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

# CMETB Public Sector Duty

## The assessment of equality and human rights issues relevant to our functions

CUMHACHTÚ TRÍ FHOGHLAIM AGUS
DUL CHUN CINN DO CHÁCH

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EMPOWERMENT THROUGH LEARNING
AND PROGRESSION FOR ALL

# Contents

# 1   Introduction

The assessment set out in this document has been undertaken by Cavan and Monaghan Education and Training Board (CMETB) in fulfilment of its obligations under section 42 of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014, the public sector equality and human rights duty (the Duty).

The Duty requires public bodies to have regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, promote equality of opportunity, and protect human rights for employees and service users, and across all function areas.  Step one of the Duty requires public bodies, including ETBs, to prepare and publish an assessment of the equality and human rights issues, relevant to its functions, for identified groups under the Duty.

This 'assessment' is not an assessment of the organisation or its performance. It is only the foundation stone for identifying the equality and human rights concerns / issues that have relevance for the functions of CMETB, with a view to identifying actions to address these issues.

The identified groups under the Duty are:

- those covered by the nine grounds under equality legislation: gender (including gender identity), civil status, family status (including lone parents, carers), age, sexual orientation, disability, race (including nationality, skin colour, and ethnicity), religion, and membership of the Traveller community; and

- those at risk of poverty and social exclusion (socio-economic status ground).

In conducting this assessment, CMETB has ensured alignment with guidance issued by the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (IHREC), including that the assessment is evidence-based and involves consultation with key stakeholders.[1]

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[1] Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (2019) Implementing the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty.

## 2  Link with our core organisational values

CMETB identifies the following six core organisational values in its Strategy Statement 2017-2021:

Progressive

Learner-Centred

Professional

CMETB

Community
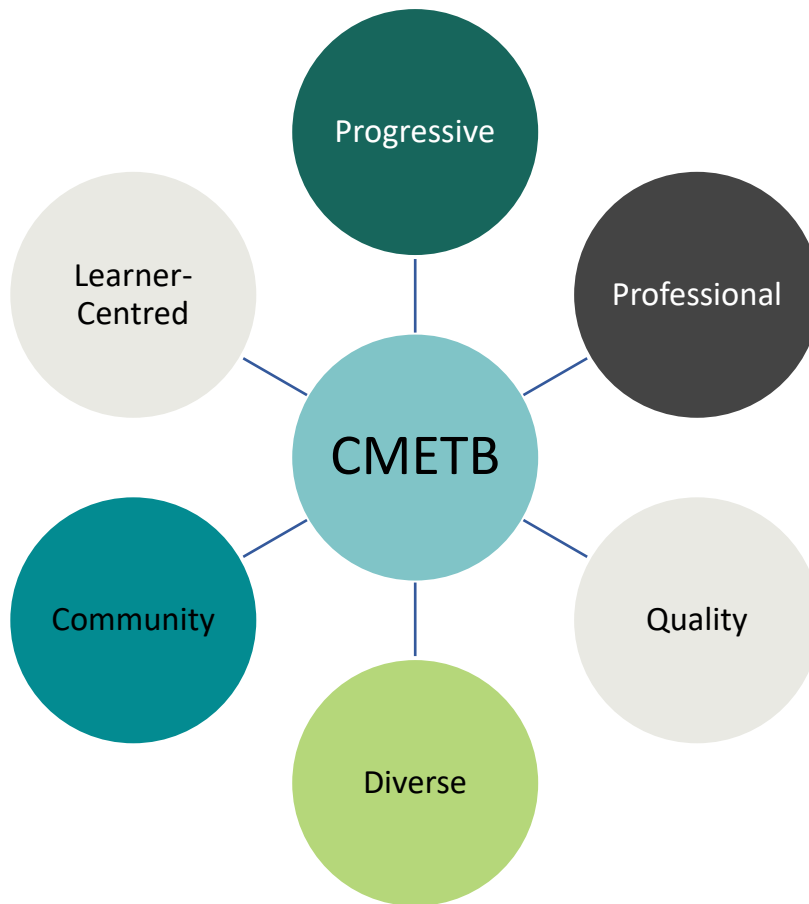
Quality

Diverse

In addition, a core value of the ETB school is the value of Equality.

These core values, in particular the values of Diverse and Equality provide an anchor for our work to address equality and human rights concerns as part of our statutory obligations to implement the Duty.

CMETB identifies the core organisational value of Diverse as explicitly connected to the promotion of equality and diversity, and we hold the following shared understanding of this value:

CMETB aims to promote equality and diversity by:

- ➡ Ensuring that the organisation is public and **democratic**, non-political, non-sectarian and **accommodating and supportive of difference and diversity**

- ➡ Encouraging **inclusivity** in all services, through educational and extra-curricular programmes, ensuring that access is provided for all who wish to avail of its services

- ➡ The provision of services and programmes aimed at **alleviation of economic, social, cultural and physical disadvantage**

- ➡ **Ensuring equal access** to employment through good employment practices

- ➡ **Engaging** with organisations representing minority groups, in the planning and development of services and programmes."

This shared understanding suggests three key value benchmarks: Social Justice, Inclusion and Participation, which will frame our work to implement the Duty.

**Social Justice**

Providing 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**

Ensuring inclusivity by accommodating and supporting the diversity of our learners and staff.

**Participation**

Providing opportunities for and facilitating meaningful participation to include the voice of all of our stakeholders in the planning and development of our services and programmes.

Section 3 sets out a summary of the key equality and human rights issues for the identified groups for the Duty. More detail regarding the specifics of these issues, for different groups, as well as the evidence-base for these data and information, is set out in section 4.

# 3 Assessment of Equality and Human Rights Issues

This section sets out a summary of the key equality and human rights issues that have most relevance to the functions of CMETB. Our value benchmarks of Social Justice, Inclusion, and Participation are the frame for setting out these issues.

The equality and human rights issues identified below relate to all the identified groups for the Duty, unless otherwise indicated.

## 3.1    Social Justice

**Providing 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.**

The equality and human rights issues to be addressed in implementing the Duty, relevant to this value benchmark for the functions of CMETB are:

➡ Intersection of socio-economic disadvantage with identity-based inequality in particular for lone parents, Travellers, minority ethnic groups, disabled people, older people, and transgender people.

➡ Poverty, with regard to:
  ○ Reliance on public transport to access education / employment for people living in poverty and those who are living in rural communities.

  ○ Financial costs as a barrier to FET.

➡ Resource barriers that prevent access to and participation in education, training and employment across the grounds including:

○ For people with a disability: lack of flexible work arrangements; need for modified tasks, wage subsidy, transport / parking, human support; assistive technology or physical adjustments; and inaccessible building. Children with a disability, in particular those from lower socio-economic groups, often have difficulty in accessing mainstream education provision.

○ For migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers: the uncertainty or short-term nature of their visa or residential status; the lack of recognition of their existing qualifications; being compelled to opt for accessing employment over attending FET to secure a basic income; lack of information about how to get their existing qualification recognised and how to access education and employment supports; how the FET system works; ineligibility to access the Free Fees Scheme; limited financial and other resources (broadband, devices, study space and so on.) to participate in education; and the limited availability of English language classes.

○ For Travellers: potential loss of income supports (such as the medical card) upon take-up of employment; a lack of networks and connectors (currently in existence for settled community) to assist them in getting into employment; removal of targeted education supports at primary level (such as the visiting teacher); limited financial and other resources (broadband, devices, study space and so on.) to participate in education (the latter was exacerbated during Covid-19-related school / college closures).

○ For Roma: limited financial and other resources (broadband, devices, study space and so on.) to fully participate in education (the latter was exacerbated during Covid-19-related school / college closures). And for adults: language and literacy barriers; lack of interpretation services; not being able to get a PPS number.

○ For lone parents and some carers: potential loss of income supports and lack of affordable, accessible childcare.

➡ Unequal outcomes in regard to key resources:
  ○ Low income, across the grounds, including:
    - Very high levels of unemployment for Travellers, Roma, and people with a disability
    - concentration of women in low-paid, part-time work
    - additional costs of a disability
    - the gender pay gap and gender pension gap
    - dependence on social welfare supports as a barrier to employment ((some) carers, lone parents, and Travellers)

  ○ Low skills status, across the grounds, including:
    - lack of access to, and outcomes from education (including FET) for: Travellers, Roma, asylum seekers, young adults who are homeless / at risk of homelessness, and young women parenting alone
    - different criteria applied for accessing FET courses as per regulations issued by Department of Foreign Affairs
    - lack of progression from training and education into employment for Travellers and people with disabilities

  ○ Lack of in-work progression, with regard to:
    - lack of women in management positions
    - impact of caring responsibilities on promotion and other career opportunities for women

⇨ Unequal health status, which impacts negatively on people's ability to access and fully participate in employment and education, with particular regard to:

- ○ mental health issues, in particular for young people, Travellers, LGBTI people, and people living in Direct Provision

- ○ the negative impact of identity-based bullying, abuse and harassment including poor physical and mental health; loss of confidence; and self- limiting participation in public and the wider community to avoid for victimisation

- ○ the negative impact of being homeless or at risk of homelessness or living in unsuitable accommodation on people's physical and mental health and wellbeing,

- ○ high levels of self-harm and suicide in the Traveller community and among young LGBTI+ people
  - limited availability of, and access to mental health supports and services for young people impact of caring responsibilities on promotion and other career opportunities for women.

# 3.2 Inclusion

**Ensuring inclusivity by accommodating and supporting the diversity of our learners and staff.**

The equality and human rights issues to be addressed in implementing the Duty, relevant to this value benchmark for the functions of CMETB are:

➡ Invisibility of and lack of diversity:

○ An absence of data on many of the identified groups in regard to their access to, participation in, and outcomes from employment, education and other key services. There is a particular dearth of data on the situation and experience of Travellers and other minority ethnic groups, and LGBTI+ people

○ Travellers and LGBTI+ people feeling compelled to hide their identity in employment and education settings in order to avoid discrimination and harassment

○ A formal and informal curriculum that does not adequately reflect the culture and identity of diverse groups, including Travellers and other minority ethnic groups, and LGBTI+ people, and

○ A lack of diversity in employees across many sectors, including education.

➡ Inadequate understanding of and response to the needs arising from people's diversity regarding:

○ Issues of intersectionality, which can give rise to experiences of multiple and compounding discrimination and inequality

○ Institutional knowledge and capacity issues for understanding and responding to equality and human rights issues for employees and service users

○ Limited application of a social model of disability (with an outdated health model of disability often dominating)

○ Failure to provide reasonable accommodations for diversity, in particular for people with a disability; people whose first language is not English, and transgender people; older people; and people with a minority religion.

# 3.3 Participation

**Providing opportunities for, and facilitating meaningful participation, to include the voice of all of our stakeholders in the planning and development of our services and programmes.**

The equality and human rights issues to be addressed in implementing the Duty, relevant to this value benchmark for the functions of CMETB are:

➡ Discrimination in accessing and participating in employment and services:

  ○ High levels of discrimination at the point of recruitment to employment, against Travellers, Black and minority ethnic people, disabled people, and transgender people

  ○ High levels of in-work discrimination against women and people with disabilities

  ○ High levels of discrimination experienced by Travellers, people with a disability, and people living in poverty, in accessing and participating in services, including education

  ○ The discriminatory impact of enrolment polices that give preference to the children of past pupils, that may segregate out Travellers and migrants from specific schools

➡ Identity-based harassment and sexual harassment which prevents access to and participation in employment and key services, such as education, with particular regard to:

- ○ High levels of identity-based harassment and bullying by peers experienced in education settings, by LGBTI+ and Traveller students,

- ○ Micro-aggressions and more direct forms of identity-based harassment experienced by LGBTI+ people, Travellers, and other minority ethnic groups in the workplace,

- ○ High levels of identity-based abuse experienced in public spaces by Black people; Roma; and Muslim women

- ○ Gender-based violence, including domestic violence, sexual harassment and assault

- ○ cyber bullying and cyber stalking

➡ Social isolation and social exclusion with particular regard to:

- ○ High degree of social exclusion experienced by Travellers, Roma and minority ethnic migrants

- ○ Rural isolation where people have limited access to transport

- ○ Social isolation of older people living alone and people with a disability where their access to the community is limited, including lone parents and people in Direct Provision

➡ Non-inclusive working and learning environments that include:

○ Limited or inadequate response from school staff to identity-based harassment and bullying by students

○ Low expectations of the potential of children with a disability and Traveller children

○ Marginalised groups feeling they have a lack of influence or voice in decisions affecting them and their family

○ Stereotyping of groups resulting in 'soft barriers' to inclusion, for example gender stereotypes that restrict subject choice and career routes for girls and boys, stereotyping of students with a disability and Traveller students, resulting in low expectations from teaching staff

○ Under-reporting of discrimination, harassment, and sexual harassment, including in work and learning environments, and lack of knowledge of rights under legislation and the capacity to exercise these rights

○ Limited understanding or capacity of employers and service providers to equality and human rights issues such as understanding and responding to diversity, addressing identity-based harassment and abuse

# 4 Evidence Base for this Assessment

This evidence-based assessment of equality and human rights issues is based on data and information from: independent research conducted by the Economic Social Research Institute (ESRI), academic institutes, state agencies and NGOs; national CSO data sets; national policy strategies for the identified groups; submissions by the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission, under the UN human rights monitoring framework; and local research and reports regarding equality issues for the identified groups for the Duty.

This evidence base will be periodically updated by CMETB to ensure that the most up-to-date data and information is informing our ongoing work to address equality and human rights concerns across our function areas.

The evidence base is set out according to the identified groups for the Duty, and using the framework of situation, experience, and identity of the group.

**Situation:** refers to disadvantage in the level and quality of resources, including FET services and employment, for the identified groups.

**Experience:** refers to the quality of the group's engagement with wider society, including with public services (both as employees, service participants and policy beneficiaries).

**Identity:** refers to the manner in which the group gives expression to its identity and to any lack of recognition for diversity leading to unmet needs that are specific to the identity of the group.

# Gender (including transgender people)

## Situation

○ In 2018 the gender pay gap in Ireland was 11.3%. The education sector had a lower average of 7.8%.[2]

○ Women's lower earnings in employment and shorter working lives also bring lower lifetime earnings, reduced pension entitlements and greater risk of poverty in old age.[3]

○ 45% of women and 29% of men provide care for others on a daily basis (childcare or adult care). Having an employed partner increases care time for women but not for men.[4]

○ 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. Without greater equality in terms of unpaid work, gender equality in the labour market is unlikely to be achieved.[5]

○ Women's representation on state agency boards is below the Government's 40% gender balance target.[6]

○ As a result of injury and ill health caused by abusive partners, and due to abusive partners preventing women from participating in work or education or making work difficult for her, domestic violence impacts on women's participation in employment and education.[7]

○ A recent review of pathways to apprenticeships reported that 85% of apprentices in 2018 were men, suggesting the need to attract more women into the programme.[8]

○ In 2019 60.2% of FET learner enrolments were female and 39.8% were male.[9]

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[2] Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration, and Youth (December 2021). Statistical Spotlight #6: Gender Norms in Ireland.

[3] Russell, H., Grotti, R., McGinnity, F., and Privalko, I. (July 2019) Caring and Unpaid Work in Ireland, ESRI.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Ibid.

[6] Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (2017)
 Ireland and the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women, Submission to the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women on Ireland's Combined Sixth and Seventh Periodic Reports, Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission.

[7] TUC (2014). Domestic Violence and the Workplace: a TUC Survey Report. PP 2 and 4.

[8] SOLAS (2018). Review of Pathways to Participation in Apprenticeship.

[9] Roe, S. (November 2021). A Study of the role, contribution and impact of Education and Training Board (ETB) Further Education and Training (FET) Services on Active Inclusion in Ireland. Education and Training Boards Ireland.

## Experience

○ Sexual harassment in the workplace is significantly under-reported: only 1 in 5 people who experience such harassment in the workplace report it to their employer.[10]

○ An EU-wide survey on gender-based violence found that 15% of Irish women have been subjected to physical or sexual violence, 31% have been subjected to psychological violence by a current or former partner, 41% of Irish women know of a family member or friend experiencing domestic violence, and 22% know of a work colleague experiencing domestic violence [11]

○ Women are more likely than men to experience discrimination in the workplace but in other domains (such as access to goods and services), men and women are equally likely to experience discrimination.[12]

○ Discrimination around pay and promotion were more frequently mentioned by female respondents. This is consistent with evidence regarding the gender pay gap and the low female representation in the most senior positions in the Irish labour market.[13]

○ Women and girls frequently express the view that stereotyping and traditional gender roles (in particular, gendered ideas about caring roles) and prejudice impacts negatively on their lives.[14]

○ School policy regarding subject provision, subject packaging and timetabling can serve to either reinforce or challenge existing gendered patterns of subject take-up. Schools have an important role in 'reducing gender stereotyping through the nature of subject provision and the way in which the choice process is constructed for students'.[15]

○ According to the results of an EU-wide survey, young women (18–29 years old) are particularly at risk of cyberstalking and 11% of survey respondents had been victims of cyber harassment at some time since the age of 15.[16]

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[10] Irish Congress of Trade Unions (November 2019) Survey with 1,300 union members on their experience of sexual harassment and sexual assault in the workplace. 72% of the survey respondents were women.
[11] Fundamental Rights Agency (2014). Violence Against Women: an EU-wide survey. European Agency for Fundamental Rights.
[12] McGinnity, F., Grotti, R., Kenny, O., and Russell, H. ( 2017) Who Experiences Discrimination in Ireland: Evidence from the QNHS Equality Modules. ESRI and IHREC.
[13] Ibid.
[14] Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (2017). Op Cit.
[15] Ibid
[16] Ibid.

○ An EU-wide survey on issues facing transgender and non-binary people found the following regarding Irish respondents: 50% had experienced discrimination when seeking employment and 20% had experienced discrimination in work, in the previous twelve months.[17]

### Identity

○ Transgender and other minority gender children and young people may require school community support to express their true gender identity. Almost half of the transgender respondents in one Irish study said they would feel unsafe or very unsafe to express their gender identity publicly.[18]

○ Issues of intersectionality which can give rise to experiences of multiple and compounding discrimination and inequality are evident for women with diverse identities involving more than one protected characteristic, including Traveller women, migrant women, Black, Asian and other minority ethnic women, disabled women, lesbian women, transgender women, older women and young women and women parenting alone.

# Family Status (including lone parents, carers)

### Situation

○ A recent ETB Leaner Survey found that 10.5% of respondents (1,496 respondents) identified as parents in a one parent household and 8.8% as dependents in a one parent household.[19]

○ Pregnant students need greater supports from schools to complete their education.[20]

○ Lack of affordable, accessible childcare is a barrier for those with childcare needs (particularly lone parents and women) in accessing employment or sustaining full-time employment. This issue is exacerbated for people in rural areas.[21]

○ Caring responsibilities are a key component of gender equality in the labour market in terms of access to employment, hours of work, promotion

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[17] FRA (2014). Being Trans in the European Union Comparative analysis of EU LGBT survey data. European Agency for Fundamental Rights.
[18] GLEN and BeLonGTo (2016).  LGBTI Ireland report- national study of the mental health and wellbeing of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex people in Ireland.
[19] Roe, S. (November 2021). Op Cit.
[20] Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (2017). Op Cit.
[21] Ibid.

prospects, wages and working conditions. Breaks in employment for caring are a key component of the gender wage gap.[22]

○ The value of income supports is critical for full-time carers who do not have access to market income in the household, for example, those in receipt of one-parent family payments or carer's allowance.[23]

○ 2014 research on the impact of the 2008 recession found that income poverty and deprivation was highest for lone parents, among whom 30% to 32% were in income poverty and 44% to 49% were materially deprived.[24]

○ An online survey by the National Women's Council of Ireland (completed anonymously by 1,466 women) looked at women's caring responsibilities during Covid-19. 62% of the women were in employment. The survey found the following:
  - 83% of respondents said their caring responsibilities had increased since the outbreak of Covid-19, with 52% stating their caring had increased 'a lot'
  - Women felt pressure to look after the emotional needs of their families with the added pressure of the closures of schools and childcare
  - Women were impacted by the loss of both formal and informal supports which supported caring prior to lockdown
  - Women parenting alone found it particularly difficult with the lack of supports normally relied on, such as childcare and grandparents, no longer available
  - A better sharing of care responsibilities between men and women needs to be addressed, which needs to be supported by employers and educators. This survey found, for example, that while employers were often flexible towards female employees regarding their childcare needs, their partners' employers were often less flexible (towards male employees), resulting in women taking on greater responsibility for childcare during Covid-19.[25]

## Experience

○ Never-married lone parents are more like to experience discrimination in public and private services than single childless adults. Family status does appear to affect rates of discrimination among those seeking work, particularly lone parents. More than 12% of lone parents who were never married report discrimination while searching for work and this is significantly different to

[22] Russell, H. et al (July 2019). Op cit.
[23] Ibid.
[24] Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (2017). Op Cit.
[25] National Women's Council of Ireland (Nov 2020). Women's experiences of caring during COVID-19

those who are single with no children (6.3%) and those who are cohabiting with children (3.9%).[26]

## 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.[27]

# Disability

## Situation

○ An ETB Leaner Survey (1,496 respondents) found that 12.2% indicated they had a disability.[28]

○ A survey of ETB staff asked respondents to rank which groups of learners, they considered to be most challenging to engage in learning. People with mental health issues were ranked as most challenging to engage in FET, by (15.7% of respondents) and people with literacy, numeracy and digital skills challenges were ranked second (by 25.3%,) of respondents.[29]

○ 2016 Census indicates that educational attainment amongst people who have a disability is lower than the general population. For those aged 15 to 50 years with a disability, 13.7% have completed no higher than primary level education, compared to 4.2% of the general population.[30]

○ Students with a disability often have difficulty in accessing mainstream education and this is a more significant challenging for disabled students from lower socio-economic groups.[31]

○ Children with disabilities are more likely to face barriers to accessing education, than their non-disabled peers. Both parents and teachers of children with a disability can have low expectations of their child's potential, which has a negative impact for those children's educational outcomes.[32]

[26] McGinnity, F. et al (2017). Op cit.
[27]Russell, H. et al. (2019). Op Cit.
[28] Roe, S. (November 2021). Op Cit.
[29] Roe, S. (November 2021). Op Cit.
[30] Banks, J., Grotti, R., Fahey, E., and Watson, D. (2018) Disability and Discrimination in Ireland: Evidence from the QNHS Equality Modules 2004, 2010, 2014. ESRI and IHREC.
[31] Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (May 2015). Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Report, Ireland and the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission.
[32] Banks, J. et al (2018). Op Cit.

○ Participation in the labour market for people with disabilities remains lower than participation rates for the general population. For those aged 15 and over, 22% of people with a disability were at work compared with more than half (53%) of the overall population.[33]

○ The national Disability Survey (2006) found that for those people with a disability who are out of work and would wish to work, the main perceived barriers are, in order of importance:
   o lack of flexible work arrangements
   o need for modified tasks
   o wage subsidy
   o transport / parking
   o accessible building
   o human support
   o assistive technology or physical adjustments

## Experience

○ People with a disability experience higher rates of discrimination than non-disabled people: in the workplace (8.8% v 5.1%), while seeking work (15.5% v 6.7%), and in accessing private and public services (7% v 2.8%).[34]

○ 2014 data indicates that approximately 15% of disabled people experience discrimination compared to 11% of non-disabled people. In addition to being more likely to experience discrimination, people with disabilities were more likely to report that the discrimination they experienced had 'serious' or 'very serious' effects on them compared to those with no disability. They were also more likely to report that the discrimination occurred more frequently than those with no disability.[35]

○ Regarding discrimination in accessing public services (such as education, health, transport), people with disabilities were three times more likely to experience discrimination compared to those without disabilities.[36]

## Identity

○ Many disabled people advocate that disability is viewed through a social model lens rather than a medical model lens. A social model of disability

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[33] Ibid.
[34] McGinnity, F. et al. ( 2017). Op cit.
[35] Banks, J., Grotti, R., Fahey, E., and Watson, D. (2018) Disability and Discrimination in Ireland: Evidence from the QNHS Equality Modules 2004, 2010, 2014. ESRI and IHREC.
[36] Banks, J. et al. (2018). Op Cit.

focuses on societal barriers that disabled people encounter and hinder their ability to lead independent, self-determined lives. The medical model views disability predominantly as a health issue thereby focusing more on the individual's impairment as the issue / problem, rather than the society in which disabled people live. The UN Convention on the Rights of People with a Disability is underpinned by the social model of disability. "The approach to disability remains stubbornly grounded in the medical model"[37]

○ 2014 data indicates that between 10% and 12% of the population have a disability.[38]

○ Universal design of workplaces would facilitate employees with disabilities to avail of employment opportunities without need for further adaptation.[39]

○ To fully participate (including in employment and education) disabled people may require adjustments or accommodations based on the nature of their disability.

# Age

## Situation

○ In 2019 32.5% of FET learners were aged under 25 and 19.8% were aged 55-64+[40]

○ Mature students (current, former, and prospective) report a wide range of barriers to participation in higher education. Financial cost is identified as the biggest barrier (for all age groups of mature students 23-64yrs), followed by family / work responsibilities.[41]

○ Early retirement is common but often unplanned, due to illness and disability and due to a redundancy package or a pension that made early retirement affordable. This research also found a strong preference for gradual retirement. More flexible retirement options were also considered important.[42]

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[37] Ibid.
[38] Ibid.
[39] Government of Ireland. Comprehensive Strategy for Employment of People with Disabilities: 2015-2024.
[40] Roe, S. (November 2021). Op Cit.
[41] Indecon (June 2021). Study of Mature Student Participation in Higher education: what are the challenges? Recommendations for the future. Prepared for the HEA. P28.
[42] Department of Health (2013).  Positive Ageing – Starts Now, National Positive Ageing Strategy, Department of Health. 5

○ Older adults in Ireland who have children are more likely to provide financial assistance to their children (48%) rather than receiving financial help from them (3%)[43]

## Experience

○ 12% of older workers (45-64 years) report that they have experienced discrimination in seeking work and they are more likely to indicate discrimination in seeking employment, than younger workers.[44]

○ Isolation and loneliness can be a significant issue for older people living alone, particular those in rural areas, where lack of transport is an issue.[45]

○ Lack of access to transport and underdeveloped IT skills constitute a significant barrier to accessing information for some people as they age.[46]

○ There is a need to combat ageism and age-related discrimination in society which contributes to the marginalisation of older people.[47]

○ Stereotyping of older people includes portraying them as frail and dependent; as an unsustainable burden on finances in health and pensions; as sick and disabled non-contributors to society and dependent on the welfare system; or as healthy, financially secure and taking advantage of state benefits that they can afford to pay for themselves.[48]

○ Research on prevalence of elder abuse found that 2.2% of the study population experienced abuse or neglect in the last 12 months.[49]

○ Children and young people need to have a voice in decisions made in their local communities, in their schools and in the wider formal and non-formal education system.[50]

## Identity

○ The population aged 65 years and over increased by 19% between 2011 and 2016

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[43] IHREC 2017. Submission to the Citizens Assembly on: How we respond to the challenges and opportunities of an ageing population.
[44] McGinnity, F. et al. ( 2017). Op cit.
[45] Ibid.
[46] Ibid.
[47] IHREC (2017). Submission to the Citizens Assembly on: How we respond to the challenges and opportunities of an ageing population.
[48] Ibid.
[49] Ibid.
[50] Better Outcomes Brighter Futures: The National Policy Framework for Children and Young People 2014-2020, Department of Children and Youth Affairs, 2014, p.31

○ Of the total population aged 65 years and over 26.7% live alone.[51]

○ Children and young people experience key developmental transitions in their journey from childhood to adulthood which give rise to diverse needs and requirements.

○ Children and young people have diverse identities:

  o children with a disability
  o children with special educational needs
  o children with a minority ethnic identity
  o migrants whose first language is not English
  o LGBTI+ children and young people
  o those living in or at risk of poverty,

need age-appropriate information and supports to fully participate in society.

○ As we age, we may acquire a disability or develop a physical or mental health issue that results in requiring specific supports to fully participate in society, including in adult and continuing education.[52]

# Membership of the Traveller Community

## Situation

○ In 2016, the unemployment rate for Travellers was 80.2% compared to 12.9% for the general population.[53]

○ Travellers seeking employment or a placement in employment as part of a training course, do not have access to the sort of family / work / college / community networks that many settled people have, making their entry into employment, particularly their first job, harder.[54]

○ In 2019, Travellers represented 0.85% of total learners who enrolled in FET (1,527 of 179,058 total learners). In terms of completion rates, 88% of

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[51] CSO. 2016.
[52] Department of Health (2013).Op Cit.
[53] Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (October 2019).
 Ireland and the Convention on Racial Discrimination, Submission to the United Nations Committee on Racial Discrimination on Ireland's Combined Fifth to Ninth Periodic Report, Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission.
[54] Mullen, R., Kelly, B., and Crowley, N., (2021). Mincéir Misl'er a Tom Tober – Travellers in the Mainstream Labour Market: Situation, Experience and Identity. St Stephens Green Trust, Dublin.

Traveller learners partially or fully completed a course in 2019 and the certification rate for completed certified courses was 60%.[55]

○ Research with young Travellers living in Cavan found the following:
  o Young Travellers often view remaining in formal education as pointless because of a lack of job opportunities thereafter, linked to prejudice and discrimination. Many view accessing social welfare payments as inevitable, despite having higher hopes and aspirations for themselves,
  o Some young Travellers identified peer pressure, being subjected to bullying or teasing from other Travellers for seeking success, as a disincentive to achieve / stay in school. However, a number of young Travellers had dreams of becoming teachers or artists,
  o Responding to Traveller culture and identity is considered a 'no go' area in schools for some teachers who fear saying the wrong thing. The report suggests teachers need to be educated in this regard.
  o Young Travellers are very concerned about mental health issues, particularly depression and suicide, in their community. There is a particular concern for young Traveller men. Access to support and treatment hampered by stigma (parental) and an overall distrust of health services, sometimes due to negative experiences with such services,
  o 51% of children in care in the Cavan region are from minority groups including Travellers. There is a higher proportion of Irish Traveller young children being taken into care than settled Irish or non-Irish nationals. [56]

○ The financial incentive offered to participate in Youthreach was noted by parents and school community staff, as an unfortunate disincentive for some Travellers to remain in formal education.[57]

○ Despite the introduction of specific initiatives including the Higher Education Access Fund, the participation of the Traveller community in further and third-level education remains comparatively low: 167 Travellers held a third-level qualification in 2016, up from 89 in 2011.[58]

○ A survey of ETB staff asked respondents to rank which groups of learners they considered to be most challenging to engage in learning. Members of the

[55] Roe, S. (November 2021). Op Cit.P14
[56] Cavan County Local Development (2018). Needs Assessment of Young Travellers (10-24) in Cavan
[57] Quinlan, M., (2021) Out of the Shadows: Traveller and Roma Education, Voices from the Community. Department of Education.
[58] Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (October 2019).Op Cit.

Traveller Community were identified as the group most challenging to engage in FET (28.3%).[59]

○ ESRI research, which draws on data from Census 2011 to examine the situation and living circumstances of Travellers compared to non-Travellers in the Irish population, found the following:[60]

### Education
o Travellers are much less likely to have completed education to Leaving Certificate (8% compared to 73% of non-Travellers)
o Only 1% of Travellers aged 25-64 years have a college degree compared to 30% of non-Travellers
o Travellers are more likely to have left school at an early age, with 28% of Travellers over 25 years having left before the age of 13, compared to 1% of non-Travellers (92% of Traveller girls and 95% of Traveller boys have left school without having completed second level).
o Among those aged 55-64 years, 97% of Travellers and 49% of non-Travellers left school without completing second level. Among those in the 25-34 age group, the figures are 91% of Travellers and 14% of non-Travellers. This suggests that Travellers have not benefitted as much as non-Travellers from the general improvement in levels of education since the 1960s.
o Compared to Dublin city and county, the odds of leaving school without full second level education are higher for those Travellers living in most of the other regions, especially the Border region (odds ratio 1.6) and the Midlands and South-East region (odds ratio 1.4 for each)

### Employment
o Travellers experience very high levels of unemployment. Among those aged 25-64 years, the unemployment rate was 82% for Travellers, compared to 17% of non-Travellers.
o For Travellers, the largest proportion is unemployed (50%), compared to 14% of non-Travellers. 24% of Travellers are engaged with home duties, compared to 10% of non-Travellers. 12% of Travellers are unable to work due to illness or disability, compared to 5% of non-Travellers.
o Travellers had a lower rate of labour market participation. The gap was not large. However; 61% of Travellers were in the labour market compared to 79% of non-Travellers. Therefore, the low employment rate of Travellers (11% v 66%) was mainly drive by differences in unemployment.

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[59] Roe, S. (November 2021). Op Cit.
[60] Watson D., Kenny O., & McGinnity F. (2017). A Social Portrait of Travellers in Ireland. The Economic Social Research Institute.

- o Travellers have 19 times the odds of being non-employed compared to the general population.
- o Married Traveller men are most likely to be at work (77%), followed by single women (68%). Among Travellers, the highest adjusted employment rate was for single men (40%).
- o Among Travellers, the adjusted employment rate is highest in the Mid-East (39%) and is also high in Dublin (38%) but lower in the Border, Midlands, West and Mid-West regions (30-32%).
- o After adjusting for education, age group, gender, marital status, presence of children and region, the rate of Traveller unemployment would still be 1.9 times higher than for non-Travellers, suggesting additional barriers such as discrimination in seeking and retaining employment.

○ Travellers report that the transition from primary to second-level school can be very difficult. A key issue noted was an increase in or commencement of racist bullying from their peers. While racism from teaching staff was less prevalent, Travellers noted that a lack of action from teachers regarding racist bullying, was a factor in them not wanting to remain in school.[61] Traveller parents and children felt that settled spaces were not 'safe' spaces for them. Children reported feeling alone if they were not with other Traveller children.[62]

○ The Education (Admissions to Schools) Act 2018 permits 25% of the places in a school that is oversubscribed to be reserved for children or grandchildren of past pupils. The IHREC has repeatedly called on the State to ensure equity of access to publicly funded schools. It is concerned that the application of this past-pupil criterion will act as a barrier, particularly for children from Traveller families and families of migrant origin in accessing education and may result in their segregation in specific schools.[63]

○ Low levels of participation among the Traveller community in early childhood education, including due to a lack of awareness about the availability of free preschool, can result in educational disadvantage before the children enter primary school.[64] The school community has expressed frustration that there is a preference to keep Traveller children at home until age 6. They then join school in senior infants, beside students that have done two years ECCE and junior infants. The feeling is that these students are always trying to catch up and never will.[65]

[61] Mullen, R. et al. (2021). Op cit.
[62] Quinlan, M., (2021). Op cit.
[63] Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (October 2019).Op Cit.
[64] Ibid.
[65] Quinlan, M., (2021). Op cit.

○ Targeted educational supports to Travellers in primary school, such as the Visiting Teacher supports, were cut by government, in 2011, despite the significant and continuing educational gap between Travellers and non-Travellers.[66] The cut in these supports has also been raised as a concern, by teaching staff, in terms of supporting them to engage Traveller students,[67]

○ The emerging and consistent reports of the use of reduced timetables for Traveller children, including as a disciplinary measure or in response to challenging behaviour when there is a lack of learning supports and resources available, has been raised as a concern. This measure involves schools reducing children's attendance at school to as little as 30 minutes or a few hours per day in the absence of appropriate monitoring and guidelines from the Department of Education.[68]

○ There is no nationally collected data on the participation of minority ethnic groups (including Travellers) in apprenticeships. Such opportunities can be particularly important for young Travellers who are more likely to leave school early.[69]

## Experience

○ 90% of Travellers have experienced discrimination over their lifetime, while 77% experienced discrimination in the previous year.[70]

○ Travellers are 10 times more likely than White Irish to experience discrimination in seeking work and are over 22 times more likely to report discrimination in accessing services (particularly in shops, pubs and restaurants).[71]

○ Travellers in employment report experiencing microaggressions as well as more direct identity-based harassment by other colleagues.[72]

○ ESRI research found that to address the education inequality gap between Travellers and non-Travellers, specific targeted additional supports are required to ensure Travellers can participate in mainstream education on equal terms, encompassing: the need to address the educational needs of the parents as well as the children; ensuring that school policies are inclusive;

[66] Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (October 2019).Op Cit.
[67] Quinlan, M., (2021). Op cit.
[68] Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (October 2019).Op Cit.
[69] Ibid.
[70] Ibid.
[71] McGinnity, F. et al. (2017). Op cit.
[72] Mullen, R., et al. (2021). Op Cit.

and education of both teachers and the general body of pupils on Traveller culture and history.[73]

○ Traveller parents report feeling that parent teacher meetings can be intimidating and not a positive experience for them or their children. School communities noticed this also, as well as and the lack of participation on extracurricular activities for Traveller children.[74]

○ Young Travellers feel they have little voice or input into matters that affect them in wider society.  They feel that they are not listened to, especially at school.[75]

○ Traveller parents felt that teachers had low expectations of their children due to stereotypical beliefs about Travellers wanting to leave school, while school community felt that this was reflective of the wish of many Traveller children to leave school at 16.[76]

○ Research conducted with the Traveller community, 40% of respondents indicated that either they or their children had been bullied at school due to their Traveller identity; 76% of respondents also reported that Traveller culture is not visible in the school curriculum.[77]

○ Research carried out with the general population in 2017, found that: 27% of respondents agreed with the statement 'it is acceptable for Travellers to be refused entry to hotels, pubs and shops' and 35% of respondents stated that they would avoid a member of the Traveller community.[78]

## Identity

○ Traveller children and adults often feel compelled to hide their Traveller identity in school / college and in seeking work due to fear of discrimination and identity-based harassment and bullying.[79]

○ schools need to recognise cultural diversity and implement inclusive practices to ensure the inclusion of very marginalised minority ethnic students such as Roma and Travellers.[80]

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[73] Watson D. et al (2017). Op cit.
[74] Quinlan, M., (2021). Op cit.
[75] Cavan County Local Development (2018). Op Cit.
[76] Quinlan, M., (2021). Op cit.
[77] Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (October 2019). Op Cit.
[78] Ibid.
[79] Mullen, R., et al. (2021). Op Cit. and Cavan County Local Development (2018). Op Cit.
[80] Quinlan, M., (2021). Op cit.

○ Parents, students, and the school community felt that the curriculum valued settled white lifestyles and required their assimilation into the culture instead of valuing real integration.[81]

○ Some Travellers fear that their culture, language and identity are being eroded and are in danger of being lost.[82]

○ There have also been criticisms at a national level about 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. Horse ownership and the promotion of Traveller culture more broadly have been identified as supporting wellbeing in young men, which is vital considering the extremely high levels of mental illness in the Traveller community.[83]

# Race (including skin colour, ethnicity, nationality) and Religion

## Situation

○ 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. Migrant women are overrepresented in the care and domestic work sectors, with many women working in vulnerable employment conditions.[84]

○ The consistent poverty rate for people who do not identify as being an Irish citizen or national is significantly higher than the general population (12.7% compared to 8.2% respectively). In 2016, the at-risk-of-poverty rate was 22.6% for people whose nationality is other than Irish and 42% for those from outside the EU, compared to 15.7% for 'Irish nationals'.[85]

○ A recent ETB Leaner Survey (1,496 respondents) indicates a diverse learner cohort, in terms of ethnicity and religion:
   o 72.6% identified as White Irish, followed by Other White background (13%), Other including mixed background (3.3%), Black or Black Irish – African (2.8%), Any other Asian background (1.8%) Irish Traveller

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[81] Ibid.
[82] Cavan County Local Development (2018). Op Cit.
[83] Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (October 2019). Op Cit.
[84] Ibid.
[85] Ibid.

(1.6%), Any other Black background ((1%), Asian or Asian Irish-Chinese (1%) and Roma (0.3%).
- 67% identified as Catholic, 15.5% had no religion, 3.1% were Muslim, 5.1% were 'other religion' including Christian, Protestant, Orthodox, Buddhist, Jehovah Witness, Hindu, Lutheran, and Baptist.[86]

○ A survey of ETB staff asked respondents to rank which groups of learners, they considered to be most challenging to engage in learning: people from the Roma community were ranked third, by 21% of respondents.[87]

○ Barriers faced by migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers who wish to pursue education or training in Ireland include:

- the lack of availability of affordable childcare and transport
- the uncertainty or short-term nature of their visa or residential status
- the lack of recognition of their existing qualifications
- lack of information about or ineligibility to access the Free Fees Scheme
- and the limited availability of beginner or upskilling English language classes[88]

○ Migrant children may be 'segregated out' of schools based on enrolment polices that give preference to the children of past pupils. Students from minority ethnic communities are more likely to access education in DEIS schools. [89]

○ Undocumented migrants' lack of legal status acts as a barrier to pursuing third-level education. They may be ineligible to access schemes to aid the Free Fees scheme.[90]

○ The Direct Provision system inhibits people's participation in society through barriers to the pursuit of meaningful further education opportunities and through rural isolation.[91]

○ Living in Direct Provision accommodation can have a particularly negative impact on children's educational attendance, engagement, and experience, including due to their poor physical or mental health, low self-esteem, exhaustion, and feelings of isolation. The unavailability of appropriate spaces

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[86] Roe, S. (November 2021). Op Cit.
[87] Roe, S. (November 2021). Op Cit.
[88] Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (October 2019). Op Cit.
[89] Ibid.
[90] Ibid.
[91] Ibid.

to study and complete homework has also been identified as an issue in a consultation carried out with children living in direct provision.[92]

○ A national needs assessment of the Roma community in Ireland found the following:

- o Only 16.7% of working age Roma were in employment. Respondents expressed a strong desire to find work and talked about the stress of not having work or income
- o In 9.5% (n=84) of households there was someone attending a training course.
- o 19.8% of respondents reported that they did not have a PPS number. Not having a PPSN is a barrier to Roma accessing state services and supports, including in the area of education.
- o Many Roma are living in situations of extreme deprivation and hardship which presents additional barriers to accessing and participating in education, and many parents struggle with the financial costs of sending children to school. These challenges were reiterated by service providers However, they also noted that many parents are very determined that their children complete their education and manage to achieve high levels of attendance despite difficult living conditions. Service providers noted that, in some cases despite families living in one or two rooms, children were still attending school and completing their homework each evening.
- o 18.4% of respondents had attended education or training in Ireland.
- o 71.2% of respondents reported that they have difficulty reading English forms and 66% said they had difficulty filling in English forms. In 84% of households respondents received help reading and writing in English.
- o 37.8% of Roma adults in had never been to school (this was particularly marked for women with 41.1% of women having never been to school versus 22% of men). This means that many Roma adults will have literacy issues in their mother tongue as well as a lack of knowledge of English. Translating written material to their native languages, therefore, will not reach all Roma. This is also a key issue when considering English classes and design of appropriate classes, which must consider literacy as well as language.
- o Roma parents often rely on their children or another family member to interpret for them with service providers, which can be inappropriate when sensitive or confidential matters need to be discussed. Some service providers expressed a concern that parents sometimes had to keep young children out of school to interpret for them.

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[92] Ibid.

- o Service providers felt that there was a lack of awareness about the free pre-school year and the benefits of early childhood education within Roma communities.[93]

○ Low levels of participation among the Roma community in early childhood education, including due to a lack of awareness about the availability of free preschool, can result in educational disadvantage before the children enter primary school.[94]

○ The Ombudsman for Children's Office (OCO) has expressed its concern about the provision of education for children who arrived in Ireland under the Irish Refugee Protection Programme and are living in emergency reception and orientation centres (EROCs). Schools in EROCs are not recognised by the Department of Education and, according to the OCO, this makes it much more difficult for them to access the additional supports needed.[95]

○ There is a diversity gap between the student and teacher populations in Ireland with over 99% of entrants to primary teacher education identifying as 'White Irish Settled'. Only 2% of secondary school teachers come from minority ethnic backgrounds. It has been reported that teachers who qualified abroad face several administrative barriers, as well as other difficulties in accessing employment.[96]

○ There is no nationally collected data on the participation of minority ethnic groups in apprenticeships. Such opportunities can be particularly important for refugee young people due to the gaps in their education and the difficulties they can face in accessing third-level education.[97]

## Experience

○ 2014 national data indicates that Black people are three times more likely than White Irish to experience discrimination in the workplace.[98]

○ Despite having the same education, experience, and labour market skills, some minority ethnic groups have poorer outcomes in the labour market due to discrimination.[99]

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[93] Pavee Point & Department of Justice and Equality (2018). Roma in Ireland: A national needs assessment.
[94] Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (2019). Op Cit.
[95] Ibid.
[96] Ibid.
[97] Ibid.
[98] McGinnity, F. et al. ( 2017). Op cit.
[99] McGinnity, F., Grotti, R., Groarke, S., and Coughlan, S. (2018). Ethnicity and Nationality in the Irish Labour Market, ESRI and IHREC.

○ Attitudes of Irish people towards immigrants to Ireland is shown to be more negative during periods of recession. During the boom years a high proportion of Irish respondents were open to some or many people of **the same** racial / ethnic group coming to Ireland – almost 80% in 2002, from 75% in 2004 and 2006. However, in 2008 and 2010 this proportion fell quite sharply to under 60% in 2010 and remained around this level in 2012 and 2014. The research also finds that Irish people are less positive about immigration where immigrants are of different racial / ethnic background.[100]

○ Irish people are considerably less welcoming of Muslim and Roma immigrants. Compared to 58% of Irish respondents who would allow many or some immigrants of **the same** ethnic group as most Irish people, 41% would allow 'many' or 'some' Muslims immigrants to come to their country. This compares with an average of 54% who would allow many or some Muslims across the ten European countries. Irish attitudes towards Roma are considerably more negative in a cross-national perspective. Of 11 EU countries, Ireland has the lowest proportion that would allow 'many' or 'some' Roma immigrants, at 25%. This compares to the ten-country average of 44% and the maximum value (Sweden) at 79%.[101]

○ Compared to Catholics, members of minority religions report somewhat higher discrimination rates in the workplace and in public and private services.[102]

○ Discrimination-related differences between religious groups in terms of accessing public and private services are more pronounced regarding public services than private services. Compared to Catholics, those whose religion is 'Other' are 1.8 times more likely to report experiencing discrimination in public services like health, education and other public services. This may be related to the prominent role the Catholic Church has played in many public services.[103]

○ The national needs assessment of Roma in Ireland found the following:
  o 78.9% of respondents reported feeling discriminated against in seeking employment, 93% reported feeling discriminated against in accessing accommodation
  o 81% said they had experienced identity-based harassment and abuse in public places
  o Those who had attended school saw this as a positive opportunity. However, they also spoke about having had to hide their identity to prevent or protect themselves against bullying and discrimination

[100] McGinnity, F., Grotti, R., Russell, H., and Fahey, E. (March 2018). Attitudes to Diversity in Ireland,
[101] Ibid.
[102] McGinnity, F. et al. (2017). Op cit.
[103] Ibid.

o  There was a correlation between the level of English Roma have, and perceived discrimination in the areas of social protection and the Gardaí:  those with less English are more likely to have felt discriminated against[104]

○  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. Second-generation minority ethnic Irish people are reported as experiencing racism, including being specifically targeted with online racial abuse due to their perceived lack of any 'biological' or 'ethnic' connection to Ireland.[105]

○  Research published in 2018 demonstrated the common use of Islamophobic and anti-Semitic racist discourse in the Irish online sphere. Such online discourse commonly deployed narratives around terrorism, the 'clash of civilisations', and crude sexualisation.[106]

○  Muslim women report much higher levels of anti-Muslim hostility than Muslim men and are at risk of discrimination in locations such as public transport or restaurants.[107]

○  Irish people are also slightly more likely than other West Europeans to believe that some racial groups are superior to others. As in other countries, Irish people are more likely to believe that some racial or ethnic groups are culturally superior or have a higher work ethic than to believe that there are racial/ethnic differences in intelligence.[108]

## Identity

○  People from minority ethnic groups and those with a minority religion, may require consideration of specific needs arising from their cultural, ethnic or religious diversity, to ensure they can fully participate in employment and services such as education, which should be considered by employees and service providers. Such needs may include language and interpretation needs; food considerations; consideration of workplace leave and so on, to observe religious days of importance / to attend family and community events relevant to their ethnicity or religious faith.

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[104] Pavee Point & Department of Justice and Equality (2018). Op cit.
[105] Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (2019). Op Cit.
[106] Ibid.
[107] Ibid.
[108] McGinnity, F. et al (March 2018). Op Cit.

○ There is a wide diversity of languages spoken among Roma in Ireland, with the majority of people speaking Romani as their first language. Also, language and literacy were identified by service providers as significant barriers preventing children from fully engaging with the curriculum and parents from participating and engaging with the school community.[109]

○ schools need to recognise cultural diversity and implement inclusive practices to ensure the inclusion of very marginalised minority ethnic students such as Roma and Travellers.[110]

○ Issues relating to race, prejudice, and cultural diversity are still not adequately addressed within teacher education programmes and the policies and curriculum in Irish schools.[111]

# Sexual orientation

## Situation

○ A recent ETB Learner Survey (1,496 respondents) found that 4.8% identified as bisexual, 1.6 percent as 'gay man', 1.4% as lesbian woman, and 13.4% preferred not to indicate.[112]

○ "a lifetime history of self-harm" was reported by a third (34%) of LGBTI+ participant in a national health study. Nearly half of these (45.6%) reported that they had self-harmed within the past year, with nearly 60% relating their self-harm to their LGBTI+ identity and their struggle to be accepted by others and society.[113]

○ A 2019 school survey of LGBTI+ students found the following:
  o Many experience school as an unwelcoming place, resulting in increased levels of absenteeism
  o LGBTI+ students who feel unsafe and unwelcome in school have poorer educational outcomes
  o Six out of ten LGBTI+ young people surveyed said they had never attended programs or groups for LGBTI+ youth outside of school,

[109] Pavee Point and Department of Justice and Equality (2018). Op Cit.
[110] Ibid. And Quinlan, M., (2021). Op cit.
[111] Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (2019). Op Cit.
[112] Roe, S. (November 2021). Op Cit.
[113] GLEN, BeLonGTo, TCD, HSE, (2016)
 The LBGTIreland Report: national study of the mental health and wellbeing of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex people in Ireland.

underscoring the importance school-based support for this cohort of students,

- o An urban / rural divide in the experiences of LGBTI+ students was noted, with students in more urban settings appearing to perceive a greater number of supportive teachers in their school.[114]

## Experience

- ○ The 2019 school survey of LGBTI+ students found the following:
  - o Anti-LGBTI+ bullying is 'rife' throughout Irish secondary schools, which poses a threat to the wellbeing, mental health and welfare of LGBTI+ young people.
  - o 73% of LGBTI+ young people felt unsafe at school. 77% report being verbally harassed (name-called or verbally threatened). 38% experienced physical harassment (shoving and pushing). 11% were physically assaulted, kicked, punched or injured with a weapon. 43% experienced sexual harassment such as unwanted touching or sexual remarks. 39% were cyberbullied in the previous twelve months. Many avoid certain spaces or activities for fear of bullying or harassment, such as avoiding PE, toilets, changing rooms and canteen areas.
  - o 60% did not report bullying to school staff and the same percentage felt that school staff interventions were ineffective. Only a fifth of students reported that school staff always or usually intervened if they were present when homophobic remarks were made.  Almost half (45.1%) stated that staff never intervened,
  - o 68% of LGBTI+ students reported hearing homophobic remarks from other students, with these comments bothering and distressing over 50% of LGBTI+ students. 48% of LGBTI+ students reported hearing a homophobic remark from a teacher or staff member. 55% of LGBTI+ students reported hearing a transphobic remark from a teacher or staff member.[115]

- ○ 17% of the LGBTI+ respondents in a national survey had experienced identity-based bullying and 21% had witnessed LGBTI+ bullying in their workplace. 6% reported that they missed or skipped work to avoid receiving negative treatment due to being LGBTI+. Intersex (35.7%) and transgender (24%) participants were significantly more likely to have experienced LGBTI+ bullying in work, compared to gay male (18.6%), lesbian female (16%) and bisexual (9%) participants.[116]

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[114] BeLonGTo (2019). 2019 School Climate Survey.
[115] Ibid.
[116] GLEN, BeLonGTo, TCD, HSE, (2016). Op cit.

### Identity

❍ The level of support for LGBTI+ issues in participants' educational and employment environment is a factor in their deciding to come out.[117]

❍ Irish LGBTI+ young people are often forgotten in wider societal efforts to promote equality for LGBTI+ adults and as such, they feel they are left to 'bide their time' until they can leave school and be their most authentic selves.[118]

❍ Young people coming to terms with their LGBTI+ identity can suffer guilt, shame, frustration, isolation, and rejection, especially so in the absence of a supportive network that includes friends and supportive school staff.[119]

❍ 68% of LGBTI+ students felt that they were not taught anything positive about LGBTI+ identities.[120]

# Socio-economic status

### Situation

❍ In 2019, on enrolment to FET:
  o 31% of learners were unemployed
  o 30.8% learners had a lower secondary
  o 34.7% had an upper secondary education
  o 19.4% had a post-secondary non-tertiary education
  o 2.2% had a short-cycle tertiary education
  o 12.9% had a third level degree education.[121]

❍ Research on barriers to FET for under 25's, the long-term unemployed, people with disabilities, and members of migrant communities, found the following:
  o Economic and social welfare issues were noted as one of the set of barriers to FET including the impact of encountering FET as a precondition for welfare payments, potential loss of social welfare payments, gaps between payments, confusion around benefits as well as discrepancies in eligible courses.
  o Costs affiliated with courses, and the cost of travel and childcare were barriers to FET.

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[117] Ibid.
[118] BeLonGTo (2019). Op cit.
[119] Ibid.
[120] Ibid.
[121] Roe, S. (November 2021). Op Cit.

- Migrants noted specific barriers including the belief that they were unable to avail of FET due to social welfare restrictions, English language ability, non availability of classes on arrival, perceived lack of language training progression options, limited knowledge of the possible contribution of FET and a perception that to progress, you need 3rd level qualification; and ESOL provision is not necessarily tailored towards the labour market, for example, migrants may have good verbal skills but poor written skills and training doesn't address this.[122]

○ A survey of ETB staff asked respondents to rank which groups of learners, they considered to be most challenging to engage in learning. 19% of respondents said that people who are homeless were the most challenging to engage in FET.[123]

○ A recent ETB Leaner Survey (1,496 respondents) found that 34.6% of respondents were in education or training, 20.7% were unemployed, 20.1% were employed and 8.5% were engaged in home duties.[124]

○ Access to transport in rural communities impacts on access to services, including training and employment. Transport was identified as a barrier to participation in further education and training for lone parents living in rural areas.[125]

○ Research on educational inequalities resulting from Covid-19 found:
- Greater levels of educational inequality based on household income. High income households more advantaged in terms of access to resources and technology including access to complementary activities for their children such as online music classes, sport and so on, to address educational gaps for their children arising from school closures during the pandemic
- Parents with lower levels of educational attainment often lacked confidence in assisting children to learn
- Children of parents with lower levels of educational attainment were "significantly less likely" to report that they had received educational resources from their teacher or using educational apps and TV hubs
- Teachers reported difficulties with remote teaching and supports for children with additional educational needs, and teachers in the most disadvantaged schools were twice as likely as teachers from

[122] Solas 2017. Barriers to FET with particular reference to long-term unemployed and other vulnerable individuals.
[123] Roe, S. (November 2021). Op Cit.
[124] Ibid.
[125] Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (2017). Op Cit.

advantaged schools to report that their students were submitting work of a "much lower quality" than before

- o Children from disadvantaged backgrounds missed out on key resources, such as free meals, and access to extra-curricular and recreational facilities due to school closures, and
- o Data available suggests that those who are experiencing higher levels of disadvantage are also experiencing deeper negative effects of lockdowns.[126]

○ Research on the experiences of young families who are homeless found that their unstable housing situation interrupted or delayed their engagement with education OR employment, which creates a vicious circle in reducing their opportunities to exit homelessness.**[127]**

## Experience

○ 2014 national data indicates that, in the previous 2 years 7% of the population experienced discrimination in seeking employment, 5% of the population experienced in-work discrimination, and 3% experienced discrimination in accessing public services.[128]

## Identity

○ Issues of intersectionality which can give rise to experiences of multiple and compounding discrimination and inequality, are evident for people living in/at risk of poverty with diverse identities involving more than one protected characteristic, including for Travellers, Black, Asian and other minority ethnic groups, disabled people, transgender people, and lone parents.

[126] Darmody, M., Smyth, E., and Russell, H. (2021). Impacts of COVID-19 Measures on Widening Educational Inequalities. Sage Publications.
[127] Lambert, S., O'Callaghan, D., and Jump, O. (2021). Young Families in the Homeless Crisis: Challenges and Solutions. Focus Ireland.
[128] McGinnity, F. et al. (2017). Op cit.

# 5   Validation Meeting with Civil Society

The Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Guidance on implementing the Duty recommends that public bodies consult with organisations and groups representing those identified groups for the Duty, as part of the process to finalise their assessment of equality and human rights issues.

CMETB invited relevant local organisations and groups to attend a meeting in February 2022. The purpose of the initial meeting was to explain the Duty, the purpose of the assessment and their required input, and to determine:

- Whether the equality and human rights issues identified in the draft assessment adequately reflects the situation, experience and identity of the identified groups and

- If there were any gaps in the assessment data and information, in particular to the local context.

Participants were then given the draft assessment to consider and their feedback was taken at a follow-up meeting.

**cmetb**

Bord Oideachais agus Oiliúna
an Chabháin agus Mhuineacháin

*Cavan and Monaghan
Education and Training Board*

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