

Gaisce Human Rights and Equality Policy

Introduction

At Gaisce – The President’s Award, we are committed to promoting and upholding human rights, equality, and dignity for all individuals. This policy is rooted in our core values and aligns with our legal obligations under Irish law, particularly the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014, the Equality Acts 1998-2015, and other relevant legislation.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

1. Ensure compliance with Irish human rights and equality legislation and the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty.
2. Promote an inclusive and diverse workplace where every individual feels respected and valued.
3. Provide guidelines to identify, prevent, and address discrimination, harassment, and inequality.
4. Embed human rights principles into our practices, policies, and decision-making processes.

This policy should be read in conjunction with Gaisce’s Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Framework.

Policy Statement

Gaisce is committed to challenging all forms of inequality and acknowledges that discrimination affects people in complex ways. To this end Gaisce aims to ensure that individuals are treated fairly and with dignity and respect regardless of their **Age, Civil Status, Disability (including physical, intellectual, learning, cognitive, emotional or medical conditions), Family Status, Gender, Housing Assistance Payment, Membership of the Traveller Community, Race (colour, nationality or ethnic origins), Religion, Sexual Orientation**, hereafter referred to as protected grounds.

Scope

This policy applies to all Gaisce employees and volunteers. It governs behaviour and interactions within the workplace and in all work-related activities, whether on-site, off-site, or online. This policy also applies to the advertising of jobs and recruitment and selection, terms and conditions of employment, training and development, opportunities for promotion, conditions of service and performance review procedures.

Principles

We commit to the following principles:

1. **Equality and Non-Discrimination:** Treating all individuals equally, irrespective of gender, marital status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race, membership of the Traveller community, or socio-economic status.
 2. **Human Dignity & Respect:** Upholding the inherent dignity of every person and fostering an environment of mutual respect.
 3. **Accessibility:** Ensuring all facilities, services, and information are accessible to individuals with disabilities and other needs.
 4. **Accountability:** Holding ourselves accountable for upholding human rights and equality within our operations and relationships.
 5. **Inclusivity:** Encouraging and celebrating diversity in all its forms, recognizing its value to our organization and society.
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Legal Framework

We are committed to complying with the following Irish legislation:

- **Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014:** This Act establishes the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission and places a public sector duty on public bodies to have regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, promote equality of opportunity and protect human rights.
 - **Equality Acts 1998-2015:** These Acts address discrimination on nine grounds: gender, marital status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race, and membership of the Traveller community.
 - **Employment Equality Acts 1998-2015:** These Acts address discrimination in employment on the nine grounds.
 - **Equal Status Acts 2000-2015:** These Acts address discrimination in the provision of goods and services, accommodation, and education on the nine grounds.
 - **Disability Act 2005:** This Act promotes the inclusion of persons with disabilities and requires public bodies to make services accessible.
 - **Data Protection Acts 1988-2018 and GDPR:** These Acts protect individuals' rights regarding their personal data.
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Responsibilities

1. **Leadership team:** Responsible for implementing and monitoring this policy.

2. **Employees:** Expected to uphold the principles of equality and human rights in their daily interactions and report concerns promptly.
 3. **Equality Lead [TBC or delegated support]:** Designated individual to oversee the policy's application, provide training, and handle complaints.
 4. **All Individuals:** Responsible for treating others with respect and dignity and for adhering to this policy.
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Prohibited Conduct

1. **Direct Discrimination:** Treating someone less favourably because of a protected characteristic.
2. **Indirect Discrimination:** Applying a provision, criterion, or practice that puts people with a protected characteristic at a particular disadvantage.
3. **Harassment:** Unwanted conduct related to a protected characteristic that breaches a person's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating, or offensive environment.
4. **Victimisation:** Treating someone less favourably because they have made a complaint or taken action under equality legislation.

Procedures

1. **Raising Concerns:** Employees and stakeholders may report concerns to their line manager or the CEO.
 2. **Investigations:** All reports will follow the grievance process outlined in the Employee Handbook.
 3. **Resolution:** Appropriate action, including disciplinary measures or mediation, in accordance with the Employee Handbook, will be taken to resolve issues and prevent recurrence.
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Complaints:

All complaints from employees in relation to employment equality or alleged discrimination will be handled in accordance with relevant procedures. Any person who wishes to raise issues concerning alleged discrimination or unfairness should do so in the first instance by contacting their manager.

Gaisce are committed to ensuring that all issues concerning alleged breaches of this policy will be dealt with seriously, promptly and with appropriate regard for confidentiality.

Training and Awareness

Gaisce will provide regular training on human rights and equality to:

- Educate employees on their responsibilities under this policy.

- Promote awareness of unconscious bias and inclusive practices.
 - Equip management with tools to handle complaints effectively.
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Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure it remains effective and compliant with legislative changes. Feedback from employees and stakeholders will be considered in each review.

Conclusion

Gaisce – The President’s Award is dedicated to creating an environment where human rights and equality are integral to our culture. By embracing these principles, we aim to build a more inclusive, fair, and respectful workplace and society.
