

Louth and Meath Education and Training Board

Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty Report



Introduction:

The Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty and the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (IHREC) Act (2014) places a legal obligation on Irish Public Bodies to promote equality, eliminate discrimination, and create an inclusive culture across all areas of service delivery. Louth and Meath Education and Training Board (LMETB) is committed to fulfilling the objectives outlined in the Duty and Section 42 of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act (2014). This document sets out the planned and systemic approach LMETB is taking to proactively eliminate discrimination, promote equality of opportunity, and protect the human rights of our staff and service users across all organisational functions and activities.

Section 42 (1): Encourages public bodies to integrate human rights and equality issues into every aspect of how public bodies perform their functions on an ongoing basis.

For LMETB, this involves:

- Being cognisant of equality and human rights issues impacting on LMETB's staff and service users, taking pre-emptive and proactive steps to address the issues as they arise.
- Addressing issues by revising policies, procedures, LMETB publications, operational standards, service delivery methods, strategies, evaluations and executive functions.

Section 42 (2): Requires public bodies to assess relevant human rights and equality issues and set out policies, plans and actions to address these in its strategic/corporate plan. The public body must then include developments in relation to addressing the equality and human rights issues in its annual report.

For LMETB, this involves:

- Proactively ensuring equality of opportunity is evident in accessing employment, education opportunities, training programs, and across our service delivery.
- Ensuring a non-discriminatory approach is evident in matters recognised and protected by the nine grounds of discrimination in Ireland, for example, age, civil status, disability, family

status, gender, race, religious belief (or lack of), sexual orientation, and membership of the Traveller Community.

- Creating, revising and implementing policies and procedures that address discriminatory behaviours and support diversity and inclusion within the LMETB workplace, educational setting and service delivery.
- Proactively promoting a culture of inclusion and respect amongst staff and service users in the LMETB workplace, educational setting and across our entire service delivery.
- Taking an evidence-based approach to 1) Assess, 2) Address and 3) Report on issues preventing the progression of a diverse, equitable and inclusive culture within the LMETB functions.
- Publishing LMETB's Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty report to inform staff and service users of LMETB's progress and initiatives to fulfil our obligations under the IHREC Act (2014)



LMETB's Evidence Based Approach

Ref: 001

Key Assessment Taken:

A review of LMETB published Reports, relevant Policies and Procedures for references to LMETB's Public Sector Duty and statutory equality objectives.

Objectives:

- To outline and underpin organisational efforts to protect the human rights of employees and service users.
- To promote a culture of inclusiveness across the organisation and prioritise efforts to eliminate discrimination.
- To comply with statutory obligations.

Current Measures to date:

- Strategy Statement and all relevant corporate publications reviewed and updated.
- Annual Report 2023 and 2024 reviewed and updated.
- Relevant Policies and Procedures reviewed and updated.
- Human Rights & Equality Statement created and published on website.
- Accessibility Statement created and published on website.
- Addendum to the existing Statement of Strategy, approved by the Board of LMETB, now includes LMETB's commitment to the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty and will be updated as necessary

Further action to be taken:

- An Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment (EHRIA) template to be created to ensure that all new policies and training initiatives are compliant per the IHREC guidance on discrimination.
- Monitoring of relevant policies and procedures, strategic documents and reports for updates and guidance changes.
- The LMETB Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy was adopted by the Board of LMETB in February 2025 and will be an integral part of a new induction and training process in development by the Human Resources Section.

Ref: 002

Key Assessment Taken:

A review of LMETB Staff Training Needs in Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity.

Objectives:

- To provide guidance and assistance to staff members on compliance with equality legislation.
- To provide staff with the necessary skills to recognise and respond to discrimination in workplace settings.
- To ensure staff members are aware of negative behaviours and actions that can be construed as a violation of human rights.
- To encourage and promote behaviours and actions supportive of a diverse, inclusive and equitable working and educational environment.

Current Measures to date:

- Disability Awareness training sourced and provided to frontline staff members in Schools and Further Education and Training services, Management teams, and Administration.

- Specific Disability and Discrimination training provided to HR Recruitment.
- IHREC training for public service circulated to staff members.
- Retirement planning provided to eligible staff members.
- Training on handling disciplinary processes in the context of allegations of discrimination was provided to Assistant Principals Officers and Management Teams.

Further action to be taken:

- Staff Disability Awareness training will continue.
- In the absence of sector customised ETB Equality and Human Rights training, the IHREC eLearning platform will be circulated to staff at regular intervals. LMETB will continue to explore and enhance methods of training delivery.
- Management Teams will continue to support staff training initiatives and promote inclusivity in their respective areas, leading by example.
- LMETB's Access Officer will continue to provide administrative support on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion matters with the Senior Management Team and established working groups.
- The internal staff information platform will continue to be updated with Equality, Diversity and Inclusion guidance for easy retrieval and use.



Key Assessment Taken:

A review of guidance and support information available to staff and service users on Equality, Diversity, Discrimination, inclusiveness and Disability.

Objectives:

Ensuring accessible guidance and support is available on hand when staff members and service users need it in a timely and efficient manner.

Current Measures to date:

- A library of guidance and support documents is available via the internal SharePoint platform.
- Locally devised learner support documentation is available in Schools and FET centres.
- LMETB Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy, and other relevant policies are available from the policy section of www.lmetb.ie.
- The Human Resources Department offers support and guidance via the Access Officer accessofficer@lmetb.ie.

Further action to be taken:

Supportive documents, updates, guidance and information will continue to be made available to staff members via the Human Resources Department and the LMETB internal staff platforms, website and published documents.

Key Assessment Taken:

A review of Human Resources recruitment and retention practices to ensure compliance with Public Sector Duty and Accessibility.

Objectives:

To ensure LMETB, as an employer, offers equal opportunities to all persons seeking employment, retention, and career progression without bias, discrimination or inaccessibility.

Current Measures to date:

- Disability Inclusion and Accessibility Training provided to the LMETB HR Recruitment Team.
- Policies and procedures reviewed to ensure equality of opportunity is promoted and communicated to all possible candidates and existing staff members.
- The recruitment process - Advertisement, Application, Interview and Selection methods reviewed to ensure equality of opportunity is applied at each stage.
- Meetings with local disability advocacy service - EmployAbility – in Louth and Meath to encourage applications from candidates seeking employment.
- Occupational Health Services and an Employee Assistance Programme are in place to provide supports to existing staff members when needed.

Further action to be taken:

- LMETB will continue to ensure advertisements and Job Application processes are compliant and accessible.
- LMETB will ensure every necessary support is in place for an inclusive retention process.
- LMETB will continue to engage with local disability services and other minority advocacy groups to support and encourage applications from persons protected by the nine grounds of discrimination to further drive our commitment to inclusive recruitment and retention processes.
- LMETB will continue to work with Occupational Health Services and the Employee Assistance Programme to ensure staff members are receiving necessary supports.

Key Assessment Taken:

LMETB consultations – assessing the lived experiences of staff and service users in the areas of Equality and Human Rights.

Objectives:

To be fully informed of the experiences of staff and service users, and to gain valuable insight to the issues impacting those in the workplace and learner environments

Current Measures to date: ** consultation data is available on appendix i, ii.*

- *Consultation with LMETB staff members conducted in 2024 for lived experiences of Equality and Human Rights issues in the LMETB workplace environment.
- *Consultation with FET learners conducted in Q1 2025 for lived experiences of Equality and Human Rights issues in the LMETB learning environment.
- Consultation with the LMETB Risk Management Team for recognition and addressing risks recorded in the areas of Human Rights/Discrimination/Inclusion impacting on staff and service users.
- Consultation with the LMETB Complaints Officer and Head of Human Resources for recognition and addressing of any relevant complaints received from staff and service users.

Further action to be taken:

- LMETB is addressing each area of response as part of the Public Sector Duty.
- LMETB will continue to engage and consult with staff and service users in relation to Human Rights/Equality/Diversity and Inclusion matters.
- LMETB will organise a cross functional working group to steer the vision and ambitions of Public Service Duty values in each pillar of our ETB.

Key Assessment Taken:

LMETB Digital Accessibility Review

Objectives:

To ensure the LMETB website and published digital content is accessible for all users across the service delivery

Current Measures to date:

- The LMETB ICT Department reviewed the accessibility features of published online documentation per obligations of the EU Web Accessibility Directive through the National Disability Authority monitoring service and is currently working through the content to fix the accessibility issues in so far as reasonably possible.
- The LMETB ICT Department is revising the accessibility design of the LMETB website and the areas impacting on service users with additional needs.
- An Accessibility Statement is now available online.

Further action to be taken:

- LMETB will continue to review all published documents for accessibility features.
- Staff to comply with instruction from Director of Organisation Support and Development to ensure documents published to the LMETB website, internal platforms and social media platforms are checked for accessibility. Guidance and accessibility toolkit circulated in Q1 2025.
- LMETB ICT team will continue to work with website design partners to bring about required changes for the LMETB website.
- LMETB will continue to provide assistive technology support to staff and service users as necessary.

Key Assessment Taken:

LMETB review of the built environment and visual representation of our Inclusive values.

Objectives:

- To ensure the LMETB environment is physically accessible by eliminating barriers.
- To ensure the visual aesthetics of premises represent the inclusive values of LMETB and the Public Sector Duty.

Current Measures to date:

- LMETB ensures compliance with building regulations for accessible environments through our Land and Buildings Department. The Land and Buildings team ensure accessibility is at the core of all new and existing premises.

Further action to be taken:

- LMETB will continue to review accessibility of the LMETB built environments through our Land and Buildings Department.
- LMETB will promote human rights issues in the interior of buildings via Posters, Art and other such visual materials. These items will act as visual prompts and reminders of the inclusive values of LMETB.

Examples of visual prompt:

Pause; take a moment to consider this picture and the differences a physically accessible and a digitally accessible environment can make to the world of a person with disabilities.



Where, after all, do universal human rights begin?

In small places, close to home – so close and so small that they cannot be seen on any maps of the world. Yet they are the world of the individual person; the neighborhood he lives in; the school or college he attends; the factory, farm or office where he works.

Such are the places where every man, woman and child seeks equal justice, equal opportunity, equal dignity without discrimination. Unless these rights have meaning there, they have little meaning anywhere. Without concerned citizen action to uphold them close to home, we shall look in vain for progress in the larger world.”

Eleanor Roosevelt – Chair – United Nations Commission 1946

Conclusion:

In 2024, LMETB made great efforts to progress the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty across the vast functionality of the organisation, and yet there is an acknowledgement of much work still to be done. This will not impact on or diminish our commitment to fulfilling our obligations under the Duty. LMETB believes in the message of the Duty and will strive to implement the changes required to positively ensure compliance, eliminate barriers, advance equality and foster good relations with staff members, service users and the wider communities in Louth and Meath.

Human Resources Department

Louth and Meath Education and Training Board (LMETB)

March 2025

Appendix: I

Equality and Human Rights at Work.

LMETB Confidential and Anonymous Staff Questionnaire – 2024

Responses

Q1> Have you ever personally felt discriminated against in the LMETB workplace due to one or more of the following Equality grounds? If YES, please select the relevant area(s) below. If not, please select No.

- **Gender** - male, female, transgender, nonbinary.
Response - 8% of staff members responded Yes to Gender.
- **Civil Status** - single, married, separated, divorced, widowed, civil partnership or civil dissolution.
Response - 2% of staff members responded Yes to Civil Status.
- **Family Status** - pregnant, parent, guardian, carer.
Response – 5% of staff members responded Yes to Family Status.
- **Age** - applicable to 18 years or over - treated less favourably due to age.
Response - 6% of staff members responded Yes to Age.
- **Disability** - physical, intellectual, and/or mental.
Response - 2% of staff members responded Yes to Disability.
- **Race** - skin colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins.
Response - 2% of staff members responded Yes to Race.
- **Sexual Orientation** - heterosexual, homosexual, bisexual.
Response - 1% of staff members responded Yes to Sexual Orientation.

- **Religion** - including religious background and those who have no belief.
Response - 2% of staff members responded Yes to Religion.
- **Membership of the Traveller Community.**
Response - 0% of staff members responded Yes to Membership of the Traveller Community.
- **No** - I have not felt discriminated against on any of these grounds.
Response - 73% of staff members responded No to having felt personally discriminated against in the LMETB working environment.

Q2> Have you ever witnessed discrimination to another person in the LMETB workplace (staff member, learner or stakeholder) due to one or more of the following Equality grounds? If YES, please select the relevant area(s) below. If not, please choose No.

- **Gender** - male, female, transgender, nonbinary.
Response - 8% of staff members responded Yes to Gender.
- **Civil Status** - single, married, separated, divorced, widowed, civil partnership or civil dissolution.
Response - 1% of staff members responded Yes to Civil Status.
- **Family Status** - pregnant, parent, guardian, carer.
Response - 3% of staff members responded Yes to Family Status.
- **Age** - applicable to 18 years or over - treated less favourably due to age.
Response - 4% of staff members responded Yes to Age.
- **Disability** - physical, intellectual, and/or mental.
Response - 4% of staff members responded Yes to Disability.
- **Race** - skin colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins.
Response - 8% of staff members responded Yes to Race.
- **Sexual Orientation** - heterosexual, homosexual, bisexual.

Response - 4% of staff members responded Yes to Sexual Orientation.

- **Religion** - including religious background and those who have no belief.

Response - 3% of staff members responded Yes to Religion.

- **Membership of the Traveller Community.**

Response - 4% of staff members responded Yes to Membership of the Traveller Community.

- **No** - I have not witnessed discrimination to another person under any of these grounds.

Response - 61% of staff members responded No to having witnessed discrimination against another in the LMETB working environment.

Q3> How confident are you in your ability to comfortably identify or recognise an occurrence of discrimination under the nine Equality grounds listed above?

- **Confident.**

Response - 77% of staff members reported Confident.

- **Neutral**

Response - 21% of staff members reported Neutral.

- **Not Confident**

Response - 2% of staff members reported Not Confident.

Q4> Do you feel training in Equality and the nine areas of discrimination would help you to feel more confident in recognising and preventing discrimination?

- Yes.

Response – 64% of staff members responded Yes.

- No.

Response – 36% of staff members responded No.

Q5> Are you aware of how you should report or express concerns regarding discrimination - experienced or witnessed - to the relevant officers in LMETB?

- Yes.

Response – 41% of staff members responded Yes.

- No.

Response – 59% of staff members responded No.

Q6> In your opinion, what can LMETB do to promote Equality and prevent discrimination from occurring in our everyday encounters with colleagues, learners, and stakeholders?

- **Response:** In summary, most received responses - Training, Awareness, more discussion, a more diverse workforce, an evidentiary zero tolerance approach lead and demonstrated by Management Teams to all staff members.

Q7> This survey is completely anonymous. No personal data, email address or identifier is required to submit your response. The anonymised data will be compiled to assess and address Equality related issues in LMETB. We would, however, appreciate if you would select one of the following:

- I am a **School** based employee.

Response – 45% of staff members were School based.

- I am a **FET** based employee.

Response – 33% of staff members were FET based.

- I am an **O.S.D** based employee.

Response – 10% of staff members were O.S.D based.

- I would rather not say where I am based.

Response – 13% of staff members were Would Rather Not Say.

Equality and Human Rights

LMETB Confidential and Anonymous FET Learner Questionnaire

2025

Responses

Q1> Have you ever personally felt discriminated against in the LMETB learning environment due to one or more of the following Equality grounds? If YES, please select the relevant area(s) below. If not, please select No.

- **Gender** - male, female, transgender, nonbinary.
Response - 4% of FET Learners responded Yes to Gender.
- **Civil Status** - single, married, separated, divorced, widowed, civil partnership or civil dissolution.
Response - 2% of FET Learners responded Yes to Civil Status.
- **Family Status** - pregnant, parent, guardian, carer.
Response – 1% of FET Learners responded Yes to Family Status.
- **Age** - applicable to 18 years or over - treated less favourably due to age.
Response - 2% of FET Learners responded Yes to Age.
- **Disability** - physical, intellectual, and/or mental.
Response - 3% of FET Learners responded Yes to Disability.
- **Race** - skin colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins.
Response - 3% of FET Learners responded Yes to Race.
- **Sexual Orientation** - heterosexual, homosexual, bisexual
Response - 2% of FET Learners responded Yes to Sexual Orientation.
- **Religion** - including religious background and those who have no belief.
Response - 1% of FET Learners responded Yes to Religion.
- **Membership of the Traveller Community.**
Response - 1% of FET Learners responded Yes to Membership of the Traveller Community.
- **No** - I have not felt discriminated against on any of these grounds.

Response - 81% of FET Learners responded **No** to having felt personally discriminated against in the LMETB learning environment.

Q2> Have you ever witnessed discrimination to another person in the LMETB learning environment (staff member, learner or stakeholder) due to one or more of the following Equality grounds? If YES, please select the relevant area(s) below. If not, please choose No.

- **Gender** - male, female, transgender, nonbinary.
Response - 6% of FET Learners responded Yes to Gender
- **Civil Status** - single, married, separated, divorced, widowed, civil partnership or civil dissolution.
Response - 2% of FET Learners responded Yes to Civil Status
- **Family Status** - pregnant, parent, guardian, carer
Response - 3% of FET Learners responded Yes to Family Status
- **Age** - applicable to 18 years or over - treated less favourably due to age.
Response - 3% of FET Learners responded Yes to Age.
- **Disability** - physical, intellectual, and/or mental.
Response - 5% of FET Learners responded Yes to Disability.
- **Race** - skin colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins.
Response - 6% of FET Learners responded Yes to Race.
- **Sexual Orientation** - heterosexual, homosexual, bisexual.
Response - 5% of FET Learners responded Yes to Sexual Orientation.
- **Religion** - including religious background and those who have no belief.
Response - 2% of FET Learners responded Yes to Religion.
- **Membership of the Traveller Community.**
Response - 1% of FET Learners responded Yes to Membership of the Traveller Community.
- **No** - I have not witnessed discrimination against another under any of these grounds.
Response - 67% of FET Learners responded **No** to having witnessed discrimination against another in the LMETB learning environment.

Q3> How confident are you in your ability to comfortably identify or recognise an occurrence of discrimination under the nine Equality grounds listed above?

- **Confident.**
Response - 71% of FET Learners reported Confident.
- **Neutral.**
Response - 25% of FET Learners reported Neutral.
- **Not Confident.**
Response - 4% of FET Learners reported Not Confident.

Q4> Are you aware of how you should report or express concerns regarding discrimination - experienced or witnessed - to the relevant officers in LMETB?

- Yes.
Response – 70% of FET Learners responded Yes.
- No.
Response – 30% of FET Learners responded No.

Q5> In your opinion, what can LMETB do to promote Equality awareness and prevent discrimination in the LMETB learning environment?

- **Response:** In summary, most received responses – Train Staff on how to manage discrimination, more discussion as part of learner training and induction – hold a workshop, encourage learners to take a stand against discrimination, teach learners who to report discrimination to, make learners aware of situations and listen to them when they report, diversity in staffing, communication and reminding.

References: IHREC Public Service Duty Guidance

IHREC Act 2014

Equal Status Acts 2000 -2018

Employment Equality Acts 1998 - 2021

Disability Act 2005

LMETB Corporate Website, Corporate Publications including gathered statistics
for same, Policies and Procedures

LMETB Staff and Learner consultation Data