



Comhairle Cathrach
Bhaile Átha Cliath
Dublin City Council



Evidence Book for the assessment of equality and human rights issues

Document History

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1 Introduction

The public sector equality and human rights duty requires public bodies to undertake an assessment of the equality and human rights issues that are relevant to their functions and purpose. These are issues that face the groups identified for the Duty and that are relevant to the functions and purpose of the Departments.

These issues relate to the:

- **Situation** of the group in terms of their access to resources and any particular disadvantage they experience.
- **Experience** of the group in terms of the quality of their interaction with employers and service providers and the wider society.
- **Identity** of the group in terms of how they chose to give expression to their identity and the specific needs that arise from this.

The **groups identified for the Duty** are those:

- covered by the grounds of gender (including gender expression, gender identity and sex characteristics), civil status, family status (including lone parents and carers), age, disability (broadly defined to include all impairment groups), sexual orientation, race, religion, membership of the Traveller community, and socio-economic status (at risk of or experiencing poverty and exclusion);
- at the intersections of these grounds; and
- rights holders under relevant human rights instruments.

This **evidence book document** accompanies the composite assessment of equality and human rights issues undertaken by the various Departments of Dublin City Council. It provides the evidence-base gathered for this assessment, drawn from Dublin City Council Plans and Strategies; Public Policy Documents; National Research; International Research, and Submissions to Human Rights Bodies.

2 Evidence Based References

2.1 Dublin City Council Plans and Strategies

The 2016 [Dublin City Local Economic and Community Plan 2016-2021](#) identifies issues of situation and experience across the identified groups.

In relation to **situation**:

- In the fourth quarter of 2015, the unemployment rate for Dublin stood at 7.6%, its lowest rate in six years, having peaked in 2012 at 13%. However, the youth unemployment rate remained persistently high at 15%.
- The distribution of affluence across the city is uneven, with 75% of residents in the Dublin City Council South East area ranked as affluent or very affluent while the same is true for just 5% of residents in both the South Central and North Central areas. 48% and 62% of residents in the North Central and North West areas respectively are categorised as marginally below average, disadvantaged or very disadvantaged. There are pockets of disadvantage within some of the most affluent areas of Dublin City.
- The EU Survey on Income and Living Conditions 2013, showed the proportions of the population of the Dublin region that were: at risk of poverty (9.1%), experiencing deprivation (28.1%) and living in consistent poverty (4.9%). Key influencing factors were: being unemployed, being unable to work due to a disability or illness, living in social housing, parenting alone or being a child (under 17 years). Lone parent households experienced higher at risk of poverty rates (31.7%), deprivation rates (63.2%) and consistent poverty rates (23%) than any other type of household.
- Traveller and Roma communities are particularly vulnerable to poverty and social exclusion and face barriers in accessing education, training, employment and services.
- In July 2015 there were 21,592 applications on the Dublin City Council social housing waiting list comprising 25,617 adults and 16,489 children. In 2014, almost 5,000 adult individuals accessed homeless accommodation in the Dublin Region and almost 800 of these service users were moved into housing. At the rough sleeper count in winter 2015, there were 91 people confirmed sleeping rough in the Dublin region on that night. This was a 46% decrease since 2014 when 168 people were confirmed as rough sleeping.
- The high cost of private rental property in Dublin has a disproportionate effect on low income earners. Low earnings, together with a high demand for accommodation, put people in receipt of rent supplement at increased risk of homelessness.
- A ComReg survey in June 2015 found that 89% of Dublin residents had access to fixed-line broadband. There were differences in access between higher socio-economic groups (86%) and lower socio-economic groups (70%).
- In the 2014 local elections, Dublin City had one of the lowest turnout rates nationally, with an average of 43%, with less than 30% of those registered to vote casting a ballot in parts of the inner city and suburbs to the west.

In relation to **experience**:

- Harassment, bullying and intimidation (including that which is homophobic, gender-based or racially motivated) in the public realm create fear and the perception that Dublin is not safe.
- In the six-month period July to December 2014, the European Network Against Racism's iReport.ie system for reporting racist incidents was alerted to 125 racist incidents nationally, 59 of which occurred in Dublin.

The 2016 [Dublin City Council Integration Strategy 2016-2020](#) identifies issues of situation, experience and identity for migrants.

In relation to **situation**:

- Difficulties in knowing how to access and navigate support to develop personal and economic potential.
- Low levels of migrant engagement in consultation structures such as PPN.
- Low participation in democratic processes.
- Difficulties in knowing how to access and navigate support to develop personal and economic potential. Lack of awareness of Dublin City Council services and supports among some of the migrant population. Lack of understanding of tenancy rights and obligations in relation to housing.
- Lack of provision of accessible and affordable meeting spaces for migrant organisations and events.

In relation to **experience**:

- Racist Graffiti and antisocial behaviour.

In relation to **identity**:

- Service providers need to have an understanding of the differing needs of diverse communities and to develop intercultural competencies to reasonably meet their needs.
- Lack of English is the single most important barrier to long-term integration in Ireland. Lack of a centralised, readily available plain English migrant-specific information.
- Differing support needs must not be ignored, such as older people who may still have poor English language skills, and newly arrived young migrants and refugees who may be very highly skilled, but whose vocational qualifications are not recognised in Ireland.
- Minority faith groups excluded from interfaith initiatives.

The 2018 Dublin City Council '[Securing Roots: Integrating Minority Ethnic People into Local Community Services in the North East Inner City](#)' identifies issues of situation and identity for Black and minority ethnic people.

In relation to **situation**:

- The lack of recognition of migrants' qualifications often results in them depending on low income jobs rather than accessing employment in their field of expertise.

- The migrant minority ethnic community population are more likely to live in insecure privately rented accommodation. Some minority ethnic people are living in overcrowded conditions. Of the homeless participants in community organisations, approx. 20% were from Minority Ethnic Communities.
- Deterrents to participation in community services and organisations include: Lack of sufficient access to English language supports; the fear of racism; high level of anxiety and fear caused by increased police presence in response to gangland crime, violence and open drug dealing; inadequate supports to enable people participate in activities outside the home such as access to affordable childcare; and separate challenges for specific groups such as the Roma community.
- There is a low level of minority ethnic people participating in the governance of community organisations.
- There is a general lack of knowledge of existing services among migrant minority ethnic people.

In relation to **identity**:

- A limited number of community organisations across the area have developed a variety of different approaches to providing information in other languages but generally have little or no resources for this.

The 2020 [Dublin City Council Strategic Plan for Housing and Disability](#) identifies issues for people with disabilities.

In relation to **situation**:

- On average 2–3% of housing applications received annually are from people with a disability. It is accepted by disability organisations that the housing need of people with a disability is significantly under-represented on Dublin City Council's Housing List.
- The report Homelessness: An Unhealthy State (2015, O'Reilly et al) concluded that in excess of 50% of a sample of 532 homeless service users in Supported and Private Emergency Accommodation in the Dublin Region were diagnosed with some form of mental illness. However, the rate was higher amongst those who also engaged in frequent rough sleeping.
- No budget for Disability Service Providers to enable them to provide the staffing required to facilitate people with disabilities living independently in the community.
- Lack of joined up thinking with state bodies and service providers.
- Staff that appear to lack knowledge or empathy with people with disabilities asking for advice or help.

In relation to **experience**:

- Large residential institutions, while maximising the pooling of support services, segregate residents from the community and from normal social life. Research has demonstrated that such institutions are not able to deliver the same quality of life for their residents as community based alternatives.

In relation to **identity**:

- Need for a universal design approach to housing.
- Lack of a continuous supply of appropriate, affordable housing is a significant barrier to effective delivery of housing for people with disabilities.
- Rent Allowance tenants' required adaptations/aids/appliances are often not accepted by landlords in private rented accommodation.
- Even with a Housing Adaptation Grant, families are often unable to finance the excess cost required to complete home adaptation.
- Moving to a new area is not just about having an accessible home; the person also needs access to the local community.

The 2014 [Dublin City Council Age Friendly Strategy 2014-2019](#) identifies issues of situation, experience and identity for older people.

In relation to **situation**:

- Opportunities for paid employment are practically non-existent. When employed, there are few opportunities for older people to upskill, and they are often overlooked for promotion.
- Many older people's houses are old and damp and too expensive to heat properly.
- Lack of door-to-door transport makes it hard to access services and events.
- Physical activities targeting older people are patchy, and too often concentrated in one area.
- Although many of the city's larger parks are widely used by older people, smaller local parks are not, due to anti-social behaviour, poor or no seating, restricted access and lack of organised activities.
- Insufficient public toilets and on-street seating often result in older people curtailing their activities.

In relation to **experience**:

- Older people often feel voiceless and brushed aside. Their opinions are dismissed by services and businesses and their complaints are not taken seriously. They are not consulted on issues which affect their lives.
- Feedback from agencies following complaints is scarce, as is feedback from public representatives and agencies after public meetings and consultations.
- There is no coordinated approach to the provision of information. Clear, concise information, devoid of jargon and suitable for those with literacy and sight issues, is required.
- Service providers calling without prior appointments can cause anxiety among older people. There should be an interagency approach to identify and engage with vulnerable older people.

In relation to **identity**:

- There is an over-reliance on the internet in the provision of information. Many older people do not use computers or credit cards.
- Older people are not a single uniform group, as individuals experience older age differently depending on their gender, sexuality, ethnicity, socio-economic background, health, education and their own perception of what constitutes older age.

The 2020 [Dublin City Council LGBT+ Employee Inclusion Strategy 2020-2024](#) identifies issues of situation, experience and identity for LGBT+ people.

In relation to **situation**:

- Need for awareness of supports that are available and a supportive framework in the workplace.
- Need for consultation and participation in decision-making that affects them.

In relation to **experience**:

- Need to be visible and accepted for the person they are and be able to be their authentic selves without negative consequences or fear of such.
- Need to feel welcomed, valued and included
- Need for positive, non-stereotypical representation of LGBT+ people
- Need to have concerns raised receive attention
- Need to address homophobic and transphobic bullying

In relation to **identity**:

- Need for gender neutral facilities

2.2 Public Policy Documents

The 2020 [Roadmap for Social Inclusion 2020-2025](#) identifies issues situation and identity on the socio-economic status ground.

In relation to **situation**:

- 21.1% of population at risk of poverty or social exclusion (2018).
- 5.2% of the population suffering severe material deprivation and 5.6% of the population in consistent poverty (2018).
- In-work at risk of poverty rate is 4.8% (2018).

In relation to **identity**:

- Marginalised groups who may be subject to unconscious and often conscious bias, include women, migrants, members of the Travelling and Roma communities, members of the LGBTI+ community, and former prisoners.
- Although, by some measures, Ireland has the lowest reported prevalence of disability in the EU, poverty rates for people who self-report a disability are among the highest in Europe - a rate of 36.9% in 2018.

- One of the key factors which is perceived to give rise to a lower employment rate for women is the requirement, mainly carried by women, to care for children and the associated difficulties posed by the availability, and high costs, of early learning and care.

The 2017 [National Disability Inclusion Strategy 2017-2022](#) identifies issues of situation, experience, and identity for disabled people.

In relation to **situation**:

- 31% of disabled people are in paid employment compared with 71% of people without a disability being in employment
- Higher numbers of people with disabilities work part time which contributes to a lower earning potential: Among those at work, one-third of people with a disability are working part-time, compared to one-fifth of people without a disability.
- The chances of exiting employment are twice as high for someone with a disability compared to an otherwise identical individual without a disability.
- People with disabilities are more likely to live alone.
- People with disabilities experience high levels of consistent poverty: 42% of people with disabilities live in a jobless household, putting them at high risk of poverty.

In relation to **experience**:

- Disabled people are more likely to live alone
- Lack of information and awareness among disabled people about their options for supported decision making
- Lack of training for staff working in sectors that interact with disabled people

In relation to **identity**,

- Access issues for disabled people in public buildings, public transport, IT systems used in service provision, and outdoor facilities, absence of universal design of built environment
- Lack of provision for Irish Sign Language users when accessing public services with free interpretation needed when accessing/availing of services

The 2015 '[Comprehensive Employment Strategy for People with Disabilities 2025-2024](#)' identifies issues of situation, experience, and identity for disabled people.

In relation to **situation**:

- People with disabilities in Ireland are only half as likely to be in employment as others of working age, due to: level of education and skills; fears around loss of benefits; employer know-how; low expectations; limited re-entry to work following onset of a disability; and higher incidence of ill-health. The 2011 census showed 33% of people with disabilities of working age in work, compared to 66% of non-disabled people.

In relation to **experience**:

- Fears also play a role in lowering the numbers interested in a job – a perception there are no suitable jobs available, fears of losing supports or benefits, worry about possible employer attitudes, possible isolation or discrimination.

In relation to **identity**:

- The main perceived barriers for those out of work who wish to work are: Flexible work arrangements (45%); Modified tasks (29%); Wage subsidy (24%); Transport/parking (17%); Accessible building (13%); Human support (7%); and Assistive technology or physical adjustments (4%).
- Universal design of workplaces would facilitate employees with disabilities to avail of employment opportunities without need for further adaptation.
- Reasonable accommodation is required such as changes to work tasks, worktimes, workstations, and provision of assistive technology.
- Work experience as a measure to employ people with disabilities needs to be promoted.

The 2019 [National LGBTI Inclusion Strategy 2019-2021](#) identifies issues of situation, experience and identity for LGBTI people.

In relation to **situation**:

- Many of the issues which prevent LGBTI+ people from achieving their full potential in Irish society are structural in nature.
- LGBTI+ adults reported that significant barriers to workplace inclusion still persist for LGBTI+ employees.
- Mainstream services need to adapt to ensure that they are inclusive of LGBTI+ service users and that LGBTI+ people are confident that their needs will be addressed by these services.

In relation to **experience**:

- The highest rates of discrimination were reported by people who identify as LGBTI+ (33.2%), followed by persons from non-white ethnic backgrounds (33.1%), unemployed (30.2%) and non-Irish (26.7%) (CSO).
- LGBTI+ people continue to experience unacceptable levels of harassment and discrimination in some workplaces.
- The need for increased and non-stereotypical representation of LGBTI+ identities arose as a consistent theme throughout the consultation process.
- LGBTI+ people do not always feel safe in the public space.
- Need to create a safe and supportive environment for LGBTI+ people.
- 'Ending sexuality and gender oppression' (encompassing workplace discrimination) was the highest rated issue in the second Burning Issues survey, results of which were published in 2016.

In relation to **identity**:

- There is a risk that Irish society may consider that LGBTI+ people have achieved full equality and inclusion, now that marriage equality has been achieved and that the Gender Recognition Act 2015 has been enacted - however, challenges still remain.
- Being able to work in an environment where a person can be fully open about their sexuality and gender identity and bringing their authentic self without fear of discrimination was rated the most important issue by respondents in the first 'Burning Issues' survey of LGBT people carried out by the National LGBT Federation in 2009.
- Difficulties coming out in the workplace, particularly for transgender people.
- Gender-segregated spaces, such as single-sex schools, toilets and changing facilities, for transgender and non-binary young people.
- Older people, migrants, Travellers, people with disabilities, and prisoners among the LGBTI+ community are at higher risk of multiple discrimination and marginalisation.
- Need for greater awareness of LGBTI+ issues in the workplace and in education and to build the capacity of employers and public service providers to understand and respond to LGBTI+ needs.

The 2018 [LGBTI National Youth Strategy 2018-2020](#) identifies issues of experience and identity in relation to LGBTI people.

In relation to **experience**:

- LGBTI+ young people experience discrimination, victimisation, bullying in schools/colleges/workplace community.

In relation to **identity**:

- Difficulties associated with acceptance of LGBTI+ identity by families, communities and broader society.
- Difficulties coming out in the workplace, particularly for transgender people.
- Limited knowledge and understanding of LGBTI+ issues by mainstream service providers and professionals who encounter LGBTI+ young people.
- What is not known, however, is how many of these young people are LGBTI+, given that limited data collection methods exist to capture LGBTI+ information. There is still no official data on transgender or non-binary people.
- Limited data and surveys.
- Limited understanding by professional service providers and broader society of LGBTI+ issues.

The '[National Positive Ageing Strategy](#)' identifies issues of situation, experience and identity for older people:

In relation to **situation**:

- Barriers (legislative, attitudinal, custom and practice) to continued employment and training opportunities.
- Underdeveloped IT skills constitute a significant barrier to accessing information for some people as they age.
- Need for a better awareness of the needs and preferences of our ageing society during policy and service development is necessary by adopting more comprehensive and inclusive approach to consultation

In relation to **experience**:

- Ageism and age discrimination.
- Age related stereotypes: based on myths and misinformation about older people's competencies, beliefs and abilities.

In relation to **identity**:

- Need for particular attention to the needs of more marginalised, vulnerable, hard-to-reach and minority groups of older people such as older migrants and people from different ethnic backgrounds; older people with specific physical and intellectual disabilities; Travellers; and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender older people.
- Need for options for gradual retirement.
- Workplaces will need to be adapted to become more age friendly.

The 2023 [National Policy Framework for Children and Young People 2023-2028](#) identifies issues of situation and experience for children and young people.

In relation to **situation**:

- 19.9% of 0-17 years old experience deprivation, 15.2% are at risk of poverty, and 7.5% experience consistent poverty (SILC 2022).

In relation to **experience**:

- Increases in housing costs, higher costs of care and changing access to occupational pensions ... these issues have created a sense of unfairness that should not be ignored. Faced with these and other challenges, younger people appear to be losing faith in democratic systems, as evidenced by measures of trust in government, increasing the potential for the breakdown of social cohesion, through the rise of extremist politics and civil unrest . Some argue that younger people's interests are not well represented in our democracies, and have expressed deep concern about intergenerational inequality.
- Children also raised issues with the extent to which their voice was heard, and their views taken seriously. As the report summarises, "children described their dissatisfaction with not having a voice or choice on matters that affect them.
- The responses within this theme captured children's descriptions of bullying by peers, siblings, or older teenagers. This also captured adults shouting at them and "bossing them about."

The 2024 [National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy 2024-2028](#) identifies issues of situation, experience and identity for Travellers and for Roma.

In relation to **situation**:

- According to Census 2022, the unemployment rate for Travellers aged 15-65 years was 61%, broken down between a female unemployment rate of 58% and a male unemployment rate of 63%.
- Census 2022 separately identified Roma as an ethnicity. Based on the principal economic status question, an employment rate of 61% and an unemployment rate of 17% are indicated for members of the Roma community, which is substantially worse than the national rates.
- In relation to experience:
- In the 2020 FRA survey, 38% of Irish Travellers interviewed reported experiencing discrimination while job-seeking in the six months prior to being surveyed. This figure rose to 70% within five years. Most survey respondents did not report or file a complaint about the discrimination they experienced. The proportion of Irish Traveller respondents who reported or filed a complaint (28%) was among the highest from all survey groups.
- The 2018 Roma Needs Assessment outlined that 78.9% of the respondents reported feeling discriminated against in attempting to access employment and, for many, hiding their Roma identity felt like being the only option to secure and keep work.
- IPSOS (2023) found that attitudes towards Travellers and Roma were still significantly less positive than they were towards other diversity groups.
- The Roma are widely recognised as among one of the most discriminated ethnic groups and the community continues to experience misunderstanding, intolerance, discrimination and racism across EU member states. Evidence suggests that poor engagement of Roma in Irish society is attributable to marginalisation, discrimination, poor access to health and social services, and lack of a political voice.
- There was also a reluctance and fear for some Roma to engage with statutory agencies, due to experiences of discrimination, lack of trust in the State and fear of the State.

In relation to **identity**:

- In March 2017, the State recognised Travellers as a distinct ethnic group within the Irish nation. The recognition of Traveller ethnicity acted to counter stigma, increase Travellers feelings of self-esteem and inclusion, and to generate mutual recognition and respect between Travellers and the wider community; however, six years later, the Traveller community is still one of the most marginalised and discriminated groups in Ireland, facing extreme disadvantage and inequalities across a wide range of indicators, including in terms of health, education, employment and accommodation.

The [Arts Council Equality, Diversity & Human Rights Strategy](#) identifies issues of situation across the identified groups.

In relation to **situation**:

- Many inequities still exist within the arts and there is a substantial number of people who continue to experience barriers to engaging with and participating in the arts because of their socio-economic background, their ethnicity or religion, their sexual orientation or gender identity, their family status, their age, their membership of the Traveller Community, or through lack of accommodation of a disability.
- Women artists across a range of artistic disciplines continue to encounter serious impediments to advancing their careers and repertoire in a way that equates with their male peers.
- There is a need to ensure recipients and beneficiaries of awards and funding programmes better reflect the population profile of contemporary Ireland, inclusive of the most disadvantaged groups.
- There is a need to ensure that boards, staff, advisers and panellists, best reflect and represent the diversity of contemporary Ireland.

2.3 National Research

The 2017 report by IHREC and the ESRI, [Who Experiences Discrimination in Ireland, IHREC & ESRI, 2017](#) identifies issues of situation, experience and identity across the identified groups.

In relation to **situation**:

- The models also control for other characteristics related to the educational and financial resources people may have available, such as economic status, education qualifications and housing tenure. The relationship between these resources and discrimination is complex. On one hand, these factors affect individuals' exposure and response to discrimination (since they may have less economic power). On the other hand, resource inequalities can be partially the outcome of discriminatory processes.

In relation to **experience**:

- In 2014, 12 per cent of the population in Ireland reported experiencing some form of discrimination in the previous two years. Discrimination rates were highest in relation to seeking work (7 per cent), followed by the workplace (5 per cent), private services (5 per cent), and public services (3 per cent).
- Women report higher discrimination in the workplace - 6.7% of women, compared to 4.1% of men.
- Older workers (45–64 years) perceive more discrimination than younger workers in seeking work – 12% of those aged 45–64 years said they experienced discrimination in job searching compared to 5.2% of those aged 18–24 and 5.9% of those aged 25–44.
- Younger age groups report higher rates of discrimination in private services, with significant differences between those aged 18–24 years (7.6 per cent) and all older age groups (between 2.8 per cent and 5.5 per cent).
- Compared to White Irish respondents, Black respondents report higher discrimination in the workplace, in public services and in private services. Asian respondents report more discrimination than White Irish in private services. Nearly 10 per cent of the Black/Other

ethnicity group report discrimination in public services, compared to 3.2 and 3.6 per cent of White Irish and White Non-Irish groups respectively.

- Irish Travellers report very high rates of discrimination in seeking work, where they are ten times more likely than White Irish to experience discrimination, and extremely high rates of discrimination in private services, where they were over 22 times more likely to report discrimination, particularly in shops, pubs and restaurants.
- Compared to Catholics, members of minority religions report somewhat higher discrimination rates in the workplace and in public and private services.
- Never-married lone parents are more likely to experience discrimination in public and private services than single childless adults.
- Those with a disability experience higher rates of discrimination than those without a disability in all areas – in the workplace, while seeking work, in private services and public services. Just over 7% of respondents with a disability reported experiencing discrimination when using public services, compared to 2.8% of those with no disability.

In relation to **identity**:

- Improved collection and publication of statistics on public and private service users, such as participants in training schemes, and those using health or care services or financial services, would provide much needed information.
- Given the experience of different ethnic groups, measuring ethnicity to monitor outcomes in surveys and administrative data would be very informative. Irish Travellers in particular, who report very high levels of discrimination, are often not identified in surveys, which highlights the importance of making use of census data and adding an ethnic identifier to administrative data to monitor outcomes.

The 2018 ESRI and IHREC report [Disability and Discrimination in Ireland: Evidence from the QNHS Equality Modules 2004, 2010, 2014](#), identifies issues of situation and experience for people with disabilities.

In relation to **situation**:

- People with disabilities are more likely to be in poverty and outside the labour force. The labour market participation of people with disabilities remains far lower than participation rates in the general population, even when controlling for age and other personal characteristics.

In relation to **experience**:

- People with disabilities experience higher rates of discrimination than people without disabilities. On average, 15% of people with disabilities experience discrimination compared to 11% of those without a disability.
- Our findings show that when people with disabilities are looking for work, or in the workplace, the odds of experiencing work-related discrimination was twice as high compared to those without disabilities.
- Focussing on discrimination in the public services (such as education, health, transport), the findings also show that people with disabilities were three times more likely to experience discrimination compared to those without disabilities.

- Need to increase awareness among both employers and staff with disabilities of their legal obligations, entitlements and protection.

The 2023 National Disability Authority report [Final Review of Progress on Indicators of the National Disability Inclusion Strategy](#) identifies issues of situation, experience and identity for disabled people.

In relation to **situation**:

- Data demonstrate that the disability employment gap increased from 39.8% to 41.3% between 2014 and 2021.
- There has been a reduction in the number of people with disabilities in receipt of Rehabilitative Training (RT) compared to the profiled targets of 2021 and 2020.
- People living in congregated settings have a lower quality of life, experience poorer quality services and have fewer opportunities to exert their rights and choices.
- People with disabilities report poorer general health, higher levels of depression, less participation in physical activity and higher rates of consistent poverty compared to non-disabled people.
- Public bodies have exceeded the 3% minimum target related to employing disabled people for the 11th year in a row with 3.6% of employees reporting a disability in 2021. While this is very positive, it is important that public bodies continue improving as a new minimum target of 6% will be introduced by 2025.

In relation to **experience**:

- The CSO's 2019 Equality and Discrimination survey found that 24.1% of adults with a disability reported discrimination compared to 16.7% of those without. Findings indicated that 18.3% of persons with a disability reported they had experienced discrimination accessing services compared to 10.9% of persons without a disability, and 12.3% of adults with a disability experienced discrimination in the workplace and/or while looking for work compared to 9% of those without.

In relation to **identity**:

- There is a need for more robust equality data collection. There remain many indicators where sufficient data on people with disabilities are not available or not recent.
- A study commissioned by the Department of Social protection (2021) examined the additional costs of disability and highlights there is an annual average additional cost of disability ranging from €11,734 to €16,284, depending on a person's degree of limitation.
- Implementation of the Irish Sign Language Act 2017 was described as poor across most sections of the Act, with many public bodies appearing unprepared for the activities needed to achieve compliance.
- The review, although based on engagement with a small number of public bodies, found that there was low awareness, enforcement and understanding among public bodies of their obligations under Section 25 of the Disability Act, particularly of the obligation to bring public buildings into compliance with the Building Regulations, Part M 2010 by 2022. The NDA are unaware of any existing data that would give information on the levels of accessibility and/or who has achieved compliance in public buildings.

- The reviews conducted demonstrated that there is large variance in levels of compliance with the EU Web Accessibility Directive across public sector websites and mobile apps in Ireland. Within the in-depth reviews, no website achieved full compliance with the accessibility standard.

The 2016 GLEN and BelongTo report [The LGBTIreland Report: national study of the mental health and wellbeing of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex people in Ireland](#) identifies issues of experience for LGBTI people.

In relation to **experience**:

- Study findings suggest that LGBTI people continue to experience incidents of victimisation, discrimination and harassment outside of school: 75.2% reported that over their lifetime they had experienced being verbally hurt, with approximately one fifth of participants having experienced physical attacks due to being LGBTI.
- Participants' comfort levels decrease around public displays of same-sex affection, with a greater percentage of participants indicating discomfort with a male couple kissing (39%) and a female couple kissing (30%) compared to a heterosexual couple (17%) kissing in public.

The 2024 NYCI report [The State of Our Young Nation: A report into the lives of Irish 18-29 year olds](#) identifies issues of situation, experience and identity for young people.

In relation to **situation**:

- The working lives of young people have changed dramatically in a short space of time, and despite positive changes which offer greater flexibility in the workplace and a general perception of good availability of employment opportunities, satisfaction with pay, benefits and development opportunities is relatively low.

In relation to **experience**:

- Despite surface level satisfaction, there is an undercurrent of discontent that often pervades this generation, particularly when they are directed to think about their future.

In relation to **identity**:

- Compared with young men, young women reported worse mental and financial wellbeing, lower satisfaction with pay and conditions, were coping worse with the cost-of-living, are more likely to have made cutbacks in spending and to feel they are worse off than their parents' generation.
- Differences also emerge between social class when it comes to satisfaction with working life; 51% of young people from a middle class background (ABC1) are satisfied with working life compared to only 37% for those from a working class background (C2DE).
- Young people with a disability tend to be more dissatisfied with 'promotion opportunities' in their workplace; 70% are dissatisfied with this compared to average of 57%.

The 2022 Age Action report [Reframing Ageing: the State of Ageing in Ireland 2022](#) identifies issues of situation, experience and identity for older people.

In relation to **situation**:

- Many people in their 60s withdraw from the labour market. This is in part due to long-term illness or disability, or a decision to retire, but also due to a lack of opportunities. Most people in their 70s are not in paid work.
- Ageism in the labour market makes it hard for older people to access work.
- More than a sixth (17.3%) of older adults (aged 65+) are at risk of poverty or social exclusion. Women (19.7%) are more at risk than men (13.9%). 42.8% of older persons (aged 65+) living alone are at risk of poverty. Three in every five (59.9%) single persons aged 65+ have incomes in the bottom 30% of society.
- Low income makes accessing services more difficult for older people. Health issues also make accessing services more difficult.
- The Positive Ageing National Indicators Report 2016 found that 61% of people aged 55-65 had low literacy and 63% had low numeracy.
- Age Action estimate that two-thirds of older persons (65%) are digitally excluded. This is either because they are not using the internet or because they lack the digital devices and/or necessary skills to navigate the internet safely. This limits their ability to access public services online. The CSO found that 22% of those aged 60-74 are not using the internet. This is true for more than half (51%) of those aged 75 or older.

In relation to **experience**:

- Stereotypical and ageist understandings of older persons.
- Mandatory retirement at age 65 persists in many employment contracts and is upheld by the law.
- Isolated housing, lack of transportation, lack of income, digital exclusion or abuse can all be equally if not more constraining than many forms of illness or disability.
- Retaining personal independence becomes a concern for many older people in their 80s, including independent living at home or maintaining autonomy in a care setting. Almost all older people in their 70s want to “age in place” in the communities where they have built their lives.

In relation to **identity**:

- There are many examples of gender inequality in the outcomes experienced by older women compared to men. Older women’s incomes tend to be lower than men’s, women carry out more care work and older women are less likely to have a car or to drive, even in rural areas. Women tend to live longer than men, which is why older people living alone (often those with the lowest incomes) are more likely to be women. They are often carers in the older years and don’t get remunerated for these duties.
- Lack of adequate provision for in person services when accessing public services with free interpretation. Over 13,000 people aged 65+ speak a language other than English or Irish at home. The most common languages are French (2,805), German (1,857) and Spanish (1,132), plus the recent addition of Ukrainian. The most common non-aegean languages are Arabic (250) and Chinese (239). In total, over sixty languages are spoken at home by people over 65.

For those aged 65+, 3,209 people report their ability to speak English as “not well” or “not at all. It is estimated that we have many older persons in the country with language barriers than our documents and this will increase as our society gets more diverse.

The 2018 Pavee Point and Department of Justice report: [Roma in Ireland A national needs assessment](#), identifies issues of situation, experience and identity for Roma.

In relation to **situation**:

- 20% of respondents are completely marginalised from services and supports.
- 60% of respondents reported experiences of consistent poverty, including not always having enough fuel, food or heat. 20% of respondents stated that they are experiencing poverty that would be considered extreme. In 50% of the households with children, respondents reported that they do not always have enough food.
- Only 16.7% of respondents reported that they are in employment.

In relation to **experience**:

- The major barriers that respondents identified in accessing services are not being eligible for supports such as medical cards, training and employment schemes, homeless supports, or social protection payments. This was either due to not having the right to reside or not meeting the habitual residence condition. 19.8% of respondents reported that they do not have a PPS number which is vital for accessing a wide range of services, including applying for a medical card and social protection.
- Barriers outlined by respondents were lack of documentation to prove residency, language barriers, not knowing about services or how to access them, and experiences of discrimination.
- The research finds a high prevalence of experiences in relation to discrimination identified by most respondents. Respondents reported feeling discriminated against at both an institutional and individual level. The highest rates of perceived discrimination were reported in accessing accommodation (93%) and social protection (84.3%). 78.9% of respondents reported feeling discriminated against in getting hired or getting a job. 81.1% of respondents also reported experiencing racism and verbal abuse in public spaces with women being identified as particularly vulnerable.

In relation to **identity**:

- The Roma population is diverse with a range of nationalities, languages and religion. Roma culture is diverse and ever-changing. For service providers, this means there should not be one 'Roma approach'.
- The findings show that there is a wide diversity of languages spoken among Roma in Ireland. 61% of respondents reported usually speaking Romani at home. This was followed by Romanian at 14.3%, Czech at 10.4%, English at 9.7% and Slovakian at 4.5%.
- Across all services language and communication between Roma and service providers emerged as a challenging issue.
- The research shows a low proportion of respondents are accessing professional interpreters, with the majority of respondents relying on friends and children to interpret for them.

The 2017 [Report of the Joint Committee on Social Protection on the Position of Lone Parents](#) identifies issues of situation and identity in relation to lone parents.

In relation to **situation**:

- Lone parent families consistently face greater levels of deprivation, risk of poverty and consistent poverty. One parent families have the highest consistent poverty of 26.2% rate of any group in Irish society. Lone parents suffer higher rates of deprivation at 57.9% compared to 25.5% in the general population. Children in one-parent families are three times as likely (26.2%) to live in 'consistent poverty' than families with two adults with one to three children (7.7%).
- Only 42.5 per cent of lone parents were in employment, compared with 69.3 per cent for heads of two-parent families. Of lone parents, 14.4 per cent were unemployed compared with 11.8 per cent of couples.

In relation to **identity**:

- Lone parents devote more of their time to caring responsibilities, responsibilities which impinge on their availability for work.
- 86.4% of lone parents were female and 13.6% were male.

The 2017 ESRI Report (Watson D., Kenny O., & McGinnity) [A Social Portrait of Travellers in Ireland](#) identifies issues of situation, experience and identity for Travellers.

In relation to **situation**:

- There is still a need to address barriers in the labour market, since the employment gap persists even after taking account of education, region, age, gender and family circumstances.
- The main difference between Travellers and non-Travellers in employment terms is their very high levels of unemployment. Among those aged 25–64 years, the unemployment rate was 82 per cent for Travellers in Census 2011, compared to 17 per cent for non-Travellers. Travellers also had a lower rate of labour market participation, that is, being either in employment or unemployed. The labour market participation gap was not as large, however: 61 per cent of Travellers were in the labour market compared to 79 per cent of non-Travellers.

In relation to **experience**:

- Although not directly measured here, prejudice and discrimination are likely to play a significant role in accounting for the remaining employment gap.
- A background and history of extreme prejudice and discrimination against Travellers. This negative attitude towards Travellers is documented. MacGréil reports that 60 per cent of the population in Ireland would not welcome a Traveller as a member of the family; 64 per cent reject Travellers based on their 'way of life' and 18 per cent would deny Irish citizenship to Travellers.

In relation to **identity**:

- Along with affirming the distinct cultural identity of Travellers, recognition of Traveller ethnic identity would create a positive platform for engagement by Travellers and public authorities together in addressing key issues facing the community on the basis of mutual respect.
- Recognition of Traveller ethnic identity could be of considerable benefit in ensuring respect for the cultural identity of Travellers in the context of targeted services.
- This recognition of Traveller ethnic identity would also facilitate the routine use of an ethnic identifier on administrative databases, which would allow the monitoring of progress towards equality for Travellers.

The 2018 report on [Discrimination and Inequality in Housing, IHREC & ESRI, 2018](#) identifies issues of situation and experience across the identified groups.

In relation to **situation**:

- Females are more likely than males to experience environmental deprivation (such as pollution, crime, vandalism) but are less likely to be homeless.
- Lone parents are a particularly disadvantaged group. 1.4 times as likely to experience housing deprivation (such as accommodation is damp/dark, has no central heating) as couples without children.
- 60% of homeless family units (defined as either a couple with or without children or a single parent with children) are lone mother families.
- The youngest individuals (under 30 years) are particularly disadvantaged. Young people are more likely to experience housing deprivation than the oldest age group. Young people are more likely to experience housing deprivation, to live in a neighbourhood with poor environmental conditions, and to live in an over-crowded household.
- Age is associated with homelessness - the most at-risk groups are young adults, in particular men aged 20-39, and very young children (aged 0-4).
- Non-Irish nationals are substantially more at risk of living in over-crowded conditions. Roma Community across the island of Ireland has identified extremely high levels of housing deprivation and over-crowding - 40% of respondents lacked hot water and 66% could not afford adequate heating.
- Non-EU nationals are found to be at greater risk of overcrowding compared to others on the same income and with the same characteristics. African migrants are also over-represented among the homeless.
- Black people, compose 11 per cent of the homeless. African migrants are over-represented among the homeless. 6% of the Roma population in Ireland is homeless, and almost 45 per cent has previous experience of homelessness.
- People with disability have high risk of housing and environmental deprivation. Individuals with a disability are 1.4 times more likely to be living in over-crowded households.
- People with disability are particularly over-represented among the homeless population: more than one-in-four homeless people have a disability.
- 56% of Travellers were faced with over-crowding compared to just 9% of the non-Traveller Community. Only 45% of Travellers had access to drinking water, 33% reported problems with rats in their immediate surroundings, and 45% said that they lacked access to a main road. Over one-in-three Travellers reported living in 'very unhealthy' and 'very unsafe' homes.

- Travellers are the most at risk of being homeless – while they represent less than 1% of the Irish population they make up 9% of the homeless.
- Socio-economic status, proxied by household income, is also strongly associated with housing deprivation, environmental deprivation and over-crowding. Tenants in receipt of Rent Supplement, were more likely to experience housing deprivation and over-crowding than other private tenants with the same characteristics (such as age, nationality, gender, household composition). Local Authority renters are almost six times as likely as homeowners to live in an over-crowded dwelling, controlling for other characteristics including income and family status.

In relation to **experience**:

- Lone parents are 2.4 times as likely to report discrimination in access to housing.
- People with a disability are more than twice as likely as people without a disability to report discrimination in access to housing. 7.4% of people with disabilities who were looking for accommodation felt discriminated against, compared to 3.5% of people without a disability.
- Black respondents were five times as likely as White respondents to report discrimination. Similarly, people of 'other ethnicity' are 1.7 times more likely to be discriminated against as the White Irish group.
- Travellers are almost ten times as likely to report discrimination in access to housing as the White Irish population.
- People with lower socio-economic backgrounds, i.e. low-educated and unemployed individuals, are more likely to experience discrimination in access to housing.
- Young people aged 18-34 were six times more likely to experience discrimination than the oldest group (65 and over).
- Irish people are least comfortable with sharing a community with Travellers, with an average comfort score of 7.5 out of 10, followed by people with mental health difficulties, and people from Black and minority ethnic backgrounds, at 8.8 each.

The 2020 Focus Ireland and BelongTo report (Quilty, A. and Norris, M.) [A Qualitative Study of LGBTIQ+ Youth Homelessness in Ireland](#) identifies issues of situation, experience and identity for LGBTIQ+ people.

In relation to **situation**:

- There is a strong consensus in the international research that LGBTQI+ youth face significant risks of homelessness and are overrepresented in the population of homeless young people.
- In addition to those LGBTQI+ young people who are 'officially' homeless, there is likely to be a significant cohort of young people living without a permanent home and surviving by sleeping on friends' sofas, squatting or staying in other insecure or unsafe places, who are even more difficult to identify and consequently are often referred to as the 'forgotten homeless' or 'hidden homeless'
- While triggers of LGBTQI+ youth homelessness are common to the entire youth homeless population, there are triggers of homelessness that are specific to LGBTQI+ youth, such as coming out and/or transitioning (there was significant evidence to link the process/act of coming out within intimate family spheres with subsequent homelessness).

- This research evidenced a deeply concerning, complex and bi-directional relationship between homelessness and mental health problems heavily bound up in complex experiences of stigma and shame.
- It is important to acknowledge how difficult exiting homelessness is for the young LGBTQI+ people interviewed for this study.

In relation to **experience**:

- Participants mentioned several reasons for their decision not to use homeless services. Influencing factors included the complexity of the homeless landscape or terrain, the lack of awareness of what was available to help or support them when they were most in need and an acute sense of deeply seated fear and apprehension about 'hostels' as being unsafe and dangerous for LGBTQI+ people.
- LGBTQI+ community is often subject to homophobia and transphobia by other users of homeless services. The adequacy of responses to this behaviour on the part of homeless providers varies.
- The majority of young people interviewed were unwilling to enter a space where they feared that they would encounter lack of understanding or blatant homophobic and transphobic attitudes among both other service users and staff, the potential for mis-gendering and fear of further isolation.

In relation to **identity**:

- There is a dearth of research on the specific experiences and needs of young Irish LGBTQI+ people who are experiencing homelessness.

The 2023 Threshold and Alone report [Double Deficit: Older and Ageing Persons in the Irish Private Rental Sector](#) identifies issues of situation, experience and identity for older people.

In relation to **situation**:

- 17% of all renters in Ireland are aged 45 years and over.
- Older renters are more likely to be in receipt of rental assistance. Those aged 65 + and renting from private landlords are likely to be spending more than 35% of their disposable income on rent.
- Older renters are more likely to live alone and renting for longer periods than their younger counterparts in the sector.

In relation to **experience**:

- Examination of the Private Rented Sector in Ireland. indicates considerable deficits in meeting the needs of older renters, particularly in terms of accommodation choice, affordability, suitability, quality and security, as well as undermining the personal agency of older and ageing people in respect of their accommodation.
- High levels of vulnerability were expressed by ageing and older renters in the study with significant concerns expressed about housing insecurity; sub-standard or unsuitable accommodation; inappropriate behaviour by landlords; the absence of alternative,

affordable accommodation options, both in the public and private sectors, along with concerns around inadequate protections and supports for Private Rented Sector tenants.

- 43% of those interviewed during this research referred to high levels of stress associated with the insecurity of their accommodation.

In relation to **identity**:

- Housing for older people that is age-appropriate and suitable to the varied needs of older residents remains under-developed.
- The Private Rented Sector, in its current form, was not an appropriate tenure option for older and ageing people.
- Absence of a data-informed approach to planning for the accommodation of a rapidly growing ageing cohort.

The 2021 Pavee Point Traveller and Roma Centre report [The Traveller Community and Homelessness: Advocacy Paper](#) identifies issues of situation, experience and identity for the Traveller community.

In relation to **situation**:

- 2019 related commissioned research suggests that approximately 39% of Travellers meet the European definition of homelessness. This is compared to 6% of the general population. The multiple forms of Traveller homelessness include Overcrowded/Inhabitable Sites; and Living on the side of the Road.
- Lack of delivery of Traveller-specific accommodation coupled with the lack of provision for affordable housing was effectively pushing Traveller families into homelessness
- IHREC's 2021 Equality Review of Traveller Accommodation Provision by Local Authorities reconfirmed the issues already known, including, underspend of Traveller accommodation budgets; poor information gathering to inform decision making; spending on refurbishment and renovation instead of new accommodation; lack of forward planning for actual and future Traveller accommodation needs; and Travellers being forced into culturally inappropriate housing.
- Research to date and the work of Pavee Point has highlighted and indicated the impacts of racism and discrimination, site evictions, lack of culturally appropriate accommodation and lack of accommodation for larger family sizes as some of the reasons as to the disproportionate numbers of Travellers experiencing homelessness. There are additional difficulties for some Travellers, including Travellers who have lived in foster care and young Travellers leaving foster care are at a high risk of becoming homeless.
- In 2016, Pavee Point raised concerns about the CBL system in our submission to the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Housing and Homelessness. In particular, we argued that there was a lack of accessibility and transparency with the system and it was of little use for individuals with little to no literacy and/or access to a computer with internet as applications must be made in writing and submitted to the online system within a short timeframe.

In relation to **experience**:

- The impact of racism and discrimination on Traveller homelessness, particularly in relation to the private rental sector.

- In 2020, research from the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights on Travellers and Roma in 6 European countries, found that Irish Travellers had one of the highest rates of reported discrimination when accessing accommodation, with 73% reporting discrimination when trying to rent or buy houses in the last five years.
- Need for a moratorium on Traveller evictions and the decommissioning of Traveller-specific accommodation until the accommodation needs of Travellers on Local Authority Housing Lists are met.

In relation to **identity**:

- Lack of implementation of ethnic equality monitoring across housing/ homelessness datasets.
- Currently units for social housing tend to be two or three bed units, as far more of this unit type are available on the property market, which often excludes Traveller families due to larger family sizes.

The 2021 NESC report: [Digital Inclusion in Ireland: Connectivity, Devices & Skills](#), identifies issues of situation, experience and identity across the identified groups.

In relation to **situation**:

- Some groups remain poorly engaged, in particular those who are older, have lower levels of education, lower incomes, and live in rural areas.
- The key dimensions of digital exclusion are connectivity, access to devices, skills, and the confidence to engage with ICT.
- In Ireland, broadband connection rates and speeds are below average for those in lower-income quintiles, and for those depending on welfare payments.
- Among older people, while 86 per cent of those aged 50–69 years had home internet in 2018, only 38 per cent aged 80+ did; 30 per cent of those over 50 and living alone did not have home internet. There is also a group of people aged over 50 who use the internet but are solely reliant on internet access external to their homes—such as friends’/relatives’ home, library, community centre and public Wi-Fi networks. This group comprises 3 per cent of those in this age bracket.
- The CSO survey data indicates that many households in the lower income quintiles had either no broadband or mobile broadband only.
- Gaps in access to devices (such as desktops, tablets) are also evident; Irish people on low incomes are more likely to own older and second-hand devices, to have internet access only on their smartphone, and to have limits on the amount of data they can use.
- Other socio-economic and demographic divides are evident, with the unemployed, those with lower education, lone-parent households, and the lower income quintiles less likely to own ICT devices, use computer software, download apps, use internet banking, or interact with government online.
- In general, the older a person is, the lower their engagement with ICT. While 60 per cent of those aged 70–79 years have access to a smartphone/tablet, only 30 per cent of those aged 80+ do (Doody et al., 2020).
- There are particular issues for people with disabilities, who need accessible devices, which are not always available.

- There are gaps in skills and confidence among those using ICT. An important issue here is the pace of change in ICT. Digital competency requires continuous learning – unlike for example, reading, a skill that is maintained once learned. As well as the technical skills of being able to use devices, ICT users also need to be able to evaluate the accuracy and trustworthiness of online resources. In Ireland, skills are lower among older people, and those on lower incomes. Challenges are also encountered by those with poor literacy.
- Eurobarometer data also shows that Irish people who do not feel sufficiently digitally skilled are more likely to be older, poorer, less educated and living in rural areas.
- Older Irish people have much lower levels of digital skills than their counterparts in other EU countries. For example, 33 per cent of Irish people aged 65–74 had never used the internet in 2019.

In relation to **experience**:

- Less than one third of those with low levels of education had interacted with government via the internet in 2019, compared to over 80 per cent of those with third-level education.
- Those with literacy problems and non-native- English speakers struggle to use online public services.
- Lack of trust in ICT—along with a fear of cybercrime, unwanted personal data use, and misinformation—can also affect engagement in the digital world. Those who use ICT less are more likely to fall foul of online misinformation and scams.
- Online threats include the following: Cyber crime, financial and identity theft; sales of counterfeit goods online; hacking and malware; and denial of service attacks which disable online services. Online sexual exploitation is another criminal activity which has particularly negative impacts on younger people; Data privacy issues, such as data being stolen, damaged or used for purposes for which permission was not given; Psychological dangers affecting individuals in particular, such as online bullying, trolling, addiction to social media, living online as opposed to the ‘real’ world, etc; Disinformation, fake news, hate speech and the existence of ‘echo chambers’; and The increasing use of AI, algorithms, data analytics and automation that may incorporate existing biases in society.
- Pietersen (2017) has argued that groups which face difficulties accessing services online—due to lack of connection, devices, skills and motivation—need other ‘channels’ to access them, for example traditional channels such as face-to face and telephone.

In relation to **identity**:

- ICT access can be transformative for many people with a disability, but they can face difficulties finding accessible devices, software and online services.

The [Digital Exclusion and E-government in Ireland A Citizens Information Perspective](#), identifies issues of situation, experience and identity across the identified groups.

In relation to **situation**:

- Digital constraint refers to exclusion from use of the internet due to literacy or digital literacy problems. Digital constraint among cohorts at high risk of social exclusion such as older people, people with literacy difficulties and non-native English speakers. Their experience is

supported by extensive research evidence in other countries which demonstrates that “digital inequalities map onto other inequalities in society” (Dobransky and Hargittai, 2016: 19).

- Digital exclusion refers to inability to access the internet regularly either at home, work or place of study because the requisite technology is not available or not affordable. There are also negative unintended consequence of facilitating ‘digital exclusion’ by reducing access to public services among vulnerable groups, such as older people, those with low incomes, disabilities, low levels of education, literacy or computer literacy, and people who live in regions where broadband access is poor (Helsper and Reisdorf, 2017; Schou and Pors, 2019). Older people are found to be the cohort that are by far the most likely to experience digital exclusion, followed by people with literacy difficulties, those resident in rural areas and non-native English speakers.
- 34 per cent of information providers estimated that 51-70 per cent of their clients’ experience difficulties in accessing public services online, and a further 29.8 per cent of information providers estimated that the proportion of clients in this category was between 31 and 50 per cent. A total of 40.38 per cent of respondents considered that factors related to the unavailability of computer technology (broadband, scanners and computers) are the most significant barrier to clients’ access to public services. A similar proportion blamed digital constraint-related factors such as lack of knowledge of how to use websites and lack of English-language reading and writing skills.
- Examination of qualitative records of client queries to the Citizens Information Services (CIS) suggests that a significant number of clients encountered barriers in accessing online public services or received an unsatisfactory service when using this mechanism.
- The CSO Information Society Statistics the GHS, reveals significant levels of both digital exclusion and constraint among low-income households. The Information Society Statistics Household Survey reveals that the proportion of very ‘disadvantaged households’ (with incomes in quintile one, the lowest income quintile) without an internet connection at home is five times higher than among ‘very affluent’ households (with incomes in quintile five, the highest income quintile).
- Very disadvantaged respondents were more likely to cite ‘lack of skills’ as a reason for not having access to the internet at home than the population-at large. Very disadvantaged households who do have internet access at home are significantly less likely to have a fixed broadband connection at home and more likely to rely on a mobile phone for internet access than their affluent counterparts.
- The CSO Information Society statistics suggest that lone-parent households are also at higher risk of experiencing digital constraint, although not digital exclusion.
- These data confirm that individuals in employment are more likely to use the internet more regularly and also more likely to use the internet for interacting with public authorities than people who are unemployed. However, the most marked disparity in regular internet use is not between the employed and unemployed but between members of these groups and people who are engaged in home duties or retired.
- There is a strong consensus in the international research that digital exclusion is strongly associated with old age (see Reisdorf and Groselj, 2017). The frequency of internet use decreases with age and vice versa. People aged 60 and over are less likely to use the internet for contacting public services and public authorities than people aged between 30 and 59 years. Low rates of digital literacy among older people are found with 50 per cent of Irish people aged between 65 and 74 never having used the internet.

In relation to **experience**:

- There is evidence that user-unfriendly design of e-government services can impede their use, particularly by those who have weak digital capacity.
- The 'digital by default' approach to the provision of public services can reinforce the social exclusion of some cohorts of clients.
- Even when alternatives to online services are provided, information providers raised concerns that clients who avail of these alternatives face delays or additional requirements which are not experienced by their counterparts who avail of the online service option.

In relation to **identity**:

- There is a strong argument for mainstreaming use of assistive technologies in e-government services, not only to enable their use by people with disabilities (the Disability Act, 2005 requires public service organisations to ensure that electronic communications are accessible to people with visual impairments to whom assistive technology is available).

The 2021 Accenture Report, [Bridging the Gap – Ireland's Digital Divide](#), identifies issues of situation and experience across the identified groups.

In relation to **situation**:

- The unintended consequence of an increasingly digital society is the risk that it will reinforce or even increase social inequality. As daily life becomes more intertwined with technology, the danger is that socially disadvantaged groups will experience further marginalisation.
- At least 25 percent of the Irish population is excluded from an increasingly digital society because of socio-economic reasons. The 'digitally disengaged' risk further isolation as communication and social interaction continue to move online. Government services, internet banking, and online shopping have been welcomed by many - but people with low digital skills are alienated and left behind.
- 42 percent of Irish people describe themselves as being 'below average' for digital skills. This highlights a gap in digital literacy that exists within the country. Our research found that age, social class, region and level of education is closely correlated with levels of digital skills.
- Our research challenges the common misconceptions that this is an issue purely for an 'old and out of touch' generation. One in five of 18-34-year olds, who could be characterised as 'digital natives', describe their digital skills as 'average' or below.
- The survey found that people with 'below average' digital competency face two obstacles: Motivation to improve their digital literacy; and Access to services that will improve their digital literacy.
- Inextricably tied to social class is education. The 55 percent of people described as having 'average' or 'below average' digital skills had attained Leaving Cert level or below.
- Over 45s tend to have the lowest confidence in their digital literacy. Feeling 'below average' were 44 percent of 45-54s, 60 percent of 55-64s, and 70 percent of over 65s. Among those 'not interested in using the internet' were 34 percent of over 55s.
- Despite the numerous bodies (public, private and otherwise) doing excellent work in this space, over one third of those with 'below average' skills cite a lack of available resources or

courses in their local area as the number one obstacle to up-skilling. 29 percent say they 'don't know where to learn' and 30 percent say they 'don't know how to go about it'.

In relation to **experience**:

- A correlation between low digital skills and a susceptibility towards online scams and 'fake news'. 70 percent of people who attained a maximum of second level education are not confident identifying fake or unreliable information. Over 55s with lower level social skills are also less confident identifying false information online and more likely to fall prey to 'fake news' or internet scams.
- More than half of people over the age of 55 are uncomfortable using government services online – this is one in five across all age groups.
- Difficulty arises when the person designing a solution indulges in confirmation bias ('the rest of the world is similar to me') or the end user is ill defined. These implicit biases compound over time and groups of people are inevitably excluded.

The DCU, IHREC, Irish Research Council report [Tracking and monitoring racist hate speech online](#), identifies issues of experience and identity for Black and minority ethnic people.

In relation to **experience**:

- Online racist speech is pervasive but it is not all the same. It can be thought of in terms of a continuum, with extreme, vicious and overt racist speech occupying one end and a subtler, more masked kind of racist speech occupying the other end.
- Online racist hate speech cannot be understood in isolation from racist structures and institutions, and from media and political discourses that racialise certain groups.
- Expressions of racism online are punctuated with misogynist, homophobic, and transphobic attacks directly targeting women and members of the LGBT community.

In relation to **identity**:

- Anti-immigrant and anti-refugee discourses revolve mainly around three inter-related tropes: access to welfare and housing; moral deservedness; and the good versus bad immigrant trope.
- Anti-Muslim discourses mobilised four tropes: terrorism; clash of civilisations; Muslim men as misogynist and sexually deviant; and a general and unspecified antipathy.
- Typically, Traveller and Roma people are targeted as undeserving, 'uncivilised', thugs and criminals; they can further be targeted using a dehumanising language.
- Jewish people are targeted as hidden figures, globalists scheming behind the scenes; as Shylock, devious merchants and users; as 'unassimilable'; through denying the importance and magnitude of the Holocaust.
- Black people are targeted in the anti-refugee/migrant discourses, in the anti-Muslim/Islamophobic ones, as well as the attacks against second generation Irish people. But it is important to further identify the specific ways in which Black people are targeted as such. Some of the ways we identified in our dataset include the trope of criminality; the trope of being 'uncivilised', lazy, 'parasites'; and the dehumanising trope of African men as animals.

- Second-generation Irish people are targeted through the trope of population replacement or colonisation; and through making a distinction between ‘real’ Irishness, which is an outcome of both a ‘biological’ and a ‘cultural’ bond and Irish citizenship which is a kind of ‘fake’, ‘paper’ Irishness.

The 2021 Age Action Report [Digital Inclusion and an Ageing Population](#) identifies issues of situation and experience for older people and a number of other grounds.

In relation to **situation**:

- 65% of people aged over 65 experience digital exclusion. The key dimensions of digital exclusion are connectivity, access to devices, skills, and confidence to engage with ICT.
- The digital divide depends primarily on income and education. Household size and type, age, gender, racial and linguistic backgrounds and location also play an important role.
- 275,000 people over 65 are not using the Internet with the percentage rising among older cohorts. (25% In the 60-74 age bracket with 56% In the 75+ age bracket).
- The report suggests that there are four main reasons for older people not using the Internet, barriers in terms of: accessibility or learning difficulties; education and training; income and affordability; and choice of not using the internet.
- Older Irish people have much lower levels of digital skills than their counterparts in other EU countries. Of those people 65-74 who are online 43% have skills below basic level.
- Only half of households headed by people aged 65+ have a personal computer and just over half broadband internet access (53%). Another 5.1% have internet but not broadband.

In relation to **experience**:

- Many publicly funded services have adopted a digital only approach which discriminates against people not using the internet, including older people.
- There are practices that effectively force people online due to poor quality or hard to access communication options.
- Participation in public life and policy consultations is often limited to an online system of notification of consultations, with short response times.
- Digital modes of communication may be inaccessible to people with various disabilities, especially those with sight loss or visual impairment, and to people with learning disabilities, mental health issues, or intellectual disabilities, as well as the one in six adults who have literacy difficulties.
- People with basic or below basic level of skills are more susceptible to fraud and other criminal activity online. Recent CSO data shows that people aged 60-74 were least likely of all age groups to undertake personal data management actions, such as checking that a website was secure or refusing use of their personal data for advertising.

The 2019 IHREC and ESRI research, [Caring and Unpaid Work in Ireland](#), identifies issues of situation and identity for those providing care.

In relation to **situation**:

- Ireland ranks the 3rd highest in Europe for hours spent in caring and unpaid work for both women and men.
- The gender gap in unpaid work time in Ireland is seventh highest amongst the EU28.
- There is low level of state support for care, particularly childcare, in comparison to the rest of western Europe .
- 55% of people engaged in caring are already in full time employment (women 45% and men 72%).
- With the increase in life expectancy and growth in birth rates there will be increasing pressure on carers and parents: 45% of women and 29% of men provide regular care on a daily basis whether for children or adults.

In relation to **identity**:

- Women spend twice the amount of time on caring and more than this on unpaid work as men: the average time spent on care giving is 16 hours per week (men 10.6 hours and women 21.3 hours); and women spend a higher proportion of time doing housework – around 20 hours per week compared to 7 hours for men.
- Men's access to flexible working arrangements is low.

2.4 International Research

The 2014 European Agency for Fundamental Rights report [Being Trans in the European Union Comparative analysis of EU LGBT survey data](#) identifies issues of experience and identity for trans people.

In relation to **experience**:

- One in three trans respondents felt discriminated against because of being trans when looking for a job (37%) or at work (27%) which is more than twice the equivalent percentage of lesbian, gay and bisexual respondents.
- Stereotypes and ignorance about the reality of the daily lives and rights of trans persons perpetuate negative public attitudes and maltreatment of varying intensity; from idiotic jokes and offensive language to serious harassment and exclusion.
- Only very small numbers of respondents reported the most recent incident of discrimination. 30% did not know how or where to report. More than three in five respondents did not report the incident because they were convinced that nothing would happen or change and half of them because they thought it was not worth reporting it.

In relation to **identity**:

- One third of all trans respondents avoid expressing their gender – or their desired gender – through physical appearance and clothing for fear of being assaulted, threatened or harassed.

One in five respondents avoid being open about being trans even in their own home, and six in ten avoid being open in public transport.

The 2019 paper by Scheerder A. et al. for Sage Journals [Internet usage in the home: Digital inequality from a domestication perspective](#), identifies issues of situation across the identified groups.

In relation to **situation**:

- Educational level of attainment was chosen as selection criteria (24 low and 24 high) as it can be considered one of the most important contributors to digital inequality (Scheerder et al., 2017) and as important component of socioeconomic status (SES) (Shavers, 2007).
- Since Internet access has increased in most Western countries, having a connection is no longer considered the primary condition for benefiting from the Internet. A second-level digital divide (Hargittai, 2002) emerged regarding skills and types of use (such as Van Deursen et al., 2016; Zillien and Hargittai, 2009). Recently, scholars have started to focus on the outcomes of Internet use or the ways in which people can benefit from the Internet.
- Research has identified a large variety of determinants to explain the first-, second-, and third-level digital divides (Scheerder et al., 2017). On a more general level, the majority of uncovered determinants are limited to sociodemographic and socioeconomic indicators, such as age, gender, educational level, and income.

The 2020 research paper by Tammi L. for international journal of Roma studies, [Across the great divide: The impact of digital inequality on Scotland's Gypsy/Traveller children and young people during the COVID-19 emergency](#) identifies issues of situation and experience in relation to the Traveller ground.

In relation to **situation**:

- Gaps are identified in relation to flexible learning and equality of access to devices and data required for digital learning. Exploration of digital access amongst Gypsy/Traveller communities across the UK revealed high levels of digital inequality with only 38% of Gypsies and Travellers (33% if housed) having an internet connection and 52% of research participants stating they did not feel confident using digital technology.
- The breadth and depth of the digital divide was highlighted even more during Covid-19, particularly within marginalised communities. Digital inequality is very real and when the COVID pandemic hit, the impact of that inequality was felt more acutely than ever.
- In terms of parents/guardians supporting their children and young people when they are mobile, a number may themselves have literacy issues so might not be in a position to support/engage with the technology.
- The lack of access to flexible learning and digital resources has impacted on young Gypsy/Travellers' education attainment levels.
- There is a need to address the lack of access to devices and data and increase levels of skills and confidence. The low-level of digital skills and knowledge impact on an individual's confidence and self-esteem. There are needs to have more skills-based learning which may be in line with what this group want from education.

In relation to **experience**:

- Discretionary decision making at the 'street level' has in the past, and continues to be in the present, a key barrier to equality of access. The Street Level Bureaucrat's behaviour will undoubtedly be influenced by (media driven) social representations designed to give individuals or groups a definite form, to categorise - or label - them, thus identifying them as an example of a certain type (of outsider) that is understood, accepted and shared by an established group.
- Discretionary decision-making powers, underpinned by prejudice and driven by false social representations will continue to be enacted and the 'forever thus, business as usual' toxic worldview of Gypsy/Travellers and other marginalised groups will endure.

The 2022 paper by Ziosi M. et al. for PubMed Central [Smart cities: reviewing the debate about their ethical implications](#) identifies issues of situation and experience in relation to rights holders.

In relation to **situation**:

- Security: The pervasive deployment of ICTs makes cities vulnerable to data security problems, such as data breaches or cyberattacks.
- Governance: New technologies such as AI and data analytics can automate this process of decision-making by letting the results of these complex analyses determine rather than simply inform decisions. While the former aspect can be conceived as an increase in efficiency from past modes of decision-making, the latter presents a new scenario where decision-making becomes entirely (or almost entirely) automated.
- Governance: The different configurations of governance may raise questions about the legitimacy of government bodies, as they employ predictive algorithms and data-processing software that they did not produce and may not fully understand. These tools may also present problems for government transparency; while many governments allow residents to send public records request to view government information (such as Freedom of Information requests in US and UK), the decision-making processes of black-box predictive algorithms are often un-interpretable to even the developers themselves. Automation can also undermine accountability.
- Governance: Some argue that digital solutions like e-democracy platforms and fablabs are designed with tech-savvy people in mind, as they require good data literacy levels or programming skills. Furthermore, the role of citizens in them is secondary and engaged in problem-solving activities that only have an indirect impact on the city. The role of citizens is often limited to reporting problematic conditions.
- Social inclusion: The benefits of smart city technologies may not reach all city residents equally, and their deployment may exacerbate longstanding inequalities.
- Social inclusion: Many people lack the digital literacy skills, the technologies, or sufficient internet connection to use smart city technologies. The use of the technologies themselves, regardless of the population's connectivity, may also entrench inequalities.
- Social Inclusion: The smart city often caters primarily to entrepreneurs and high-skill professionals as its "smart citizens". By attracting these into newly developed neighbourhoods or cities, smart cities can raise home prices and accelerate gentrification.

In relation to **experience**:

- **Control:** Smart city technologies can increase the control of the government over people, they can also shift that control to private entities. As cities become “smarter” and increasingly connected with sensors and reliant on algorithms being fed large quantities of real-time data, the power centred in the administration of city services moves from the mayor’s office and city council chambers to the control rooms, from officials who are responsive to democratic will to those processing the data. The degree of control afforded to officials in smart cities exceeds that of any previous era.
- **Surveillance:** Smart cities may run the risk of becoming a tool or even a catalyst for unwarranted surveillance as well as exacerbating existing inequities in policing systems in the name of increased security. Additionally, some smart cities may install surveillance tools specifically for policing, raising additional ethical questions. Peculiar to smart cities is the fact that people themselves are also participating in their own surveillance, including through wearable devices.
- **Privacy:** The pervasive process of data collection presents a challenge to data privacy. User profiling is considered as a major threat. The use of increasingly complex technologies in a smart city allows a great amount of data about citizens to be collected. This often happens without them being asked for consent nor being given an explanation about why the data is collected and how it will be used.
- **Discrimination:** Much has been written about the problems of fairness in the use of algorithms. City officials and other customers of smart city technologies like to point to the outcomes of algorithmic predictions and decisions as objective and unburdened by value judgments. However, these algorithms are trained with data from the “real world,” which invariably reflects ethical and political choices and historical trends that may be open to criticism.

The 2020 Equinet and Cloisters report by Allen & Masters, [Regulating for an Equal AI: A new role for equality bodies](#), identifies issues of situation and experience across the identified grounds.

In relation to **situation**:

- Lack of transparency and the need to ensure that any future data protection legislation will enable the “black box” to be fully opened to the extent necessary for equality rights to be fully secured.

In relation to **experience**:

- Some organisations will use algorithms to speed up decision making. These are not necessarily sophisticated, but they can become infected with discrimination, either through ML based on inappropriate data sets, or simply because they reflect the prejudice of the coder who designed the algorithm which has been used on a data set.
- There is the further issue that the algorithm will likely have little human oversight and there is no guarantee of this.
- Facial Recognition Technology systems will provide false matches or sometimes fail to make matches when they would be appropriate. These are false positives and false negatives. It is well established that they can occur on a discriminatory basis and that this depends on the competence of the AI system to make appropriate matches. This skill in the system is learnt by the computer as a result of ML using databases of already identified faces.

- Research in the US by Joy Buolamwini and Timnit Gebru revealed how in the US this type of technology (facial recognition technology) can have a disparate impact on women and certain racial groups. They highlighted how commercially available systems contained a misclassification error rate of up to 34.7% for darker skinned women in comparison to a maximum error rate of 0.8% for lighter skinned males. It is obvious that if such a faulty FRT system were to be used in Europe as a gateway to a benefit or service of some kind it would be potentially discriminatory.
- The use of FRT in Europe could readily give rise to indirect discrimination. Indirect discrimination occurs where an apparently neutral provision (here, the algorithm or the data used to train the algorithm) puts or would put persons with a protected characteristic (for instance, ethnicity and/or gender) at a particular disadvantage (here, the risk of being misidentified) compared with others (different gender/ different ethnicity).
- Many countries are using AI systems to predict the risk of a certain occurrence. These include the following assessments – the risk of: a person remaining unemployed; an elderly person requiring care; a child might need welfare services; a crime; hospitalisation; committing fraud; and re-offending. Risk analysis is a key area where discrimination can occur in a way which can have significant effects on individuals.
- Algorithms are being deployed in Europe in relation to immigration decision-making and determining whom may claim citizenship. There is evidence to suggest in one example that certain groups may be particularly at risk of being incorrectly rejected, in particular women.

The 2020 European Institute Gender Equality's online publication, [Gender Equality Index 2020: Digitalisation and the Future of Work](#), identifies issues of situation, experience, and identity for women, including at the intersections of gender and other groups.

In relation to **situation**:

- Only six Member States (Finland, Slovenia, Lithuania, Latvia, Cyprus and Bulgaria) show women scoring higher than men on internet user skills.
- In the EU, men often have more advantages than women when it comes to the digital skills (information, communication, problem-solving and software skills) necessary to thrive in the digitalised world of work.
- At a later age, the gender divide widens, with most older people having low to basic digital skills.
- More men than women have above basic digital skills in problem-solving and software skills, with a smaller gap evident in information and communications skills.
- Gender differences in all types of digital skills are largest among those with low education, particularly women. Across all levels of education, women have fallen behind in problem-solving and software skills.

In relation to **experience**:

- Women generally experience bigger obstacles in trying to improve their digital skills, owing to factors such as gender stereotypes, family status, and the broader societal, economic and technological environment.
- Negative gender stereotyping often deters women from selecting ICT-related training.

- Even where women have access to advanced training opportunities through their existing professional networks, the burden of unpaid care or domestic responsibilities may prevent them from availing themselves of these opportunities.

In relation to **identity**,

- On average 40 % of women – compared with 24 % of men in the same age group – report that they cannot participate in lifelong learning because of family responsibilities.

The 2022 paper by Borda M. et al. for Sustainability [Impact of Digital Inequality on the COVID-19 Pandemic: Evidence from the European Union Countries](#), identifies issues of situation and experience across the identified groups.

In relation to **situation**:

- Gender, age, personality, health, literacy, education, economic and social resources, Internet attitude, material access, Internet access, and Internet skills remain important factors in obtaining Internet outcomes in the age of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- In a representative sample of respondents in the Netherlands studying communication during the pandemic, several groups of people were identified as vulnerable, such as those who are elderly, less educated, or have physical health problems, low literacy levels, or low levels of Internet skills.
- The digital inequality in terms of age is most pronounced, affecting older people, who are most vulnerable during a pandemic. The study found that their existing level of loneliness and a lack of access to social technologies and the skills and experience to use them effectively were among the challenges faced by older adults when using digital media for social connection during the pandemic.
- We found that digital inequalities by age, generation, place of residence, and gender in Internet use had relationships with the spread of COVID-19 between the first and second waves in 2020. We also found a similar relationship between the divide in digital skills of European citizens by gender and marital status.

In relation to **experience**:

- Once online, seniors face the additional challenge of becoming targets of misinformation and fraud in the context of COVID-19.

2.5 Submissions to Human Rights Bodies

The 2021 IHREC submission [Ireland and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights](#) identifies issues of situation and experience across the identified groups.

In relation to **situation**:

- Women, lone parents, young people, migrants, ethnic minorities, including Travellers, and disabled persons experience significant barriers in meeting their right to decent work.
- Women are significantly over-represented amongst employees who avail of reduced hours in order to facilitate the combination of care and paid work, contributing to gender inequality in the labour market.
- Ireland continues to have amongst the lowest employment rates for disabled persons in the EU (32.2% compared to 50.6% in the EU in 2017).
- Ireland continues to have amongst the lowest employment rates for disabled persons in the EU (32.2% compared to 50.6% in the EU in 2017).
- The consistent poverty rate was 5% in 2020, the 'at risk of poverty' rate was 13.2% and 15.6% of the population experienced enforced deprivation. By household composition, individuals living in households where there was one adult and one or more children aged under 18 had the highest consistent poverty rate at almost 22%.
- Those most at risk of experiencing poverty in 2020 were those unable to work due to disability or illness (33.7%), and the unemployed (32%).
- Minority ethnic groups are over-represented among those living in consistent poverty, and have been found to experience cumulative disadvantage and discrimination in accessing education, employment, housing, and other areas such as social assistance.

In relation to **experience**:

- Racist attitudes can be found across Irish society and across all social classes.
- Travellers and Black people experience particularly high rates of labour market discrimination, both when seeking work and in the workplace.
- Travellers continue to experience systemic discrimination in employment, education, health, and housing, with many living in poverty.
- Significant barriers to the enjoyment of equal rights for disabled persons remain, pointing to structural and institutional ableism across Irish society.

In relation to **identity**:

- The Commission highlights that racism is experienced in different ways and to different degrees, often intersecting on multiple grounds of discrimination, including religion, age, disability, gender, sexual orientation and socioeconomic status.
- Funding and infrastructure are required to preserve and develop Traveller culture and identity.
- Considerable shortfalls in equality data in Ireland.

The 2022 IHREC submission [Ireland and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights](#) identifies issues of situation and experience in relation to the identified grounds.

In relation to **situation**:

- The digital divide exacerbates existing social and economic inequalities and further isolates marginalised communities who are more likely to experience digital poverty (a lack of reliable access to the internet and technology, and of digital skills). The digital divide was further

reinforced as essential services and supports were moved online, and will continue to deepen as the Government implements a 'digital first' policy for public services.

- The State's response to the pandemic also demonstrated a lack of human rights and equality expertise in decision-making structures, and in the systems that implement and scrutinise those decisions.

In relation to **experience**:

- State action to eradicate structural and institutional racism, ableism, ageism and sexism is also required to ensure the equal protection of civil and political rights for all individuals and groups.
- CSO data from 2019 demonstrates that just 3% of people who experienced discrimination made an official complaint or took legal action.
- The Commission notes the publication of the Online Safety and Media Regulation Bill and regrets that there is no specific reference to hate speech or incitement to violence and hatred in the definition of harmful online content under this Bill.

The 2017 IHREC [Submission to the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women on Ireland's combined sixth and seventh periodic reports](#) identifies issues of situation, experience and identity for women.

In relation to **situation**:

- There is a clear gender dimension to the incidence of low pay, with women accounting for 60% of low paid workers.
- Concentration of women in part-time
- There is a gender pay gap of 14% and a pension gap of 38% in favour of men.
- Women are concentrated at middle management in the civil service.
- In 2022, 5.7% of women were living in consistent poverty, 13.2% were considered 'at risk of poverty', and 19.1% experienced enforced deprivation.
- The poverty rates among structurally vulnerable groups are of particular concern, including older people living alone, unemployed people, people unable to work due to health complications, Travellers, Roma and other ethnic minority groups. Furthermore, one-parent families, 86.4% of which are headed by women, disproportionately experience poverty, with 14.1% living in consistent poverty and 31% at risk of poverty.
- We are concerned about women's participation at all levels of sport, including playing, coaching, officiating and leadership. The legacy of historical underfunding of women's sports is stark, impacting players from grassroots to elite levels.
- Women's participation in all aspects of political, public and cultural life is impacted by care inequality. Women shoulder a disproportionate burden of unpaid care work, including significant child and family care responsibilities.
- Lower levels of female representation on boards of Small and Medium Enterprises is particularly concerning, as this experience is a crucial pathway for future career development. Similarly, women's representation in key leadership roles, including Chairs, Chief Executive Officers and Chief Financial Officers, fall significantly short, with disappointing trends between 2022 and 2023

In relation to **experience**:

- Due to persistent gender stereotyping in the labour market, women predominate in lower paid sectors such as hospitality, childcare and adult social care, and are more likely to be in receipt of the National Minimum Wage.
- Women are more likely to experience discrimination in the workplace, including in relation to pregnancy and maternity, menstrual health, and menopause.
- Pregnancy-related workplace discrimination, which may include job offers being rescinded; being placed on reduced hours; unfair selection for redundancy; negative impact on work performance rating; and lack of promotion.
- Non-Irish nationals face particular obstacles to accessing decent work and are more likely to have less advantageous working conditions than White-Irish nationals.
- We also note the issues experienced by disabled people in relation to decent work, including higher rates of work-related illnesses, and failures to put reasonable accommodations in place for disabled employees.
- Trans women experience high levels of discrimination in employment for expressing trans identity.

In relation to **identity**:

- Gendered division of care labour is deeply embedded in the legislative and policy fabric of Irish society.
- Intersectional issues for specific women including Traveller women, women with disabilities, women in rural areas, and women in direct provision.
- The gender employment gap gets wider as women age.
- The participation rate of disabled women in full-time employment in Ireland is the worst in the EU, highlighting the level of ableism in Irish society.
- Travellers face intense discrimination in the labour market, and the participation rate of Traveller women was last estimated to be 30%.
- Although there is limited data disaggregated by gender, research evidence documents the existence of attitudinal barriers to the employment of a number of other ethnic minority communities, including racism and micro-aggressions at the point of recruitment.
- Structural barriers are built into the Irish employment landscape, including the lack of recognition of foreign qualifications, resulting in complex hurdles faced by migrants and international/temporary protection applicants seeking employment.
- Research on the Roma community highlights barriers to employment such as language and literacy, access to training, the social determinants of health, as well as the lack of appropriate transport and childcare supports for Roma women in particular.

The 2019 IHREC report on [Ireland and the Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination](#), identifies issues of situation, experience and identity for Black and minority ethnic people, including Roma and Travellers.

In relation to **situation**:

- The employment rate of 'African nationals' is 45%, compared to an average of 70% for other minority national groups. The employment rate of African women is 38%, 17% below the average female employment rate in Ireland.
- In 2016, the unemployment rate for Travellers was 80.2%, compared to 12.9% for the general population. Census 2016 also highlighted that only 10.1% of Traveller women and 12.6% of Traveller men list their principal economic status as 'at work'.
- Only 17% of Roma respondents were in employment, and 79% felt that they had been discriminated against in getting a job.
- The recognition of qualifications acquired abroad is also an issue. A European directive on the recognition of foreign qualifications only applies to people from the EU, and there are often lengthy and complicated procedures in place. Difficulties in obtaining recognition in Ireland of qualifications acquired abroad can give rise to situations of under-employment and over-qualification. The over-qualification rate for migrant workers in Ireland is 41%, compared to 29% for workers born in Ireland.
- There is a lack of representation of people from minority ethnic groups in employment across the public sector.
- Minority ethnic groups are often confronted with issues in the workplace such as precarious contracts, a lack of progression, unequal treatment, and exploitation.
- The data demonstrates that 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).
- Widespread failure by local authorities to provide Traveller- specific accommodation, with many Travellers living in unacceptable conditions, and many others facing persistent discrimination in the private rented sector.
- Roma experience severe overcrowding, poor quality accommodation, a lack of security of tenure, homelessness, and lack of access to social housing and rent supplement.
- Possible barriers to registering to vote include access to information about voting rights and the complexity of the registration process, including electoral registration forms.
- Fifty-three 'naturalised/non-Irish citizen' candidates contested the 2019 local elections, with eight being elected. Analysis suggests that some 86 people would need to have been elected in the 2019 local elections for this group's political representation at local government level to be proportionate. The Commission further notes the low levels of Traveller and Roma participation as electoral candidates.
- Minority ethnic women face additional barriers to political participation, including due to language and gender-based discrimination, sexist stereotyping, political inexperience, limited access to campaign funding, work commitments, and the lack of childcare provisions.
- To protect the social and cultural life of the Traveller community, the Commission is of the view that the State must invest in the necessary infrastructure. While the funding provided to date to promote Traveller culture is welcome, it has been criticised for its ad hoc and project-based character.
- To an increasingly large extent, the relationship between the State and civil society organisations is focused on arrangements relating to the subcontracting and delivery of services. However, the advocacy role of such organisations in democratic discourse and in the promotion of human rights needs to be fully recognised and protected.

In relation to **experience**:

- Compared to 'White Irish' respondents, 'Black' people are three times more likely to experience discrimination in access to public services and almost five times more likely to

experience discrimination in access to private services such as shops, banks, and housing. 'Asian' respondents also report more discrimination in private services.

- The CSO published data in July 2019 demonstrating that compared to 16.3% of 'Irish persons', 26.7% of persons of other nationalities and 33.1% of 'persons from non-White ethnic backgrounds' reported experiencing discrimination in the previous two years.
- There is a demonstrable history of chronic racism and discrimination against the Traveller community in Ireland. 90% of Travellers have experienced discrimination over their lifetime, while 77% experienced discrimination in the previous year.
- High levels of discrimination faced by Roma on the street or other public settings (81% of respondents) when accessing social welfare (84%) and in shops, restaurants, pubs, or other social venues (74%). This report highlighted that Roma women are particularly vulnerable to on-street racism, including because of their identifiable and traditional dress.
- The 2018 study, *Ethnicity and Nationality in the Irish Labour Market*, found that, in comparison to 'White Irish' people, Black people of Irish nationality were twice as likely to experience discrimination when seeking employment and 3.4 times as likely to experience discrimination in the workplace. Black people of other nationalities were five times more likely to experience discrimination when seeking employment, and over 2.5 times more likely to experience discrimination in the workplace.
- Research co-funded by the Commission and published in 2018 demonstrated the common use of Islamophobic and anti-Semitic racist discourse in the Irish online sphere.
- 'Just under half of adults born in Ireland believe some cultures to be superior to others. It also found that 45% believe that some races/ethnic groups were born harder working.' It was found that 17% of adults born in Ireland believe that 'some races were born less intelligent.'
- One study that analysed reported racist incidents found that the shaming of and discriminatory behaviour towards people of African descent are frequent and highly visible in Ireland.
- Victims of racism report a lack of confidence in occupying public spaces and engaging with strangers, as well as fears for their other family members.
- There are concerns held by the Commission about political discourse in Ireland that may serve to exclude minority groups from public life.
- Growth of a troubling anti-immigrant and anti-refugee discourse and negative stereotypes of Travellers in public discourse reinforce barriers to public services and exacerbate the disadvantages they face.

In relation to **identity**:

- 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
- The recognition of qualifications acquired abroad is an issue. A European directive on the recognition of foreign qualifications only applies to people from the EU, and there are often lengthy and complicated procedures.
- Unavailability of disaggregated statistical data on the issues faced by Black and minority ethnic groups in Ireland, Irish data collection instruments do not collect information on ethnicity as standard.



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Please contact the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Office if you require a copy of this policy in large print, high-contrast print, Braille or audio format.