

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION



PURPOSE

The IBTS is made up of a wide range of people with diverse backgrounds and circumstances, which we value and regard as a great asset. As part of our continued commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion, we strive to create an environment in which all members of our community should expect to be able to thrive, be respected and have a real opportunity to participate in and contribute to IBTS activities so that they can achieve their fullest potential.

The Public Sector Equality and Human Rights ('the Duty') places a statutory obligation on public bodies to eliminate discrimination, promote equality of opportunity and protect the human rights of those to whom they provide services and staff when carrying out their daily work. It puts equality and human rights in the mainstream of how public bodies engage with members of the public and their own staff.

Having a commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion, supported by the IBTS strategy, brings many benefits including: attracting, retaining and developing employees leading to better performance, a sense of commitment, engagement and wellbeing, and the achievement of excellence.

DEFINITIONS

Equality is ensuring individuals or groups of individuals are not treated less favourably, on the basis of the ten IBTS grounds (see definitions below). Equality seeks to advance equality of opportunity in access to employment or training, development, career opportunities etc. without any direct or indirect discrimination, or conscious or unconscious biases.

Equity is concerned with promoting fairness so that everyone starts from the same place. This may include positive measures in order to achieve greater equality of outcome.

Diversity means more than just acknowledging and/or tolerating difference. Diversity involves understanding, appreciating and embracing differences and practicing mutual respect for qualities and experiences that are different from the majority.

Inclusion is a sense of belonging; feeling respected and valued; feeling a level of support and commitment from others so that one can achieve their best at work.

*Ten IBTS Equality Grounds:

- **Gender**
(including gender identity): a person's gender identity including male, female, transgender or non-binary
- **Civil status**
a person's civil status be it single, married, separated, divorced, widowed, civil partnered and formerly civil partnered
- **Family status**
being a parent of a person under 18 years or the resident primary carer or parent of a person with a disability or not
- **Socio-economic-status**
a combined economic and sociological measure economic and social position in relation to others, based on the income, education, and occupation of an individual and their family.
- **Sexual orientation**
a person's sexual orientation including gay, lesbian, bisexual and heterosexual
- **Religion**
a person's religious belief, background, outlook or none
- **Age**
a person's age, this does not apply to a person aged under 16
- **Disability**
includes people with physical, intellectual, learning, cognitive or emotional disabilities and a range of medical conditions
- **Race**
includes race, skin colour, nationality or ethnic origin
- **Membership of the Traveller community**
recognised as an ethnic group

**(Equality grounds, {excluding socio-economic status} are defined in the Employment Equality Acts. Socio economic status is enshrined in the Constitution)*

EDI mainstreaming: ensures that Equality, Diversity and Inclusion is embedded and mainstreamed into every aspect of IBTS life which includes assessing the impact of our policies, procedures, practices and communications on equality, diversity and inclusion and how these promote EDI.

Recognition: underpins Equality, Diversity and Inclusion through a recognition culture in IBTS where all employees feel acknowledged and valued for their contributions to IBTS and supported in their career and personal development.

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EDI: Raising awareness and consultation:

- ensuring that all employees undergo appropriate equality training for their role and that everyone in the IBTS community is aware of their personal responsibility to support and promote EDI;
- ensure that employees are provided with appropriate opportunities to discuss equality and diversity issues, raise any concerns and to involve the community in the development and delivery of our equality objectives;
- ensure that the EDI Policy and EDI Strategy and Action Plan is communicated throughout the organisation through a variety of channels, and are embedded into all aspects of IBTS life.

EDI data monitoring: having an effective data monitoring and analysis process that supports this policy.

Legislative compliance: ensuring that IBTS will apply this policy in compliance with and in the spirit of the relevant legislation.

Unconscious Bias: referring to one’s background, personal experiences, societal stereotypes and cultural context which can have an impact on decisions and actions without one realising. Implicit or unconscious bias happens by our brains making incredibly quick judgments and assessments of people and situations unconsciously using those biases.

PRINCIPLES

MISSION

IBTS believes in equality, diversity and inclusion and embeds these fairness principles into all aspects of IBTS life. Fairness is integral to our mission and informs our policy development, behaviours and decision-making so that the IBTS community embraces equality, diversity and inclusion.

VISION

IBTS’s vision for EDI is to be a leader in equality and diversity, and for EDI to be at the heart of all we do. In order to achieve our vision, we will continue to take active steps around the following principles:

- Equality of opportunity
- Equity
- Recognition
- EDI Awareness Raising and Consultation
- EDI data monitoring
- Legislative compliance

SCOPE

This Policy applies to all members of our IBTS community, including:

- Employees
- Members of the public including donors and customers
- Visitors, including external persons or agencies using the IBTS premises, facilities or services
- Individuals working or acting on IBTS behalf, including suppliers of goods and services
- All applicants for work
- Any students, interns, including visiting and placement students

This policy applies (but is not limited) to recruitment and selection of employees, training and development, opportunities for promotion, conditions of service, benefits and pay, conduct at work and the staff grievance and disciplinary procedures.

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ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

All members of IBTS have a role under the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy, in that they are responsible for their own behaviour but also responsible for ensuring that they carry out their role in line with this policy. Individuals therefore are:

- Responsible for making themselves aware of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy.
- Expected to participate in training which supports the implementation of IBTS’s Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy, as appropriate.
- Responsible for their behaviour and expected to treat others with dignity and respect and to challenge inappropriate behaviour or discrimination.
- Compliance with the EDI Policy is essential – non-compliance may result in complaints under the Dignity and Respect policy or other relevant policies and potential disciplinary action.

The IBTS Executive Management Team will ensure that:

- They take a leadership role in all equality, diversity and inclusion related matters.
- They promote the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy.
- There is strong leadership on equality, diversity and inclusion at all levels within IBTS.
- That, in line with the Public Sector Duty, equality is promoted, discrimination prevented and the human rights of everyone affected by our policies and plans are protected.
- Publicity and other material reflect the diversity of the IBTS’s community.
- Employees and visitors are treated fairly across the 10 grounds. IBTS will take prompt action over alleged discrimination or harassment.
- All employees will receive training on equality and diversity related matters.
- External contractors are made aware of their responsibility in relation to equality and diversity and will be required to comply with IBTS policies and regulations.
- Public events are held, wherever possible, in accessible locations.

Those with People Management Responsibilities have a responsibility to:

- Set a good example by treating all members of IBTS with dignity and respect.
- Manage unacceptable behaviour in accordance with relevant policies.
- Increase awareness of EDI and promote a positive working environment.
- Ensure that due consideration is given to equality and diversity within their areas of responsibility e.g. policy development and decision making.
- Participate in training which supports the implementation of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy, as appropriate and to ensure that those in their area do likewise.
- In line with the Public Sector Duty, promote equality, prevent discrimination and protect the human rights of everyone affected by their policies, actions and plans.
- Implement EDI policies and report on their implementation.

The HR Department is responsible for:

- Leading on equality, diversity and inclusion related initiatives.
- Making recommendations to the Management Team on all matters relating to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.
- Ensuring the promotion, communication, and mainstreaming of equality, diversity and inclusion throughout IBTS and that appropriate and effective training is provided at governance, management and staff levels.
- Promoting measures and activities that enhance our sense of wellbeing and physical health.
- Considering all existing and emerging equality legislation with a view to identifying relevant issues, which are then translated into key IBTS policies.
- Data monitoring, analysis and policy development.
- Designing and delivering equality and diversity related training and awareness raising campaigns.
- Providing advice, support and guidance on equality, diversity and inclusion related issues.

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RELATED DOCUMENTS

LEGISLATION

There are different legislative measures in place that protect people from discrimination. IBTS will apply this policy in compliance with and in the spirit of the relevant legislation.

- The Employment Equality Acts 1998–2015 outlaw discrimination in a wide range of employment and employment-related areas. These include recruitment and promotion; equal pay; working conditions; training or experience; dismissal and harassment including sexual harassment. The main type of unlawful discrimination involves the treatment of a person in a less favourable way than another person is, has been, or would be treated in a comparable situation on any of the nine grounds.
- The Equal Status Acts 2000-2018, prohibit discrimination in the provision of goods and services, the provision of accommodation and access to education, on any of the nine grounds. The Acts outlaw discrimination in all services that are generally available to the public whether provided by the state or the private sector.
- The Disability Act 2005 places a statutory obligation on public service providers to support access to services and facilities for people with disabilities.
- The Gender Recognition Act 2015 provides a process enabling trans people to achieve full legal recognition of their true gender and allows for the acquisition of a new birth certificate that reflects this change. The Gender Recognition Act will allow all individuals over the age of 18 to self-declare their own gender identity.
- The Public Sector Duty introduced under the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2015 places a duty on public sector bodies to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, promote equality of opportunity in the treatment of its employees and the persons to whom it provides services, and protect the human rights of its members, employees and the persons to whom it provides services. In the case of IBTS, this would include all members of our Community.

POLICIES

- There are a number of policies in place in IBTS that support the vision of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy and also manage instances where this policy is contravened. These policies include, but are not limited to the Equality Policy, the Dignity and Respect Policy, Code of Conduct for the Employment of People with Disabilities and the Grievance and Disciplinary procedures.

SUPPORTS

- Where employees perceive that they have been unfairly treated in respect of one of the ten IBTS grounds, or the conduct of an individual is in contravention of this policy, the following supports are available.

Employees:

- Support and information from the Line Manager;
 - Confidential advice and guidance about EDI provision from the HR Department;
 - Advice on all aspects of employment through Human Resources Department;
- and
- Confidential Counselling Service through the Employee Assistance Programme; Freephone Helpline: 1800 995955
- Email: eap@vhics.ie
- Website: www.wellbeing-4life.com
Website Username / access code: VHIIBTS

OTHER RESOURCES

- Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (IHREC) – www.ihrec.ie
- Transgender Equality Network Ireland (TENI) – www.teni.ie
- National Disability Authority (NDA) – www.nda.ie
- Age Action Ireland – www.ageaction.ie
- Irish Traveller Movement – www.itmtrav.ie