

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy



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1.1 Introduction - Policy Statement

- 1.1** At An Post we appreciate the value that diversity brings and believe our workforce should be reflective of the customers and communities we serve. An Post, working together with our group of Trade Unions, is committed to maintaining a workplace environment that encourages and supports equality, diversity, and inclusion ensuring it is embedded into our day-to-day working practices, led by our purpose, our values and our behaviours.
- 1.2** The purpose of this policy is to support the creation of an equal, fair and respectful working environment, where all employees feel accepted, valued, supported and encouraged to realise their full potential while contributing to business objectives.

2. Key Terms

- 2.1 Diversity** refers to the existence and **acceptance** of differences between people in whatever form they take. These differences can be related to race, ethnicity, religion, age, disability, sexual orientation, and gender, as well as the many differences in values, attitudes, beliefs, cultural views, skills, knowledge, education, background, employment, parenthood, marital status, and life experiences of every individual.
- 2.2 Inclusion** is about creating a workplace that allows people to bring their authentic selves to work without fear of judgement. It is about ensuring that everybody has the opportunity to contribute and develop, regardless of their differences.
- 2.3 Equal Opportunities** can be defined as ensuring all those involved with, or wishing to be involved with the organisation, regardless of their diversity, are provided with opportunity based on their ability or potential to perform the required activity.
- 2.4 Discrimination** happens when a person, or a group of people, is treated less favourably than another person or group because of their background or certain personal characteristics. It may be direct; for example, refusing to send someone on a training course because they are married or have children.
- 2.5 Indirect discrimination** is when there's a practice, policy or rule which applies to everyone in the same way, but it has a worse effect on some people more than others.
- Discrimination may be subtle and unconscious and may not be easy to identify. For example, discrimination sometimes results from general assumptions about the capabilities, characteristics and interests of particular groups or individuals, which are allowed to influence the treatment of staff or job applicants or clients. This includes unconscious bias.
- 2.5 Harassment or bullying** has the effect of causing undue stress on individuals and of demotivating them. Harassment or bullying of any kind will not be tolerated and serves to undermine the safe, supportive, and welcoming environment which An Post wishes to encourage. Our Dignity at Work policy covers harassment and bullying in the workplace.
- 2.6 Victimisation** is being penalised for; making a bone fide complaint about discrimination, or for helping someone who has been the victim of discrimination.
- 2.7 Positive action** is where an employer takes steps to address inequalities experienced by underrepresented or disadvantaged groups.

3. Legislative Framework

3.1 An Post is committed to promoting equality and equal opportunities, and is opposed to all forms of unlawful discrimination.

3.2 The Employment Equality Acts 1998 - 2015 outlaw discrimination in a wide range of employment and employment-related areas. These include recruitment, training, pay, access to employment, work experience, and promotion. Dismissal, harassment including sexual harassment, and victimisation at work are also covered by the Acts.

The Acts prohibit discrimination in the workplace across nine grounds; gender, civil status, family status, age, disability, sexual orientation, race, religion and membership of the Travelling community.

Discrimination is defined as less favourable treatment, or the unfair or prejudicial treatment of people **based on** one of the nine grounds.

3.3 The main aims of the Acts are to:

- Promote equality;
- Prohibit discrimination across the nine grounds (some exemptions might apply);
- Prohibit harassment and sexual harassment;
- Prohibit victimisation;
- Require reasonable accommodation for people with disabilities in relation to access, participation, and training in employment;
- Encourage positive action measures to ensure full equality in practice across the nine grounds.

3. Legislative Framework Continued

3.4 The Employment Equality Acts (1998 - 2015) prohibit discrimination on any of the following nine grounds:

1. Gender	This means man, woman, or a transgender person. Pregnancy-related discrimination is discrimination on the ground of gender and includes recruitment, promotion and general conditions of employment. Women who are pregnant or have recently given birth are also protected under maternity protection and unfair dismissals legislation.
2. Civil status	Includes single, married, separated, divorced, widowed people, civil partners and former civil partners.
3. Family status	A parent of a person under 18 years or the resident primary carer or parent of a person with a disability.
4. Sexual orientation	Includes gay, lesbian, bisexual, heterosexual, pansexual and asexual people.
5. Religion	Means religious belief, background, outlook, or none.
6. Age	Applies to an individual above the age of 16.
7. Disability	Includes people with physical, intellectual, learning, cognitive or emotional disabilities, and a range of medical conditions.
8. Race	Includes race, skin colour, nationality or ethnic background.
9. Membership of the Travelling community	People who are commonly called Travellers, who are identified both by Travellers and others as people with a shared history, culture and traditions, identified historically as a nomadic way of life on the island of Ireland.

3.5 An Post is committed to ensuring that no applicant, employee, client or customer receives less favourable treatment on any of nine grounds identified above.

4. Policy Objectives

4.1 An Post are committed to;

- 4.1.1** Developing action plans that encourage equality, diversity, and inclusion in the workplace.
- 4.1.2** Providing senior leadership with the skills and knowledge to fully embed fairness, respect, equality, diversity, inclusion and engagement into the Company's culture, strategy, and processes.
- 4.1.3** Providing diversity & inclusion training to all employees to ensure they understand their responsibility not to discriminate and to treat everyone with respect and dignity. This training will assist employees to be aware of personal prejudices, unconscious bias, stereotypes and labelling.
- 4.1.4** Ensuring opportunities are accessible to all employees and implementing reasonable accommodations to facilitate this where required.
- 4.1.5** Providing a safe, supportive, and welcoming environment where everyone can contribute to their fullest potential.
- 4.1.6** Gathering data to enable the monitoring of customer and employee satisfaction to identify and address any negative trends on the 9 Grounds of discrimination.
- 4.1.7** Creating an environment where employees and customers are treated fairly and with dignity and respect.
- 4.1.8** Challenging discrimination and promoting inclusion and belonging.
- 4.1.9** Enforcing a zero-tolerance approach in relation to discrimination, thoroughly investigating any reported incidents and taking appropriate actions.
- 4.1.10** Employing and retaining employees solely on the basis of merit, recognising and valuing the contribution and identity of all people.
- 4.1.11** Giving consideration to the needs of particular groups of customers covered under equality legislation.
- 4.1.12** Ensuring that all employees recognise the vital part they have to play in building an environment free from unlawful discrimination, harassment or victimisation.
- 4.1.13** Developing, monitoring and reviewing employment practices to ensure that they do not, directly nor indirectly discriminate unfairly against employees or potential employees.

5. Recruitment, Selection and Retention

5.1 An Post will enact policies that are fair and equitable and which ensure that entry into and progression within An Post is determined solely by application of job criteria, personal ability and competence. In practice, this will mean that:

5.1.1 All job advertisements will state: "At An Post we appreciate the value that diversity brings and believe our workforce should be reflective of the customers and communities we serve. That is why we actively welcome applications from people from all backgrounds, and do not discriminate based on gender, age, race, religion, marital status, sexual orientation, disability, membership of the Travelling community, or family status.

An Post is committed to having an inclusive workplace where every employee feels they belong. If you require accommodations to be made during the recruitment process, or have questions relating to accessibility please contact us".

5.1.2 Any references on application forms to gender, age etc. will only be included for the purpose of tracking the progress of the candidates and the promotion of equality. Self-declaration in these instances will be entirely voluntary and failure to declare a response will not be held against the applicant. Any such information provided will be treated in the strictest confidence.

5.1.3 Only those qualifications and requirements necessary to the performance of the job shall be referred to in the job specification.

5.1.4 Employment and recruitment agencies will be advised of our commitment and policy position on employment equality across the nine grounds of the equality legislation.

5.1.5 Managers will not make assumptions about the career prospects of their employees, or take decisions that would adversely influence decisions about their development.

5.1.6 All employees will be encouraged to pursue personal and career development opportunities available to them.

5.1.7 We will strive to ensure a balance of persons from across the nine equality grounds on our interview panels, where practicable.

5.1.8 Interview panel members will receive training on good interview practice, and in the prevention of discrimination.

5.1.9 Interview panels will not make assumptions about the suitability of individuals for certain types of work on any of the nine grounds, on their current employment status, or based on any criteria not relevant to the job.

5.1.10 Candidates will be assessed against pre-defined criteria at the end of an interview. There will be an agreed objective system of rating candidates by experience, skill, qualifications, competencies or job record as appropriate or relevant.

5.1.11 Post-interview developmental feedback will be available on request.

5. Recruitment, Selection and Retention Continued

- 5.2** All decisions on learning and development, performance appraisals, and access to benefits will be based solely on objective and essential business related criteria and on the promotion of equal opportunity.
- 5.3** Taking any positive actions necessary to address imbalances and inequalities in the workplace.
- 5.4** Providing reasonable accommodations to support disabled people and enable them to do their job without unnecessary difficulty.

6. Dignity and Respect at Work

- 6.1** An Post has a duty of care towards its employees. We strive to create and maintain a safe and healthy work environment in which all employees are treated with dignity and respect, free from harassment or bullying. Our 'Dignity at Work Policy' defines what constitutes unacceptable behaviour and provides a procedural framework for dealing with complaints. A copy of these procedures is available from your local HR manager or can be accessed on the internal Company intranet and external Company website.

7. Supporting disabled employees

- 7.1** An Post acknowledges the concerns of disabled people and the need to challenge stereotypes. We will not tolerate discrimination in relation to disability. This occurs when, for a reason related to their disability, a person is treated less favourably than other people. Every effort will be made to make reasonable accommodations to ensure equality of opportunity for job applicants and employees with disabilities. Our 'Disability Inclusion Policy' & 'Reasonable Accommodation Policy' are available from your local HR manager or can be accessed on the internal Company intranet and external company website.

8. Combining work and caring responsibilities

- 8.1** The Company acknowledges that many employees have caring and personal responsibilities and it can be difficult to balance work with these demands. In order to assist employees, flexible working arrangements may be made available insofar as practical and as business requirements permit. Flexible work arrangements include; hybrid /remote work, flexitime, work-sharing, term time and part-time hours.
- 8.2** Currently, business requirements limit the application of some flexible working arrangements to certain areas of the business for example remote/hybrid working, term time leave, flexitime. These arrangements are in addition to statutory leave entitlements, such as Carer's leave, Parental leave, Parent's leave, Adoptive Leave, Maternity leave, Paternity leave, and Force Majeure leave.
- 8.3** An Post will promote opportunities to reconcile work-life balance among employees. Employees who avail of flexible working arrangements will not be placed at a disadvantage or treated differently to their colleagues.

9. Responsibility

- 9.1** All employees have an important role to play in ensuring that An Post continues as a fair and equitable workplace, and that employees, customers, applicants, clients and visitors are treated with respect.
- 9.2** All employees, especially managers, have a role to play in ensuring the effective implementation of this policy. This includes maintaining an acceptable standard of behaviour at all times towards colleagues and customers alike. It includes combating prejudice, harassment and discriminatory behaviour and contributing to the creation of a work climate in which such actions are not tolerated.
- 9.3** It is the responsibility of management to support and communicate the Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy. It is the responsibility of management in each area to lead by example, to ensure that best practices are maintained and that the necessary steps are taken to eradicate any behaviour which contravenes the policy.
- 9.4** This approach complies with An Post's aim to mainstream equality, diversity and inclusion principles as the basis for developing all people management practices and business activities.
- 9.5** It is expected that when employees represent An Post at any time, including through attendance at committees, meetings with external stakeholders and contact with customers, they will ensure that the equality, diversity and inclusion principles and practices outlined in this policy are adhered to.
- 9.6** This policy is fully supported by senior management and has been agreed with our Group of Trade Unions.

10. Implementation

10.1 Employees who believe that they have suffered any form of discrimination, harassment or victimisation (or who wish to seek clarification on these issues) can get information from, or contact, any of the following people (who will assist the individual by referring to the appropriate agreed procedures);

- Your Line Manager or Supervisor; or any Manager/Supervisor in your area;
- Any HR Manager;
- A Trade Union Representative.

If an employee is unable to resolve their grievance informally, a formal complaint may be lodged in writing to any manager. Enquiries and complaints will be dealt with seriously and promptly. Confidentiality and discretion will be observed according to HR policies.

10.2 These procedures do not detract from an individual's rights under statutory legislation.

10.3 A complainant's rights are protected under this policy, and the complainant will not be penalised for making a complaint in good faith. If, however, it is found that the complaint was brought maliciously, it will be treated as misconduct under the Company's disciplinary code.

10.4 An individual will not be victimised or treated in any way less favourably as a result of bringing a complaint, or providing support or evidence on behalf of a person bringing a complaint.

10.5 Any employee who is found to have breached this policy will be subject to the Company's disciplinary procedures.

11. Monitoring and Review

11.1 Ongoing monitoring of this Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy will include:

- Ensuring that the policy is communicated to all employees;
- Establishing mechanisms to collect equality-related data (e.g. the Inclusion Survey);
- Regularly reviewing policies and processes in the light of changes in employment and equality legislation and best practice in this arena;
- Ensuring that breaches of this policy will be investigated internally through the normal grievance mechanism, and complaints will be treated on a prompt and confidential basis;
- Reviewing the complaint procedure on a regular basis to evaluate its effectiveness.

11.2 Some of the statements in this policy are framed by other An Post policies as stated below. For example, age discrimination and our Retirement Policy are connected.

- Our Dignity at Work Policy
- Our Disability Inclusion Policy
- Our Reasonable Accommodation Policy
- Our Retirement Policy
- Our Recruitment and Selection Policy

11.3 This policy will be reviewed on a regular basis in line with changes in the law, relevant case law, and other developments. This policy is a collective agreement registered with the Joint Conciliation Council and any amendments will be made through that forum.





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