

Brief profile

Contact details

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Overview

The Equality Authority works to promote equality of opportunity and to eliminate discrimination in relation to employment, the provision of goods and services, of accommodation and by educational establishments on nine grounds: gender, family status, civil status (that is, marital or civil partnership), age, sexual orientation, race, disability, religion and membership of the Traveller community.

Type of equality body

The *Equality Authority of Ireland* is a predominantly promotion-type and legal support body¹.

Grounds and fields of discrimination covered

Grounds	Fields	
	Employment	Beyond employment (education, goods & services, housing, etc.)
Gender	◆	◆
Race and ethnic origin	◆	◆
Age	◆	◆
Disability	◆	◆
Sexual orientation	◆	◆
Religion and belief	◆	◆
Other *	◆	◆

* The other grounds are: **civil status** (which means being single, married, separated, divorced, widowed, in a same-sex civil partnership or being a former civil partner in a civil partnership that has ended civil partnership), **family status** (which means a parent of a person under 18 years or the resident primary carer or a parent of a person with a disability) and **membership of the Traveller community** (which means people who are commonly called Travellers, who are identified both by Travellers and others as people with a shared history, culture and traditions, identified historically as a nomadic way of life on the island of Ireland).

¹ According to a [European Commission study on Equality Bodies](#), predominantly promotion-type equality bodies “spend the bulk of their time and resources on a broader mix of activities that include supporting good practice in organisations, raising awareness of rights, developing a knowledge base on equality and non-discrimination, and providing legal advice and assistance to individual victims of discrimination” (page 44).

Detailed profile

Brief history

The Equality Authority was established in 1999 under the Employment Equality Act 1998. Its functions and powers were amended under the Equal Status Act 2000, the Equality Act 2004 and the Civil Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2008. It is also accorded a number of functions under the Intoxicating Liquor Act 2003.

Mandate

- **Powers:** the Equality Authority is a predominantly promotion-type and legal support body;
- **Litigation powers:**
 - Representing in front of courts;
 - Bringing proceedings in its own name;
 - Intervening before the court;
 - Intervening as *amicus curiae*;
 - Bringing proceedings on behalf of a person where it is not reasonable for the person to do so herself or himself;
 - Representing clients in the statutory mediation process established under the equality legislation;
 - Reaching settlements on behalf of clients;
 - Brining proceedings to the Circuit Court to enforce orders made in the Equality Tribunal;
 - Conducting inquiries;
 - Inviting employers to undertake employment equality reviews and prepare employment equality action plans;
 - Inviting providers of goods and services, of accommodation and inviting educational establishments to undertake equality reviews and prepare equality action plans relating to their provision of goods and services;
 - Carrying out an equality review and preparing an equality action plan in relation to employers or providers of goods and services or educational establishments

Grounds and fields of discrimination covered

Grounds	Fields					
	Employment	Education	Housing	Social protection	Goods and Services	Discriminatory advertising
Gender	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆
Race and ethnic origin	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆
Age	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆
Disability	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆
Sexual orientation	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆
Religion and belief	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆
Other *	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆

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Activities

- Promotional activities aimed at duty bearers (by way of trainings, guidance material, etc.);
- Promotional activities aimed at potential victims (trainings, awareness raising, etc.);
- Communication activities;
- Publications and research projects;
- Policy contributions, seeking to influence government policy;
- Keeping the equality legislation under review;
- Provision of information on family leave entitlements;
- Number of queries on equality legislation / legal cases handled per year: **4905** queries and **332** cases handled (year 2010).

Structure

1. Management structure

- Type: collegiate headed equality body (led by a distinct board);
- Details:
 - An Authority (board) of between 12 and 16 members is appointed by the Minister for Justice and Equality.
 - A Chief Executive Officer manages and controls the staff, administration and business of the Authority and performs other functions that are determined by the board.

2. Institutional structure

- Type: stand alone dedicated national equality body;
- Details: the work is divided across five sections: Legal, Communications, Research, Development, and Administration.

3. Nomination of senior staff and board:

Two board members nominated by representatives of employers; two board members nominated by representatives of employees (that is, representatives of employees in Ireland generally – not the staff of the Equality Authority), and all four appointed by the Minister for Justice and Equality; all others nominated and appointed by the Minister on the basis of their knowledge or experience in consumer, social affairs or equality issues, issues related to the provision of goods or services, or other matters such as law, finance, management or administration that appears to the Minister to be relevant to the functions of the Authority.

Senior staff members are civil servants; some are recruited specifically to the Equality Authority through competitions open to the public; others are assigned from the pool of available staff in the employment of the Department of Justice and Equality.

4. Number of staff: 34.

Operating budget (for the parts of the organization dealing with equality issues)

2.984.000 € (for 2012)

Accountability (reporting to)

On the content of the work, a three-year strategic plan must be submitted to the Minister for Justice and Equality for approval by the Minister, who then lays it before Parliament.

On the use of public funds, the CEO is accountable to Parliament.

Contact details (address, key contact person, website)

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