



A Standard for the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission

Why develop a standard?

The Equality and Rights Alliance (ERA) was established to seek the highest standards for our equality and human rights infrastructure. We have developed a range of publications and reports that explore and establish the standards we seek for this infrastructure.

ERA welcomes IHREC's strategic plan. We present this standard to communicate civil society's hopes and expectations for IHREC, which are based on documents developed by ERA, and to offer support IHREC in achieving this standard¹.

What is the standard we want IHREC to achieve?

Engagement with Civil Society

We want IHREC to:

- Create meaningful ways for civil society engagement with its work.
- Demonstrate solidarity with civil society and make the case for a vocal and vibrant civil society in this field.
- Provide support for civil society initiatives to ensure rights holders know how to exercise their rights.

How ERA will review IHREC's progress on this standard:

An IHREC advisory committee to enable ongoing engagement and consultation between IHREC and civil society.

Civil society participation on a formal basis in IHREC's research work and work on the public sector duty.

Advancing Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

We want IHREC to:

- Champion respect, protection and fulfilment of economic, social and cultural rights.

How ERA will review IHREC's progress on this standard

IHREC pressure for relevant disaggregated data to be gathered by all State Agencies

New evidence-based discourse and action on respecting, protecting and fulfilling economic and social rights.

New understanding of and action on respecting, protecting and fulfilling cultural rights

Integration of Equality and Human Rights

We want IHREC to:

- Engage with relevant stakeholders and take action to explore and develop an integrated approach to its equality and human rights mandates.

How ERA will review IHREC's progress on this standard

IHREC support for stakeholder debate on equality and human rights traditions and the challenge of building an integrated approach

Underreporting of discrimination and human rights abuses:

We want IHREC to:

- Establish a local presence for IHREC in each County to enable greater access for those experiencing discrimination.
- Support a critical mass of casework that enables a culture of compliance and ensures the development of casework across all grounds and in all key areas for human rights.
- Take targeted action to engage those who are experiencing discrimination or violations of their rights and are finding it most difficult to access justice.

How ERA will review IHREC's progress on this standard

IHREC to have a local presence in each county, so complainants can meet IHREC staff and IHREC staff can engage with local civil society organisations.

A decrease in the recorded levels of under-reporting and seeking ongoing CSO data on this.

Increased awareness among groups that find it difficult to access justice on their rights and how to exercise these.

The level of equality cases supported back to the levels of 2007/8 and a significant increase in the number of human rights cases supported and an appropriate balance between the two.

Public Sector Duty

We want IHREC to:

- Drive implementation of the Public Sector Duty (Section 42).
- Develop a code of practice for public bodies to fulfil their Section 42 duty.

How ERA will review IHREC's progress on this standard

An IHREC Code of Practice on implementing the public sector duty widely disseminated.

IHREC use of its power of requiring an equality and human rights review where there is a failure to adequately implement the public sector duty.

ⁱ [Creating a strategic engagement between Civil Society and the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission](#) & [Access to Justice and under-reporting of discrimination and human rights abuses](#) & [A New Public Sector Duty: Equality and Human Rights Duty](#) & [Equality and Human Rights: An integrated Approach](#)