



Cork City Council



Cork City Council
Partnership Committee



Social Inclusion and Cork City Council

A Guide for Staff

June 2003

Treoir don Fhoireann

Cuimsiú Sóisialta agus Comhairle Cathrach Chorcaí

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Buíochas

Acknowledgements

The Social Inclusion Unit would like to thank all of the members of staff of Cork City Council who have taken the time to assist in preparing this Social Inclusion Booklet. Particular thanks is due to the members of the Social Inclusion Committee for their editorial assistance.

We would also like to thank the Partnership Committee for their financial support in the production of this Booklet. Finally we would like to acknowledge the assistance of Brendan Hennessy in preparing the first draft of the Booklet.

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The Social Inclusion Unit

Brollach

FOREWORD

I welcome the production of this Social Inclusion Booklet. It is informative, accessible and practical. It will help us to become more socially aware and to focus better on providing a socially inclusive working environment within the organisation and in our dealings with the broader community which we serve.

The involvement of staff from every department of the City Council on our Social Inclusion Committee will facilitate a comprehensive and co-ordinated approach to the general issues of social inclusion.

I would like to commend the work of our Social Inclusion Unit for the impact it has made and for the amount of consultation it has engaged in when preparing this booklet.

I would like to thank Pat Ledwidge, Director of Services, Community and Enterprise, Donal Guerin, Social Inclusion Officer, and their teams for their leadership and commitment.

May I encourage all staff to support the principles of social inclusion.

J. Gavin,
City Manager.

Is aidhm don cháipéis seo fostaithe Chomhairle Cathrach Chorcaí a chur ar an eolas mar gheall ar an dá choincheap, cuimsiú sóisialta agus comhionannas. Cabhróidh an leabhrán seo le daoine chun an nuathéarmaíocht a bhaineann leis an gcuimsiú sóisialta a thuiscint. Déanfar sonrú ann ar théarmaí dála 'cuimsiú sóisialta', agus téarmaí dála 'comhionannas', 'bochtaine' agus 'eisiámh sóisialta' a ghabhann lena leithéid.

The purpose of this document is to familiarise Cork City Council employees with the concepts of social inclusion and equality. This Booklet will assist in the understanding of the new vocabulary associated with social inclusion. It will define terms such as 'social inclusion' and the associated terms of 'equality', 'poverty' and 'social exclusion'.

This Booklet is designed to be a significant step to ensuring that the social inclusion and equality agenda remains a high priority within Cork City Council. It will help build on the current range of actions being carried out by individual staff members with the general public, other colleagues from the commercial sector, state agencies and the community and voluntary sector. The Booklet will be a resource for all staff who have the responsibility of implementing the social inclusion objectives of the Corporate Plan, Imagine Our Future (the Cork City Development Board Strategy), the forthcoming City Development Plan and other Departmental and Directorate operational strategies and plans.

The content of the booklet is divided into 3 main sections:

- Section 1 deals with the relationship between poverty and social inclusion and provides an overview of the national policy framework in the area of social inclusion
- Section 2 outlines some of the main initiatives, which are being taken by the City Council in promoting social inclusion
- Section 3 provides an overview of the requirements of the equality legislation, which has major implications for the delivery of City Council services. Examples of possible initiatives on how the equality agenda could be implemented by the City Council are also introduced in this Section.

The booklet concludes with a series of questions, which each staff member could consider in their day-to-day work.

The booklet is co-funded by the Social Inclusion Unit and the Cork City Council Partnership Committee.

SECTION 1: Poverty and Social Inclusion

What is social inclusion?

Social inclusion can be defined as a series of positive actions to achieve equality of access to goods and services, to assist all individuals participate in their community and society, to encourage the contribution of all persons to social and cultural life and to be aware of, and to challenge, all forms of discrimination.

What is social exclusion?

Social exclusion can be defined as the experience of social and economic inequalities. That is where people are excluded from some, but not necessarily all, aspects of daily living which are considered normal, and may be experiencing poverty. For example people can be excluded from:

- Production: not being able to access employment or education
- Consumption: unable to afford goods and services
- Social networks: lack of access to social, sporting or cultural organisations
- Decision making: being without power to change personal or wider circumstances

How is poverty defined?

People are living in poverty if their income and resources (material, cultural and social) are so inadequate as to prevent them from having a standard of living, which is regarded as acceptable by Irish society. As a result of inadequate income and resources people may be excluded and marginalised from participating in activities, which are considered the norm for other people in society.

What are the Effects of social exclusion?

- Unemployment and/or low income
- Poor Housing
- Ill-health
- Inadequate education
- Few recreational opportunities
- Feeling powerless and marginalised.

Main National Policy Response:

The National Anti-Poverty Strategy

The National Anti Poverty Strategy called Building an Inclusive Society was launched in February 2002. This National Action Plan set out to 'reduce substantially and, ideally, eliminate poverty in Ireland and to build a socially inclusive society'. It proposes six ways that social inclusion can be achieved;

- Sustain economic growth
- Provide levels of income support to those relying on social welfare sufficient to sustain dignity and avoid poverty, while facilitating participation in employment and escape from welfare dependency
- Address the needs of groups at high risk of poverty;
- Provide high-quality public services to all
- Tackle the causes of inter-generational transmission of poverty
- Support disadvantaged communities.

Building an Inclusive Society also recommended that local authorities need to take a lead role in incorporating anti-poverty strategies into their day to day activities e.g. it recommended that all City/County Development Plans have a specific anti-poverty focus. The Cork City Development Board Strategy, *Imagine Our Future* has a strong anti-poverty focus.

SECTION 2: Cork City Council and Social Inclusion

Cork City Council has a long history in supporting communities in Cork. However, the City Council recognises that some housing schemes, which it has developed are associated with high levels of disadvantage. The City Council has for many years' actively targeted resources towards these disadvantaged communities. It has done this through the direct provision of services such as quality social housing, the provision of community infrastructure such as sports facilities and community centres and major regeneration schemes in disadvantaged areas.

Examples of Social Inclusion Measures Undertaken by Cork City Council

Housing:

- Current provision of approximately 7,000 units. In the past, up to 12,000 units of housing have been provided by the City Council. Tenant purchasing has reduced much of this stock
- Major regeneration schemes in Knocknaheeny and the Glen
- Developed groundbreaking models of estate management and tenant participation in Ardbhaile, Mayfield and the current deployment of tenant liaison staff in the Glen, Knocknaheeny, Mayfield and Togher
- Lead role in the development of services for homeless people through its support for voluntary agencies providing accommodation, lead role in the Homeless Forum and appointment of an outreach worker
- Provision of halting sites for Travellers
- Opening of Area Office in Knocknaheeny, which is bringing the delivery of housing services closer to tenants.

Architects:

- Change in orientation from large to smaller estates, which has centred around the development of sustainable communities. (e.g. energy efficiency, disability access, a good example is the estate in Lotamore)
- Consultation with local communities in all major developments (the Glen Regeneration Project)
- High quality design principles and building materials in all housing provided by City Council.

Environment:

- Provision of waivers system
- Increased number of litter wardens
- Increased public awareness on litter and waste (20/20 Newsletter and Support for GAP and Combat Poverty Agency projects in Mahon and other parts of the City)
- Provision of recycling facilities in all parts of the City.

Roads and Transport:

- Regular consultation with groups representing persons with disabilities
- Increased number of parking spaces for persons with disabilities
- Traffic crossings have become more disability friendly in the City Centre.

Recreation and Amenities:

- Development of Glen Sports Centre
- Proposed refurbishment of Churchfield swimming pool
- The development of a Strategy, which is addressing the recreation and amenity needs of the northside of the City
- Key role in working with the community in the distribution of funds from the Young Persons Facility Fund
- Support for community arts through the appointment of a Community Arts Co-ordinator

- Placing social inclusion at the heart of the successful bid for the City of Culture Award
- Library Service developing ground breaking models in the delivery of services (e.g. working with the housebound elderly)
- Use of CE and Job Initiative Schemes.

Corporate Affairs:

- Placing social inclusion at the heart of the Corporate Plan
- Developing Customer Action Plan, which has a specific focus on supporting front line staff in dealing with social inclusion issues e.g staff training on disability issues..
- Roll out of e-government.

Human Resources:

- Supporting literacy training to members of staff
- Measures to promote access to persons with disabilities.

IT:

- Supported IT projects in the community
- Co-operation with the REACH Project i.e. e-forms
- Access to Council services through website
- E-government

Docklands and Special Projects:

- Social inclusion has been put at the centre of the aims and objectives of the regeneration of the Docklands. It is intended that the re-development of the Docklands will be inclusive of all of the people of Cork.

Planning:

- Social inclusion has been firmly located as a core principle
- Childcare guidelines are used in assessing planning applications.

Law Department:

- Implementing measures to deal with derelict sites

Finance:

- Waivers and fee reduction schemes for various services for households on low incomes.

Community and Enterprise:

This Directorate is pioneering new approaches to social inclusion in Cork City Council.

Three main initiatives are currently underway, which have a specific social inclusion focus.

1. Social Inclusion Unit

A Social Inclusion Unit has been established in Cork City Council. Nationally, 8 local authorities have secured funding for the establishment of Social Inclusion Units (Cork, Waterford, Limerick and Dublin local authorities). A Social Inclusion Officer and Analyst staff each of these Units. The main objective of the Social Inclusion Unit is to promote social inclusion in the day to day activities of Cork City Council. This is being achieved in three main ways:

1. Research and evaluation
2. Awareness and information provision
3. Policy analysis.

A Social Inclusion Committee has been established within the City Council. The Committee is drawn from all Departments and will facilitate inter-departmental discussion on best practice in ensuring that all of the activities of the Council contribute to social inclusion.

2. RAPID

In 2001, the Government announced that 25 urban areas throughout the country would be targeted for the delivery of the RAPID 1 (Revitalising Areas by Planning, Investment and Development) Programme.

Four of these areas are in Cork, they are:

- Knocknaheeny/Hollyhill/Churchfield
- Blackpool/The Glen/Mayfield
- Fairhill/Gurranabraher/Farranree
- Togher/Mahon.

In each RAPID area, local community groups and residents came together to discuss the programme and choose their representatives for their Area Implementation Team, which also includes representatives from:

- State Agencies
- Cork City Partnership
- Drugs Task Force.

Each RAPID area has its own Programme co-ordinator. The Area Implementation Team and the Co-ordinator worked together to draw up a plan outlining specific actions which was submitted to Area Development Management in December 2001. A vital part of RAPID is the development of new ways for statutory agencies and communities to work together to deliver more effective services at a local level, but also to ensure that the process informs national policy making with regard to the design, development and delivery of any new services within disadvantaged areas. In each of the RAPID areas in Cork, the Area Implementation Teams are now working to deliver upon the actions outlined in the area plan. In addition, they are attempting to design new and innovative ways of delivering currently available services.

3. The Cork City Development Board

The Cork City Development Board's 10-year strategy for the economic, social and cultural development of Cork City, called *Imagine Our Future*, was published in July 2002. It was developed over a two-year period, in close co-operation with community and voluntary groups, public agencies, employer's organisations and others. By setting out a shared vision, it will help organisations and agencies work together to tackle those issues which local people say are important to them e.g. health, public transport, education and training as well as focusing on combating disadvantage and creating a more inclusive society. Social inclusion is at the heart of the Strategy, which includes over 500 detailed actions to be implemented and monitored.

The Cork City Development Board has also set up a Social Inclusion Measures Working Group. Its objective is to guide the co-ordination of social inclusion projects and programmes at local level. It was agreed that information sharing would be effective for co-ordination and allow for co-operation between organisations, avoidance of overlap in activities and meeting gaps in service provision.

SECTION 3: Equality Agenda

Section 3 provides an overview of the existing equality legislation and its implications for the delivery of Cork City Council services.

What is Equality?

Equality means:

- Equal rights for all to participate in the economic, social, political and cultural life of society.
- Removing barriers and providing the structures to ensure equal participation for all members of society
- Assisting disadvantaged groups realise their economic, social and cultural rights.

Attempting to achieve equality means seeking to guarantee a range of rights to disadvantaged groups and to eliminate various forms of discrimination against them.

Culture and Diversity

Everybody has a culture. It is the sum of customs, traditions, symbols, values and phrases and other forms of communication by which people belong to a community. Culture is the way people learn to think, behave and do things.

Cultural diversity within a society provides its members with a broader range of perspectives. In the context of mutual respect diverse communities can provide different approaches and solutions to common problems and enrich and contribute to society.

The Equality Authority and The Equal Status Act

At a national level there are structures to monitor and support equality in the provision of goods and services. In 1998 the Employment Equality Act was passed in order to promote equality in the workplace. In 2001, the Equal Status Act came into operation. This Act put into focus discrimination experienced on nine grounds

Gender

Sexual Orientation

Marital Status

Age

Family Status

Religion

Disability

Race

Membership of the Traveller Community.

The Equality Authority is responsible for overseeing the Equal Status Act and assisting people who feel they have been discriminated against. The Office of Equality Investigations deals with cases that are supported by the Equality Authority. Public agencies also receive advice and training on equality issues from the Equality Authority.

Cork City Council and the Equality Agenda

The nine specific grounds mentioned above are detailed in the following pages. The following information is designed to help members of staff reconsider aspects of discrimination, which they may not have previously thought of. In each of these considerations it may be possible for members of staff to consider actions which promote the equality agenda in Cork City Council.

Gender

Who does this refer to: a man or woman.

How else is it known: sexism, also sexual harassment.

Discrimination on the grounds of gender, or sexism, was formerly perceived as only being associated with discrimination against women. This is not surprising considering the level of inequalities experienced by women, for example in relation to access to the workplace, earning power and promotion opportunities. Many people would describe the 'marriage bar' which debarred women from working in the civil service prior to 1973 as being institutionalised discrimination on the grounds of gender. Women have sought equality in accessing sporting, cultural and social facilities, and continue to pursue equal representation in political life.

Men can of course experience gender discrimination also. This can occur by stereo-typing, for example men's groups point to issues in family law which they believe discriminate against them in the area of child custody in the case of marital breakdown.

Sexual Harassment takes place where a person subjects the victim to an act of physical intimacy or any request for sexual favours from the victim, or subjects the victim to any act or conduct with sexual connotations, including spoken words, gestures or the production, display or circulation of written words, pictures or other material.

Gender equality issues within the City Council: some examples

- Number of women in senior management positions in a wide variety of public agencies
- Awareness of the issue of sexual harassment and the supports available within the City Council.

Marital Status

Who does this refer to: People who are either single, married, separated, divorced or widowed.

Marital status equality issues within the City Council: some examples

- Access to local authority housing for single people. How can this growing need be met?

Family Status

Who does this refer to? Pregnant women or the resident primary carer.

Similar to Marital Status, consideration of Family Status requires service providers to respect the position of a member of the family. In particular in terms of Irish equality legislation, family status refers to pregnant women and the primary carer in the home.

Family status issues within the City Council: some examples

- Supporting members of staff with high levels of caring responsibilities e.g. through the new term time possibilities. The City Council is also committed to supporting customers with caring responsibilities.

Disability

Who does this refer to? People with physical, intellectual, learning, cognitive or emotional disabilities and a range of medical conditions.

Cork City Council has ratified the Barcelona Declaration to promote equal opportunities for people with disabilities, to design and provide accessible services and to consult with people with disabilities and their advocates. The Barcelona Project takes its name from the

Barcelona Declaration "The City and the Disabled" signed in Barcelona in 1995.

The Declaration advocates the right of disabled people to equal opportunities and recognises their contribution to the society and the environment they live in. Under the terms of the Declaration, local authorities undertake to consult people with disabilities and their advocates. Each local authority agrees to devise a plan of action for the implementation of the Barcelona Declaration.

Furthermore at national level there is a commitment to undertake positive action for people with disabilities, one example of this is that the public service will employ at least 3% of staff members with disabilities, and facilitate their integration in the workplace.

Disability issues within the City Council: some examples.

- Awareness of needs of members of staff who may have some form of disability
- Ensuring that users of Council services have full access to services. This must mean that people have access to transport, buildings and information e.g. if a meeting is being organised by City Council staff, have appropriate efforts been made to ensure that there is disabled access to the building or the presence of interpreters for persons with hearing difficulties?

Sexual Orientation

Who does this refer to: Sexual orientation refers to people who are heterosexual, homosexual or bi-sexual.

Discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation is still experienced by lesbians and gay men. However since the legalisation of homosexual relationships in the 1980s, there has been a far greater public acceptance of lesbians and gay men.

Sexual orientation issues within the City Council: some examples

- Awareness among staff of the needs of lesbians and gay men who may be their colleagues or their customers.

Age

Who does this refer to: Older or retired people and pensioners.

Thanks to improved health and housing provision, Ireland now has an older population. Being old or retired does not mean that ones useful life has come to an end, indeed in recent times many older people have been encouraged to re-enter the workforce. Ageism, however, arises when an older person is considered unable to work or contribute just because of their age.

Age issues within the City Council: some examples.

- Recognition of contribution of members of staff who are older or retired.
- All City Council services to be designed and implemented with explicit recognition of the needs of older people.

Race

Who does this refer to?

A particular race, or skin colour, nationality or ethnic origin.

Racial discrimination is defined by the United Nations as any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, colour, descent or national or ethnic origin, which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social and cultural or any other field in public life. Xenophobia is an attitude based on a fear of strangers.

Racism, also occurs, when services are not sensitive to the needs of particular groups e.g. lack of information available in minority languages. This creates a situation that certain individuals and groups are denied the right to participate fully in society. Groups, which have experienced racism, include members of the Travelling Community, people from minority ethnic communities, refugees and asylum-seekers.

Racism issues within the City Council: some examples

- Availability of information in different languages
- Awareness among City Council staff of the needs of non-nationals.

Religion

Who does this refer to: Discrimination on the basis of religious belief or none.

Religious diversity is increasing in Ireland, including an increasing number of people who profess no religion. In an increasingly diverse society, it is essential that the practice of all religions is respected as well as the beliefs of those persons who do not practice any religion.

Religion issues within the City Council: some examples:

- Awareness of the different attitudes to religion in an increasingly diverse society among City Council staff.

Membership of the Traveller Community

Travellers are a nomadic Irish ethnic group.
An ethnic group shares a common ancestry, culture, history, tradition and sense of belonging.

Travellers are a people with a separate identity, culture and history, although they are native Irish people. Nomadism is a defining

characteristic of the Travelling community. Travel is often connected to the most important things that happen in life. Their nomadic identity is not necessarily affected even by long periods of living in one place. Living in groups with their own extended family and friends is an important feature of Traveller life.

There are approximately 25,000 Travellers in Ireland. The Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act 1998 places a statutory obligation on Local Authorities to meet the accommodation needs of Travellers. Each local authority is required to implement an accommodation programme that would include halting sites, group housing schemes and transient sites as well as standard local authority housing for Travellers.

Traveller issues within the City Council: some examples

- Awareness among staff of the specific needs of the Traveller Community
- Effective consultation with the Traveller Community.

Cork City Council and the Equality Agenda.

As a public service organisation, the City Council is responsible for ensuring that all of its services to members of the public and staff are fully compliant with the Equal Status Act. As part of its commitment to meeting these legal requirements, the City Council has appointed an Equality Officer. The Equality Officer is responsible for identifying measures to ensure that Cork City Council is meeting its responsibilities under the Equal Status Act.

Cork City Council and the Social Inclusion Agenda.

Cork City Council has established a Social Inclusion Committee, which is developing new approaches to improving its social inclusion focus. The Committee is made up of members of staff from all Departments and Directorates. The Committee is sharing information on models of best practice, supporting the work of the Social Inclusion Unit and identifying how cross departmental measures can be developed further.

What can I do?

This booklet is designed to act as a helpful informative tool for all members of staff. All staff have a responsibility for ensuring that the services of the City Council are provided in a tolerant and respectful manner and which meet the requirements of the equality and social inclusion agenda.

The following ideas may be useful for staff in their day to day work:

1- Consider what activities you undertake in your job and ask yourself:

- Which of your job activities have a direct impact on the lives of disadvantaged groups? Is there any practical way you could reinforce the impact of these activities?
- Which of your job activities do not directly impact on the lives of disadvantaged groups? Is there any way you could adapt these activities to meeting the needs of disadvantaged groups?
- Could you improve your job activities by consulting and approaching the support of external organisations/groups that represent the disadvantaged?
- Could you develop mechanisms (example: surveys) to get feedback from the service users, particularly those from disadvantaged groups, to improve services?
- What actions should be prioritised in your day to day work?
- How could your Department/Directorate change the way it delivers services? (e.g. provision of easily read materials to members of the public with reading difficulties, provision of translation services, reception facilities for people with disabilities)

2 - If you deal with the public directly:

- Do you have any ideas on how to better communicate and reach out to those people who are most disadvantaged? (example: older people, homeless people, Travellers, etc).
What methods could you use to achieve this?

3 - What supports are necessary for you to make a difference in implementing the social inclusion and equality agenda?

- What types of training do you need to help you contribute to the social inclusion and equality agenda?
- How can information on social inclusion and equality issues reach all members of staff?

If members of staff have ideas where do they go?

- Sharing ideas with direct line managers
- Contact the representatives of Department/Directorate on the Social Inclusion Committee
- Contact the Social Inclusion Unit
- Contact the Equality Officer.

Members of Cork City Council Social Inclusion Committee

Siobhan Horgan	Environment	Ext 4726
Michael Mulcahy	Environment	4465
Aileen O Connor	Community and Enterprise	4596
Norma Murphy	Community and Enterprise	4210133
Noreen Mulcahy	Corporate Affairs	4037
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Harling Hayes	Roads and Transport	4160
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Maeve Dineen	Recreation, Amenity & Culture	4736
Barbara Creed	Recreation, Amenity & Culture	4442
Don O'Callaghan	Law	4085
Linda Hanley	Law	4473
Jim O'Donovan	Planning	4621
Ernest Burns	City Architects	4287
Mark Collins	City Architects	4459
Maureen Ryan	Housing	4403
Derry O' Donovan	Housing	4183
Liz Donovan	Housing	4248
Eileen O'Leary	I.T.	4638
Declan Roche	Finance	4300
Andy Lyons	Finance	4547
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Mary Hegarty	Docklands and Special Projects	4034
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- Maria Minguella, Social Inclusion Analyst.....4060
- Eleanor O’Keeffe, Clerical Officer..... 4703

Human Resources

- Michael Burke, Equality Officer..... 4482

Useful National Phone Numbers

- The Equality Authority, Tel: **1890 24 55 45**
- Combat Poverty Agency, Tel: **01 6706746**
- National Disability Authority, Tel: **01 6080400**
- Irish Travellers Movement, Tel: **01 6796577**
- National Consultative Committee on Racism and Inter-Culturism, Tel: **01 4785777**