Dyslexia Ireland

POLICY COVERSHEET

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Section 42 of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014: The Public Sector Equality And Human Rights Duty (the Duty), is a statutory obligation on public bodies to have regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination against,
- Promote equality of opportunity for, and
- Protect the human rights of employees (including prospective employees), service users and policy beneficiaries of the organisation.

Public bodies must undertake three steps in giving effect to the Duty:

Step 1. Assess: Undertake an assessment of the equality and human rights issues facing the identified groups for the Duty, that have relevance to the specific functions of that public body, and make that assessment publicly available.

Step 2. Address: Identify and communicate the plans, policies and actions being taken or proposed, to address the issues identified in the assessment, in the plans, policies, programmes and services of the public body; and

Step 3. Report: Report annually on developments and achievements in implementing the Duty.

The identified groups for the Duty are:

- Those groups covered by the nine grounds under equality legislation:
  1. gender (including gender identity, gender expression and sex characteristics)
  2. civil status
  3. family status (including lone parents and people with caring responsibilities)
  4. age
  5. disability (including physical, sensory, and intellectual disabilities, mental health issues, and chronic illness)
  6. sexual orientation
  7. race (including skin colour, nationality and ethnic origin),
  8. religion (including any or no religious belief), and
  9. membership of the Traveller community.

- Rights holders under the various international human rights instruments.
- The Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission recommend inclusion of those at risk of or experiencing poverty and social exclusion as an identified ground for the Duty, thus adding a further ground of 'socio-economic status'.

While the disability ground is of core relevance to Dyslexia Ireland, the other protected grounds are also of relevance.

Our employer role means we must be concerned to address equality and human rights concerns for prospective and current employees who are members of one or more of the protected grounds. Our roles as service providers and as advocates for people with disabilities, means we must be concerned to ensure that the diversity of people with disabilities is considered in regard to how we plan, deliver and review our service provision and advocacy.

The Duty covers all functions of an organisation. For Dyslexia Ireland this encompasses the following functions:

- employment;
- service provision;
- advocacy and campaigning;
- training; and
- corporate functions.

Equality and Human Rights Values Statement

Introduction

This is Dyslexia Ireland's equality and human rights values statement. It has been developed using a template developed for use by the Disability Federation of Ireland (DFI) and its member organisations in taking a values-led approach to implementing the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty (the Duty).

Organisational values are central to organisational culture, which in turn, impacts on the priorities, processes, and practice of an organisation. A values-led approach to the Duty can assist in mobilising organisational culture behind implementation of the Duty and can serve to embed a focus on equality and human rights within the culture of an organisation.

The values statement identifies and defines five interlinked values that motivate a concern for equality and human rights, that underpins implementation of the Duty including: voice; inclusion; respect; social justice; and autonomy. The implications of each of these values for organisational priorities and processes are established in:

- a statement of priority: the implications of the value for the change sought and priorities pursued by the organisation across its various functions, to take account of equality and human rights concerns; and
- a statement of process: the implications of the value for the way the organisation works in pursuing this change, to take account of equality and human rights concerns.

The statements of priority and of process serve as benchmarks against which to check and assess an ongoing organisational alignment with the ambitions set for equality and human rights in implementing the Address Step of Duty.

The equality and human rights values statement informs implementation of the Duty by:

- framing the assessment of equality and issues, the first step of the Duty, to ensure the full scope of equality and human rights is addressed; and
- providing benchmarks, with value statements of priority and process, to assist decision-making under the Address Step of the Duty, to assist the organisation to remain aligned with and sustain our ambition for equality and human rights.

The Five Core Equality and Human Rights Values

1. Inclusion
2. Respect
3. Voice
4. Social Justice
5. Autonomy

These five values are interlinked, such that each value needs to be engaged and embedded in our work to eliminate discrimination, promote equality of opportunity, and protect human rights.

1. INCLUSION

Inclusion is about valuing and accommodating diversity. It involves taking account of and responding to different needs that flow from this diversity, and having the supports in place to enable the participation of this diversity of people.

Statement of Priority: We seek to ensure people's diversity is valued and that universal design is the norm in ensuring people with disabilities' participation in society. In doing so, we seek to ensure that the specific situation, experience and needs of people with disabilities (especially those with dyslexia and dyscalculia, our key stakeholders) are taken into account in the design, delivery and development of services, wider policymaking, and the public realm. We seek to ensure this is done in a manner that addresses issues of intersectionality, recognising the multiple identities people with disabilities and learning difficulties hold.

Statement of Process: We work in a manner that values diversity. We make reasonable accommodation for people with disabilities, taking account of intersectionality. We do so in a manner that enables their full and effective participation, and reaches out to ensure the involvement of those most isolated or marginalised. Further, we work in a manner that makes reasonable accommodation for the specific needs of staff from across the identified groups, in our workplace processes.

2. RESPECT

Respect is about dignity and human worth. It involves equal treatment and sustaining relationships of solidarity.

Statement of Priority: We seek the sustaining of organisational cultures of openness and transparency, and respect for all people, especially those with disabilities and learning differences. We promote public perceptions of people with disabilities (in particular those with dyslexia and dyscalculia) rooted in a social model of disability. We seek the elimination of discrimination against, and harassment of, people with disabilities and other minority groups.

Statement of Process: We work in a manner that involves relationships of solidarity and respects people's individual boundaries. We prevent and effectively address incidents of discrimination against, and harassment of the diversity of people with disabilities, especially those with dyslexia and dyscalculia. We work to challenge stereotypes, as all stereotypes (both negative and positive) take focus away from each individual's unique experience and needs. Furthermore, we ensure our workplace processes are based on relationships of solidarity, and prevent and effectively address issues of discrimination and harassment for staff from across the identified groups.

3. VOICE

Voice is about speaking out, being heard, having a say, and participation in decision-making. It involves advocacy, listening, collaboration, and accountability.

Statement of Priority: We seek to ensure recognition for the voice of people with disabilities (especially those with dyslexia and dyscalculia) and that the means are in place for this voice to be heard and acted upon. These means include consultation, feedback mechanisms, co-design of services, and participation in decision-making.

Statement of Process: We work in a manner that recognises the voice of people with disabilities (especially those with dyslexia and dyscalculia) in our organisation. We have systems in place to engage with this voice in defining our mandate and in our strategic decision-making. We take steps to facilitate people with dyslexia and dyscalculia to give voice to their perspectives and preferences so that these can be acted upon. Further, we work in a manner that recognises and engages with the voice of staff from across all the identified groups, in our workplace processes.

4. SOCIAL JUSTICE

Social justice is about resources and the distribution of resources. It involves the elimination of structural inequality.

Statement of Priority: We seek to ensure a targeting of organisational and societal resources such that:

- the equality gap between people with disabilities and non-disabled people is addressed;
- people with disabilities have a quality standard of living;
- the costs of disability are addressed; and

- there is adequate investment in the supports required by people with disabilities, especially those with dyslexia and dyscalculia.

Statement of Process: We work in a manner that sees the potential in the person. We plan for, and address the resource barriers that block the participation of the diversity of people with disabilities and, in our workplace processes, of staff from the identified groups. We ensure organisational resources are distributed in a manner that is transparent and fair across this diversity.

5. AUTONOMY

Autonomy is about having meaningful choices and options. It involves self-determination and having control over one's choices and options.

Statement of Priority: We seek to ensure people with disabilities, especially those with dyslexia and dyscalculia, have access to the range of services and supports they need to enable independence, interdependence and living lives of their choosing to their fullest potential. We seek to ensure that the deployment of these services and supports, and any such technology, respects the rights of people with disabilities and ensures their control over choices made.

Statement of Process: We work in a manner that offers options for people with disabilities (especially those with dyslexia and dyscalculia), that facilitates, supports, and informs their choices, enabling them to explore beyond the boundaries that can be set for them. Further, we enable staff from the identified groups to gain experience and have options that enable them to have choices in progressing their work careers.