

# SEEKING ACTION ON THE DUTY

By Niall Crowley

# STARTING POINT - PURPOSE

- ▶ Advance achievement of equality and fulfillment of human rights.
- ▶ Support evidence-based policy-making by public bodies.
- ▶ Secure quality, inclusive, accessible and accountable public services.
- ▶ Improve employee diversity in public bodies.
- ▶ Drive cultural change within public bodies
- ▶ Bring a wider perspective to policy-making, employment procedures, and service provision.

# STARTING POINT - PRINCIPLES

- ▶ **Embedded:** An approach that is integral to the way public bodies conduct their business.
- ▶ **Participatory:** Dialogue with people experiencing inequality and human rights issues.
- ▶ **Comprehensive:** Gender, civil status, marital status, disability, sexual orientation, race, religion, Traveller community and socio-economic status
- ▶ **Values:** A values based approach.

# ACTION REQUIRED OF PUBLIC BODIES

- ▶ Take steps to eliminate discrimination, promote equality, and protect human rights as employers, policy-makers and service providers.
- ▶ Assess the human rights and equality issues relevant to the public body and its work.
- ▶ Identify policies, plans and actions to address these issues in a strategic plan.
- ▶ Report on developments and achievements in responding to these issues in an annual report.

# PRE-PLANNING

- ▶ Establish a senior management group to oversee and drive a strategic approach.
- ▶ Provide training on equality and human rights issues and on the skills to implement the duty.
- ▶ Make a plan to implement the duty, embed the duty in the body's work processes, and secure participation of people experiencing inequality and human rights issues.

# IMPLEMENTATION - EXTERNAL

- ▶ Gather information on the equality and human rights issues relevant to the work of the public body.
- ▶ Assess the impact of the body on these issues as policy-maker, employer, and service provider.
- ▶ Engage with representative organisations of people experiencing inequality or human rights issues.
- ▶ Establish plans, policies, and programmes to address these issues.

# IMPLEMENTATION - INTERNAL

- ▶ Gather information on the presence, position, and experience of staff from the ten grounds.
- ▶ Review internal policies, procedures and practices for their impact on equality and human rights issues for these staff.
- ▶ Engage with staff, in particular those from the ten grounds.
- ▶ Establish plans, policies, and programmes to address the issues identified.

# KEY TOOLS

- ▶ **An equality and human rights review:** An assessment of internal policies, procedures, staff perceptions and practices for their impact on equality and human rights of staff, service users and groups targeted by policy.
- ▶ **Impact assessment:** A systematic assessment of likely or actual effects of a plan, policy or programme on groups experiencing inequality and human rights issues from the ten grounds.

# REPORTING

- ▶ Monitoring, on an ongoing basis, of outcomes from the duty by the working group.
- ▶ Systematic data gathering in relation to the ten grounds.
- ▶ Indicators to ensure change is tracked and measured.
- ▶ Engage with representative organisations of people experiencing inequality or human rights issues.
- ▶ Report on progress made annually.

# A LENS OF FIVE VALUES

- ▶ **Freedom:** Choice, agency, and absence of coercion.
- ▶ **Dignity:** Respect, caring relationships and absence of degrading treatment.
- ▶ **Democracy:** Participation, voice, and empowerment and accountability from those with power.
- ▶ **Solidarity:** Redistribution, well being and a challenge to individualism and isolation.
- ▶ **Equality:** Accommodating diversity, removing disadvantage, and eliminating discrimination.

# AN INTEGRATED APPROACH

- ▶ Develop and agree the core values and what these values mean.
- ▶ Review the body's plans, policies, services and the body's internal operations to identify issues for each value.
- ▶ Identify objectives and actions for the body to address these issues.
- ▶ Set up data gathering, indicators and monitoring systems in relation to each value.

# CONCLUSION

- ▶ Will this approach achieve gains for Travellers and Roma?
- ▶ Are these the best values to use as a lens for public sector action?
- ▶ How could we mobilise an effective demand for this type of approach?
- ▶ What are the implications for our organisations of this approach?