administrative offices in accessibility for deaf or hard or hearing stakeholders, and the development of an Irish Sign Language (ISL) protocol for staff. This includes the provision of an ISL interpreting service across the organisation as it is required by staff, students, learners and other stakeholders.
- Expansion of Special Educational Needs (SEN) units across Cavan and Monaghan ensuring equal access to education.
- Development of new CMETB website and taking into consideration digital accessibility in content, documents and colour contrast.

- Development of Learner Support Service with dedicated Officer and Learner Support / Wellbeing Champions in each FET Service
- Roll out of Counselling Support service for CMETB learners
- Expansion of supports, previously only available for those in PLC provision, across all FET provision
- Increased focus on and prioritisation of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and training of staff in this area
- Creation of dedicated Learner Support area on website
- Training for administrative staff on creating and maintaining accessible documents for internal and external stakeholders.
- Review of Customer Service Charter and Action Plan.
- Review of Equality and Diversity Policy.

6.1 Report

The EDA Group will set targets and related KPIs for the ETB's work in relation to the implementation of the Duty in the annual service plans. These targets will be reported on in the ETB's annual reports.

6.2 Engagement with our Equality and Human Rights Values

CMETB will find ways to engage internal and external stakeholders with our values statement, including through:

- Making the values visible in our schools / centres / Institutes / Administrative Offices, and on our website www.cmetb.ie
- Incorporating the values in our strategic external communications and our internal communication processes and structures.



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