

The Pensions Authority

Public sector equality and human rights duty assessment and action plan 2025 – 2027

Document history

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Introduction

All public bodies in Ireland are subject to a statutory duty to uphold and promote human rights and equality in the performance of their functions. This obligation referred to as the Public sector equality and human rights duty (“the duty”) is set out in Section 42 of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014, which states that:

42. (1) A public body shall, in the performance of its functions, have regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination,
- Promote equality of opportunity and treatment of its staff and the persons to whom it provides services, and
- Protect the human rights of its members, staff and the persons to whom it provides services.

Section 42 of the Act also sets out three core steps to be taken by public bodies. These are:

- **Assess** – set out in its strategic planning processes an assessment of the human rights and equality issues it believes to be relevant to its functions and purposes.
- **Address** – set out in its strategic planning processes the policies, plans and actions in place or proposed to be put in place to address those issues.
- **Report** – report on developments and achievements in a manner accessible to the public.

This Public Sector Duty requires public bodies to proactively consider the need to eliminate discrimination, promote equality of opportunity and treatment for staff and service users, and protect human rights across all areas of their work. To give effect to this duty, public bodies must assess relevant human rights and equality issues, identify actions to address them, and report publicly on progress through their strategic and annual plans.

The Pensions Authority is a statutory body set up under the Pensions Act. Its core function is to monitor and enforce compliance with the Pensions Act, ensuring that occupational pension schemes, PRSA providers, and employers meet their legal obligations. The Authority also provides guidance to trustees, members, and the public, supports policy development, and advises the Minister for Social Protection on pension-related matters. Through its supervisory and enforcement activities, it plays a key role in safeguarding the retirement benefits of pension scheme members.

The Authority's [Statement of Strategy 2025 - 2029](#) affirms our commitment to human rights and equality issues. This commitment is embedded in how we plan, deliver, and report on our work.

We have committed to:

- Assessing our policies, practices, and services to identify potential impacts on equality and human rights.
- Addressing any issues identified through targeted actions that promote fairness, dignity, and inclusion.
- Reporting transparently on our progress in fulfilling these commitments through our Annual Reports and by publishing updates on our website.

The Authority's culture statement contained in our Statement of strategy 2025-2029 confirms our commitment to an inclusive and respectful work culture and acting in accordance with the Authority's values. Our values are;

- Public interest – we act in the interests of pension scheme members, prospective members and beneficiaries and PRSA contributors, with respect to their pension rights.
- Professionalism – we carry out our work with skill, expertise, good judgement, and respect.
- Integrity – we act honestly and ethically and are committed to accountability and transparency.
- Effectiveness – we apply our efforts where they will have the greatest impact on member outcomes.
- Efficiency – we are focussed on cost-effective operations and regulation.
- Responsiveness – we adapt as circumstances change to meet our objectives.
- Independence – we act objectively and impartially in carrying out our functions.

The Pensions Authority is committed to fulfilling the obligations of the Act and instilling a culture that is inclusive and respectful among staff and those that we provide services to. We have conducted an assessment of our equality and human rights issues relevant to our function and are satisfied that the Authority is fulfilling its public sector duty.

An EDI working group was established to conduct the assessment and identify appropriate actions to support equality and address any human rights issues. To support ongoing achievement of compliance with these obligations, we have developed a three-year action plan, see Appendix I, which will be reviewed annually. Senior management is represented in the working group and will be responsible for monitoring the implementation of the actions identified in this plan. The action plan will

be integrated with the Authority's annual business plans and progress will be reported in our annual report.

Appendix I The Pensions Authority Public sector equality and human rights duty action plan 2025 – 2027

Action identified	Key performance indicator	Timeline
The Authority will review policies that relate to human rights and equality issues regularly and ensure they are written in plain language and accessible to all staff.	The Employee handbook will be reviewed annually. The recruitment policy reviewed annually.	Annually
The Authority will organise training for staff on human rights and equality issues annually.	Employees will receive training on human rights and equality issues annually.	Annually
The Authority will continue to make flexible work arrangements available to staff.	Flexible working arrangements will be communicated to staff at least annually.	Annually
The Authority will make details of the Access Officer readily available to staff.	Details of the Access Officer is published on the intranet and is readily available to all staff.	Q1 2026
The Authority will conduct an audit of the organisational culture every five years.	A culture audit will be conducted every five years; the last audit was conducted in 2025.	2030
The Authority will report on its statutory obligations on human rights and equality issues, monitor such reports and take appropriate action where required.	Appropriate timely action will be taken if the Authority's reporting on human rights and equality issues identifies any concerns.	Annually