

	<p>Objective Three: Provision</p> <p>Accommodating cultural diversity in service provision, including a focus on common outcomes, education, health, social services and childcare, accommodation and the administration of justice.</p>
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This section of the Plan is structured to both take account of expected outcomes for all service providers (section 3) and expected outcomes in specific policy areas (sections 4-7). Objective Three is closely linked to Objective Two, which includes a focus on employment, the workplace and poverty.

Section	Focus
3	Service Provision: Common Outcomes
4	Education
5	Health, Social Services and Childcare
6	Accommodation
7	Administration of Justice

3. Service Provision: Common Outcomes

Key Challenges

The key challenge is to ensure that access to and the delivery of public services make reasonable accommodation of cultural diversity and take positive action measures.

The key policy initiatives linked to improving access to and delivery of public services are the public service modernisation programme (the Strategic Management Initiative) . See www.bettergov.ie and the National Anti-Poverty Strategy (provisions on access to services section 25). A key theme within the modernisation programme is Quality Customer Service (QCS), which is underpinned by a number of principles, including the principle of equality/diversity.

Recent research reveals that while there has been much progress, there needs to a much more sustained and proactive approach to the implementation of the public service modernisation programme if it is to become widely embedded at all levels of the public service, particularly among those at lower and middle grade levels. NGM, (2003). Report on Communicating change and modernisation in the civil service.

Policy context and developments underway

Sustaining Progress Commitments: ‘Sustaining Progress’ contains strong commitments to developing quality public services, including the continued

modernisation of the Civil Service, health, education and local government sectors, including a focus on equal opportunities in employment.

Equality/Diversity: The Equality/Diversity principle underpinning QCS reflects the legal requirements placed on service providers by the Equal Status Act s 2000-2004 and developments related to rural development, anti poverty and the Irish language. It commits service providers to ensure the rights to equal treatment and to accommodate diversity under the nine grounds in the equality legislation. An information pack and research reports was produced to support this process. SMI/Equality Authority, (2002). Support Pack on the Equality/Diversity Aspects within QCS and Pillinger J, (2002). Research Report on Equality/Diversity and Quality Customer Service.

Consultation: There has been significant progress has been made in recent years by Irish public service organisations in consulting with a diverse range of external customers. However government commissioned research shows that in comparison with the good practice examples identified internationally, efforts to engage effectively with the external customers of the public service are at a comparatively early stage in Ireland. Humphreys P, (2002). Effective Consultation with the External Customer. Institute of Public Administration.

Proofing and impact assessments: Proofing and Impact assessments on policy are already undertaken in the policy areas of planning/environment and are being developed within the health sector. Optimum models for equality proofing, including the undertaking of impact assessments, are currently being considered by a working group convened by the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform.

Priorities

The priority is to apply a ‘whole system’ See Part Two Section 2.2 for full definition of ‘whole system approach’. approach to ensuring that access to and the delivery of public services make reasonable accommodation of cultural diversity and take positive action measures, with reference to broader equality policy including the use of equality reviews and equality action plans. Equality Authority. www.equality.ie

Whole System Approach summary

Mainstreaming (M): Building an intercultural approach into policy planning and service provision.

Targeting (T): Developing specific policy priorities tailored to meet the needs of different groups based on evidence of inequality/disadvantage.

Benchmarking (B): Developing data/statistics programmes through which progress can be measured in meeting targets and timescales.

Engagement (E): Consultation with and the participation of key stakeholders.

Provision: Overall Expected Outcomes

3.1	Develop a template for service providers to underpin the National Action Plan Against Racism. (M)
3.2	Build an intercultural dimension into the Public Service Modernisation Programme as part of the equality/diversity theme. (M)

3.3	Mainstream/develop anti racism and intercultural training in all government departments and statutory agencies. (M)
3.4	Develop the business case for diversity in the private sector. (M)
3.5	Develop targeted initiatives focussing on access to key public services, for Travellers, refugees and migrants. (T)
3.6	Develop a comprehensive framework of social and equality statistics to meet policy and service provision needs. (B)
3.7	Develop a clear policy on how diverse external customers/key stakeholders will be consulted on policy and service provision on an ongoing basis. (E)

3.1 Develop a template for service providers to underpin the National Action Plan Against Racism.

The development of a template to underpin the NPAR provides a mechanism through which an anti racism and intercultural dimension to service provision can be developed with reference to the broader equality/diversity agenda.

Measures

3.1.1 Develop a template to provide guidance for service providers in implementing the National Action Plan Against Racism, with reference to broader equality, anti poverty and public service modernisation policy.

3.2 Build an intercultural dimension into the public service modernisation programme.

As part of existing commitments on equality/diversity, there will be a new high profile initiative focussing on developing intercultural approaches to service provision See Part Four, Outcome 3.2. . The initiative should focus on both human resource management and providing quality customer services.

Measures

3.2.1 Develop a focus on competencies to promote equality and combat discrimination within the Performance Management and Development System.

3.2.2 Develop further resource materials/awareness initiatives to support greater understanding among service providers of the needs of customers from cultural and ethnic minorities and implement a programme of cultural awareness training among service provider staff.

3.2.3 Equal status reviews and action plans will be implemented by key service providers in the public sector. These will be supported by guidance materials developed by the Equality Authority.

3.3 Mainstream/develop anti racism and intercultural training in all government departments and statutory agencies.

There is an increasing number of government and statutory agencies that organise anti racism and intercultural training for staff which is delivered by bodies such as the NCCRI, training consultants and NGO's.

Measures

3.3.1 Integrate anti racism and intercultural training into in-service modules under the public service modernisation programme (SMI), with reference to broader equality/diversity policy.

3.3.2 Develop an anti racism/intercultural ‘training for trainers programme’ for training units in government departments and statutory agencies.

3.3.3 Develop an intercultural training initiative focussing on local authorities.

3.4 Develop the ‘business case for diversity’ in the private sector.

There is growing awareness among the private sector in Ireland of the business case for accommodating cultural diversity both in terms of human resource policy and tailoring the provision of goods and services to reflect the increasingly diverse customer base that exists both within Ireland and in wider European markets.

This awareness is now beginning to be reflected in both workplace and marketing strategies by companies seeking to realise the full potential of their employees and their customer base. Recent surveys also highlight the need for greater awareness in the private sector to the obligations required under the equality legislation.

Measures

3.4.1 Develop a new high-level initiative with the private sector focussing on developing the business case for accommodating cultural diversity in the workplace involving key stakeholders.

3.4.2 Develop a new mentoring scheme to enable larger companies in the public and private sectors with a developed business case for diversity, to pass on their approach and experience to smaller companies.

3.4.3 Undertake research on best practice related to developing the business case for diversity in Ireland.

3.5 Develop targeted initiatives focussing on access to key public services, for Travellers, refugees and migrants.

Where groups, including Travellers, refugees and migrants experience additional barriers in accessing key public services, targeted strategies will be developed to overcome these barriers. Where appropriate, targeted initiatives should also provide a focus on the inclusion of women, people with disabilities, younger and older people and gay and lesbians from cultural and ethnic minorities.

Measures:

3.5.1 Implement a range of targeted initiatives outlined under each of the key policy areas including education, health and social services, accommodation and the administration of justice.

3.5.2 Develop guidelines and examples of good practice of targeted initiatives.

3.6 Develop a comprehensive framework of social and equality statistics to meet policy and service provision needs.

A comprehensive framework of social and equality statistics to meet policy needs will be developed incrementally, based on the recent recommendations of the National Statistics Board.

Measures:

3.6.1 Implementation of the recommendations of the report of the National Statistics Board (NSB) 'Developing Irish Social and Equality Statistics to meet Policy Needs' National Statistics Board, (2003). Developing Irish Social and Equality Statistics., including:

- The development of a framework for social and equality statistics by the CSO.
- The development of a formal data/statistics strategy devised by each government department and statutory agency.
- Support of the Senior Official's Group on Social Inclusion for the implementation and evolution of this framework.
- Establishment of Departmental Statistical Committees bringing together data users, and appropriate outside experts, and where appropriate subcommittees covering individual policy areas.

3.6.2 The application of disaggregated social and equality statistics for the purpose
Of setting targets and measuring progress, related to the key objectives set out in the NPAR.

3.7 Develop a clear policy on how external customers/key stakeholders will be consulted on policy and service provision on an ongoing basis.

Within the overall commitments to improve engagement with external customers in policy development, measures will be undertaken to ensure reasonable accommodation of cultural diversity and positive action.

Measures

3.7.1 Outline as part of Government departments/statutory agency strategy statements/corporate plans/customer service plans, clear and reasonable mechanisms to engage with external customers/key stakeholders, including specific reference to cultural and ethnic minorities.

3.7.2 Publish guidelines and good practice relating to consultation with external customers, including cultural and ethnic minorities as part of the public service modernisation programme (SMI).

4.0 Education

Key challenges

Education is one of the most important ways of combating racism and developing a more inclusive, intercultural society in Ireland. There are four overall challenges identified in this Plan related to education:

- Through intercultural education strategies, pupils/students and young people in general must be enabled to appreciate the richness of a diversity of cultures and be supported in practical ways to recognise and to challenge prejudice and discrimination where they exist. Department of Education and Science, (2002) Guidelines on Traveller Education in Primary Schools.
- Through intercultural education strategies, schools and colleges must be enabled to make reasonable accommodation and take positive action measures in response to the increasing cultural diversity among pupils, students and staff.

- €€€€The development of intercultural education strategies must make reference to statutory equality policy and take place at all levels within the education system, including:

- Pre school level

- Primary level

- Second level

- Adult and Further Education level

- Third level

- €€€€The development of an intercultural strategy within the informal youth sector, including through the national youth services.

As part of the consultative process for the NPAR the Department of Education and Science drew up a range of recommendations for inclusion in the Plan, which were presented at a national education conference in November 2002. This section of the Plan draws extensively from this consultative process. Department of Education and Science, (2002). Promoting Anti Racism and Interculturalism. Recommendations Towards a National Action Plan.

Policy Context and Developments Underway

There are already a number of significant policy initiatives taking place which are relevant to building an intercultural dimension into education policy including:

Curricula: The curricula at both primary and second level have undergone extensive revision in recent years and the changes are being implemented on a phased basis, supported by full time support services and extensive in-service training. The new curricula provide ample opportunity to extend children's awareness of their environment and the wider world, to learn about the lives of people in other countries and of their contribution to art, history, music, drama etc. The Social and Personal and Health Education aspects of the curriculum are designed to foster a respect for human dignity, tolerance and respect for the values and beliefs of others, and a celebration of diversity.

Additional resources and supports. Additional teaching and non-pay resources are provided to schools at both primary and second level to cater for the needs of children for whom English is not the mother tongue. In the current school year grant assistance has reached almost €2m and just under 500 additional teaching posts have been sanctioned. The Reception and Integration Agency (RIA) provides support in placing asylum seeker and refugee children in schools when they live in RIA accommodation centres, and supports schools in the integration of these children.

Funds are also provided to Integrate Ireland Language Training to provide a support programme for teachers responsible for the English language development of non-English speaking pupils

In addition, additional grants and teaching resources are provided to schools to support the participation of Traveller children, and this is accompanied by a national network of Visiting Teachers.

Increased awareness: Through the publication of guidelines, resource materials,

conferences and in-service training, there is increased awareness of the need to develop intercultural education strategies and greater awareness among schools and other educational institutions of their obligations under the Equal Status Acts. Department of Education and Science, Equality Authority (2003). Schools and the Equal Status Act.

Whole school planning: For some time, the Department of Education and Science has promoted ‘whole school planning’ as a national initiative in primary and second level schools in order to enhance the quality of learning. The school plan addresses the promotion of an equality strategy as part of its overall remit. Department of Education and Science, (1999). Circulars, on School Development Planning.

Youth Services: A number of national and local youth organisations have been active in developing strategies to combat racism and to raise awareness of cultural diversity, including the Youth Against Racism and Discrimination joint initiative. The National Youth Work Development Plan covers the period 2003-2007 and includes a commitment to ‘play a part in building a mutually enriching multicultural society’. Department of Education and Science, (2003). Challenges for Youth Work-National Youth Work Development Plan 2003-2007.

Other actions under way to support the educational needs of minority ethnic students include

- €€€€€ information for schools on the integration of asylum seekers and travellers
- €€€€€ resource packs for schools prepared by organisations such as the National Consultative Committee on Anti- Racism and Interculturalism, and guidelines, policy documents and reports have also been provided by teacher unions and school management bodies
- €€€€€ a video for second level schools highlighting excerpts from the Mono TV programme
- €€€€€ expanding provision for language and literacy tuition for adults for whom English is not the mother tongue through the VEC literacy services.

Priorities

The key priority is to develop an intercultural education framework at all levels within education, which seeks to build on existing initiatives, which seeks to remove existing barriers to access and which makes reference to statutory equality policy

Education: Expected Outcomes

The following are the expected outcomes and measures to achieve these outcomes under the education focus of this Plan.

4.1	Develop a national intercultural education strategy with reference to equality/diversity policy. (M)
4.2	Develop a more inclusive and intercultural school practise and environment through the whole school planning process, admissions policies, codes of behaviour, and whole school evaluation. (M)

4.3	Accommodate cultural diversity within the curricula. (M)
4.4	Develop an intercultural implementation strategy within youth work. (M)
4.5	Enhance access and education service delivery to Travellers. (T)
4.6	Enhance the participation of refugees and asylum seekers in education up to 18 years of age, as well as the participation of refugees and those with humanitarian leave to remain in the State in Further and Higher Education provision. A specific focus on the needs of females will be part of this process.(T)
4.7	Enhance access and education service delivery to unaccompanied minors. (T)
4.8	Enhance provision of English as a second language. (T)
4.9	Evolve education related data systems to provide a comprehensive picture of diversity and policy progress. (B)
4.10	Strengthen the participation of key stakeholders in the development of an intercultural approach to education. (E)

4.1 Develop a national intercultural education strategy with reference to equality/ diversity policy.

Based on the recommendations of the Department of Education Report ‘*Promoting Anti Racism and Interculturalism in Education*’ an overall programme aimed at the reasonable accommodation of cultural diversity at all levels of the Irish education system will be implemented through a national intercultural education strategy, with reference to broader equality policy in Ireland. The strategy will focus on enhancing policies at national, organisational and institutional level; promoting greater dialogue with relevant educational interests and non governmental organisations; providing awareness and development programmes for staff; enhancing language tuition, and support services; developing culturally appropriate materials; and increasing the focus on monitoring, research and evaluation. This work will be progressed on an ongoing basis as resources permit.

Measures

4.1.1 Develop a national intercultural education strategy that will provide a blueprint for accommodating cultural diversity at all levels within the Irish education system with a focus on:

- The challenges of increasing cultural diversity for the Irish education system.
- Developing a whole system approach to intercultural education focussing on mainstreaming at all levels within the Irish education system, targeting marginalised communities, developing ways of benchmarking progress, and ensuring engagement with key stakeholders.
- The necessary supports needed to realise the overall strategy.
- The linkages with broader equality/diversity policy.

4.1.2 Expand the work of the equality and intercultural steering group within the Department of Education and Science, involving a wide range of key stakeholders to assist in the implementation of an intercultural education strategic plan.

4.1.3 Implement an over-arching equality strategy which incorporates the core principles of anti-racism and interculturalism. This will provide for investment in awareness and staff development, curriculum and support systems, and address assessment, methodology and research and evaluation issues.

4.1.4 Develop guidelines for teachers at primary and post primary level on how best to mediate and adapt the curriculum to reflect expanding cultural diversity in Ireland.

4.1.5 Pilot an action research project in a number of post primary schools on accommodating diversity and building an intercultural approach to education policy.

4.2 Develop a more inclusive and intercultural school environment through the whole school planning process.

The school plan provides the most effective way of ensuring that anti-racism, cultural diversity and equality are promoted within individual schools. Under the Education Act 1998, each school board of management is required to prepare a school plan in collaboration with parents, staff and students, and ensure it is regularly reviewed and updated. School Development Planning is a national initiative supported by a full time support service, guidelines, resources and in-service training at both primary and second level. The overall aim is to embed in the school system a framework for collaborative planning and a quality cycle of continuing goal setting, self appraisal and review, which will enhance the quality of teaching and learning. The School Plan includes a focus on the aims and objectives of the school, and deals with such issues as curriculum and assessment, pastoral care, pupil behaviour, admission and discipline policies, staff deployment and development, parent and community links, school management & administration. The Education Act requires that the school addresses issues of equality of access and participation, and the guidelines on school planning place particular stress on equality proofing of the school plan and policies.

Whole School Evaluation provides an important opportunity to assess the effectiveness of a school's strategy within the context of its school plan.

School policies have a key role to play in the development of a more inclusive school environment as part of the whole school planning process, including policy related to:

Admissions and Enrolment.

Reception/induction of new students.

Curriculum, including civic/social/religious education.

Learning supports.

Bullying.

Child protection.

Home/school liaison.
Employment and Human Resource Management.

Schools will need support and guidance to ensure that they have the skills to work in an increasingly intercultural environment both within the school or in the broader community context in which the school is located.

Measures

4.2.1 Strengthen the implementation of an equality focus within school practice by:

- Strengthening guidelines on whole school planning for schools to ensure reasonable accommodation of cultural and ethnic diversity.
- Providing guidance on an effective equality focus within codes of behaviour and admission policies.
- Developing an equality focus in whole school evaluation that examines school practise from an equality perspective.

4.2.2 Further develop practical resource materials for schools to support this process.

4.2.3 Provide for training in interculturalism for teachers as part of primary and post-primary in-service training.

4.3 Accommodate cultural diversity within the curricula.

The curricula at both primary and second level have a key role in ensuring that students appreciate the richness of a diversity of cultures and are able to challenge prejudice and discrimination where they exist. The curriculum is designed to promote a respect for personal dignity and that of others, positive attitudes towards other cultures and ethnic groups, a commitment to the democratic process, and an awareness of the rights and responsibilities of citizenship. In particular, the Social Personal and Health Education aspects of the curriculum provide opportunities to introduce the themes of anti-racism and interculturalism. The new curricula are supported by in-service training, teacher guidelines, and full-time staff development teams.

At **post primary level** the Civic Social and Political Education programme is designed to prepare students for participatory citizenship, develop the skills of critical appraisal and decision making based on human rights and social responsibilities. The format allows scope for teachers to deal with issues such as gender equity, racism and xenophobia, interculturalism, development issues etc. Pupils are required to undertake at least two class/group action projects in such areas.

While there are opportunities within subject and programme areas (e.g. English, Arts, Religion, History and Geography, Home Economics, Music and Art and Business Education) to look explicitly at the issue of interculturalism and anti-racism, all subjects can be taught from a perspective which respects and reflects cultural diversity.

The **Leaving Certificate Applied programme** includes a Social Education Module which provides for contemporary issues and human rights issues to be discussed and promoted. Guidelines have been issued for teachers featuring examples of

assignments, resources etc.

The **NCCA** has initiated work at **primary and post-primary** level to examine ways in which the existing curriculum can be mediated and adapted to reflect the emergence of an expanding multicultural society. It is expected that this process will be concluded shortly.

At **Further Education** level modules in interculturalism have been developed and approved by the Further Education and Training Awards Council for use across the sector.

Measures

4.3.1 Guidelines on intercultural education and the curriculum will be developed that will seek to mediate and adapt the existing curricula to reflect the emergence of a more culturally diverse society in Ireland.

4.3.2 Training and resource materials will be provided to support guidelines on intercultural education and the curricula.

4.3.3 New nationally certified modules in interculturalism will be provided in the Adult and Further Education Sector.

4.4 Develop an intercultural strategy within youth work.

Building on the commitments in the National Youth Work Development Plan and the work of existing national umbrella and local youth work organisations, an intercultural implementation strategy will be developed for the youth service, which will seek to take on board the ‘whole system’ approach advocated in this Plan, including mainstreaming and targeted strategies to combat racism and make reasonable accommodation of cultural diversity.

During the Irish Presidency of the EU, a declaration on Racism, Violence and Intolerance was progressed and adopted by the Council of Youth Ministers of the European Union. It called for concrete measures to be implemented by the European Commission and the Member States which will reinforce cooperation at all levels and between all actors to combat discrimination and racism.

Measures

4.4.1 An intercultural advisory committee consisting of key stakeholders in the youth sector, and relevant specialised and expert bodies and NGO’s will be established to draw up an intercultural strategy for the youth service, including a focus on access, service delivery, ethos, proactive strategies, including targeted provision to groups such as refugees and Travellers

4.5 Enhance access and education service delivery to Travellers.

Some of the key issues related to Traveller participation in education can be summarised as follows:

High levels of participation by Travellers at preschool and primary level.
Poor retention rates to completion of upper second level education by Travellers, notwithstanding improvements in recent years.

Participation at third level is probably less than 20 Travellers per annum.
Poor participation at adult/further education level
Literacy levels improving, but a very high proportion of Travellers still unable to read or write.

The enhancement of access to education services for Travellers is a multifaceted issue that takes into account living circumstances, parent/pupil/teacher expectations and the wider marginalisation/social exclusion experienced by Travellers. This will require a multifaceted response, including review of existing education provision and supports at all levels within the education system.

Measures

4.5.1 Review existing provision, access and education service delivery at every level of the education system.

4.5.2 The development of a Traveller Education Strategy to improve the participation and achievement of Travellers at every level of education, with reference to the Report of the Task force on the Travelling community and the model provided by the Traveller Health Strategy.

The strategy will examine the effectiveness of existing measures including such issues as teacher training, encouraging the promotion of positive views of Traveller culture among the settled community, interculturalism, school development planning, data collection, transfer and progression within second level education, school enrolment policies, community and parental links, transport, second chance education, third level access, literacy and youth work.

4.6 Enhance the participation of refugees and asylum seekers in education up to 18 years of age, as well as the participation of refugees and those with humanitarian leave to remain in the State in further and higher education provision. A specific focus on the needs of females will be part of this process

Some of the key issues related to participation of non-nationals in education include:

Insufficient English language proficiency among some refugees.

The need for additional teaching supports within the classroom.

Lack of recognition of qualifications.

Supports needed for specialised teachers.

Barriers to participation in further and higher education

Measures

4.6.1 Review existing access to all levels of education for refugees and those with humanitarian leave to remain in the State. All pupils may access education at first and second level up to 18 years of age irrespective of nationality or status. In general, free access to further and higher education full time programmes is confined to EU nationals, refugees and those with humanitarian leave to remain in the State, with all others being required to pay the economic fee.

The exception is that adults may access literacy and language supports within the framework and resources available under the VEC adult literacy budget.

4.6.2 As resources permit, enhance the level and range of additional teaching supports provided to non-nationals attending primary and second level schools, with a particular focus on second level.

4.6.3 As resources permit, enhance supports and resource materials for teachers working with non-nationals in schools and adult and further education

4.6.4 Promote measures to increase the participation of refugees and those with humanitarian leave to remain in the State in third level education.

4.6.5 Provide for a balanced gender strategy to ensure that additional barriers experienced by girls from minority groups in accessing education are addressed.

4.7 Enhance access and education service delivery to unaccompanied minors

Unaccompanied minors are a particularly vulnerable group of young asylum seekers/refugees who need additional supports in educational placement.

Measures

4.7.1 Provide supports to assist in the educational placement of unaccompanied minors. Where such pupils are referred as minors to Youthreach, ensure that they have access to appropriate supports such as childcare, guidance and counselling services, on the same basis as Irish nationals.

4.8 Enhance provision of English as a Second language.

Language and literacy proficiency has long been recognised as playing a key role in the integration process. There is considerable linguistic diversity and ability to communicate in English among people who are recent migrants to Ireland, but there are also a significant number of people who need to improve their English language skills. There are several language and literacy providers including the Vocational Education Committee's (VEC's), Integrate Ireland Language and Training, and non Government Organisations. Many primary and second level schools are also faced with the challenges of teaching pupils who need additional language supports and additional resources are provided to schools towards meeting this need. In December 2002 Department of Education and Science provided funds for a pilot initiative in the City of Dublin VEC, to enable a comprehensive needs analysis to be undertaken of asylum seekers in adult education, focussing on language and literacy needs. City of Dublin VEC/Tanya Ward, (2002). Asylum Seekers in Adult Education. A Study of Language and Literacy Needs. In addition, the Department has supported the provision of training and materials for staff through Integrate Ireland Language Training and the National Adult Literacy Agency. Literacy and Language supports are seen as an essential element of provision to enable adults for whom English is not the mother tongue to integrate into Irish society and, where appropriate, to support their children's participation in education. Within the framework and resources available under the VEC adult literacy budget, adults may access literacy and ESOL language supports. Over 5000 adults are currently availing of this facility.

Measures

4.8.1 As resources permit, provide teaching and non-pay resources to schools to cater for the needs of pupils for whom English is not their mother tongue.

4.8.2 Enhance support programmes for teaching staff through Integrate Ireland Language Training.

4.8.3 Continue to provide and enhance ESOL supports to adult refugees, asylum seekers through the VEC's.

4.9 Evolve education related data/statistical systems to make reasonable accommodation of cultural diversity and take positive action measures.

At present there is limited availability of data related to pupil/student diversity in the Irish education system beyond enrolment of non-nationals and Travellers at primary and second level. The broadening of existing statistical and administrative data systems at all levels, will provide a more comprehensive picture of ethnic and cultural diversity within the education system and will assist in the process of benchmarking both individual student and general policy progress.

Measures

4.9.1 Develop disaggregated statistics/data on cultural diversity at all levels of the education system on a phased basis as part of development of a formal statistics/data strategy by the Department of Education and Science.

4.9.2 Implement the recommendations arising out of the National Statistics Board Report on developing Irish Social and Equality Statistics, as they relate to education National Statistics Board, (2003). Developing Irish Social and Equality Statistics. and give further consideration of mechanisms to:

- Collect and analyse administrative data on both enrolment and completion of education for all levels of education of pupil/students disaggregated by cultural diversity.
- Provide disaggregated data on early school leaving rates.
- Develop a more comprehensive system of categorising cultural diversity in schools, consistent with a format developed by the CSO.
- Make reasonable accommodation of cultural diversity and take positive action measures within relevant education surveys and research, including longitudinal studies on students.
- Review and to ensure that data/statistics research on cultural diversity contributes to evidence based policy development at all levels of education.

4.10 Strengthen the participation of key stakeholders in the development of an intercultural approach to education.

Key stakeholders in the development of an intercultural approach to education include the Department of Education and Science, education bodies, specialised and expert bodies, teacher bodies including trade unions, parent bodies and representatives from cultural and ethnic minorities.

Participation involves a range of strategies at different levels, including participation at a policy level, administrative level and school/college level. In particular there is a need for on going coordination within the Department of Education and Science, which involves a range of key stakeholders.

Measures:

4.10.1 Ensure that the equality and intercultural steering group which will co-ordinate the national intercultural education strategy (4.1) provides an important

ongoing forum for consultation with key stakeholders.

4.10.2 Outline an on-going consultation strategy for involving key stakeholders from cultural and ethnic minorities as part of the national intercultural education strategy.

4.10.3 Strengthen guidelines for school plans to include a focus on consultation, including consultation and involvement of parents from cultural and ethnic minorities.

5.0 Health, Social Services and Childcare

Key challenges

Research in many countries confirms that cultural and ethnic minorities can experience higher illness and mortality rates compared to the general population.

Living conditions, income, gender, disability, communication, cultural barriers and the availability of family/community supports can all have an impact on health and general well being.

In recent years there has been an increased focus on fairness and addressing health inequalities within health policy, where health inequalities are targeted and people are treated fairly and according to need. Department of Health and Children, (2001). *Quality and Fairness: A Health System for You. The National Health Strategy*. Consistent with this overall approach to health policy is the proactive inclusion of cultural and ethnic minorities vulnerable to health inequalities.

Responsibility for providing social services is shared by a number of Government departments and agencies with different responsibilities concerning older people; younger people, including children; families, including lone parents; the unemployed; people with long term illnesses and people with disabilities. The breadth of policies and range of bodies involved presents a significant challenge to develop a coherent intercultural approach to social service provision. In recent times bodies involved in providing health and social services have been among the most active in developing anti racism and intercultural awareness training for staff. Recent publications also indicate that there is increasing awareness about cultural diversity among health and social service professionals. See for example: Torode, R; Walsh, T; Woods M, (2001). *Working with Refugees and Asylum Seekers. A Social Work Resource Book*.

Childcare provision is an important issue for all but has added importance to people who may have limited access to other family supports, such as recent migrants to Ireland. Access to quality childcare helps to enable women in particular to access employment, education and training and important services, including health. The challenge is to ensure that existing mainstream childcare provision makes reasonable accommodation of cultural diversity and take positive action measures.

The continued delivery of quality health and social services and childcare in Ireland is in large part dependent on both attracting and retaining staff from cultural and ethnic minorities, including staff from non-European Economic Area (EEA) countries to

work as doctors, nurses, ancillary staff and health care and social service professionals. There is a concomitant challenge to ensure that the overall workplace experience for employees from cultural and ethnic minorities in the health and social services sector is a positive one (see Objective Two: Inclusion)

Within the overall challenge to develop a more inclusive, intercultural approach to health and social service provision in Ireland there is a need to focus on cross cutting themes such as gender, age and disability related issues for example:

Older people from cultural and ethnic minorities can often experience higher levels of isolation in hospitals.

People with disabilities from cultural and ethnic minorities may need additional supports in accessing social services.

Ensuring mainstream childcare provision is inclusive of all children.

Policy context and developments underway

Health

Health policy: Overall health policy is set out in the National Health Strategy ‘Quality and Fairness’. This and subsequent health related policies include strong commitments to reducing health inequalities and developing a people centred, quality and accountable health service. Arising from this Strategy there are further health strategies relating to:

Primary health care: Community involvement is emphasised in primary health care strategies and innovative partnerships have already been developed between health bodies and Traveller and refugee/asylum seeker support organisations such as Pavee Point, Access Ireland and Spiritan Asylum Services Initiative (SPIRASI).

Health promotion, information and research: The National Health Promotion Strategy recognises the need to improve the health and social gain of disadvantaged groups by sensitive and appropriate health promotion goals. The National Health Information Strategy provides a blueprint for gathering and using information for health that will help individuals to make informed choices and will inform policy decisions. The National Strategy for Health Research outlines the research and development function of the Department and enhanced support for science and health.

Poverty: The National Action Plan Against Poverty and Social Exclusion highlights the need to tackle health inequalities and to ensure access to quality health and social services.

Human Resource Management: The Action Plan for People Management in the Health Sector contains important commitments on the quality of working life, training, performance and industrial relations.

Travellers: Traveller Health- A National Health Strategy recognises the health inequalities experienced by Travellers and sets out a practical response that takes into account their particular needs, culture and way of life. Traveller groups including Pavee Point and the Irish Traveller Movement have played in key role in helping to design and support the implementation of the Strategy through the National Traveller Health Advisory Committee.

Refugees and Asylum seekers: Incentives are in place to encourage General Practitioners to include refugees and asylum seekers on their patient lists. NGO's such as Access Ireland and SPIRASI have been active in highlighting the needs of refugees and asylum seekers.

Health impact assessment: HIA is a way of judging the potential impact of a policy, programme or project on the health of a population. It is designed to inform and influence decision-making and to reduce health inequalities. Department of Health and Children, The Institute of Public Health in Ireland, (2003). Health Impact Assessment.

Multi-agency project: A peer-led health information programme has been established by the Northern Area Health Board (NAHB) to examine health promotion issues for asylum seekers and refugees. The programme, which is a pilot project between three partners, SPIRASI, the NAHB and the RIA, provides accurate and comprehensive information on health services for newly arrived asylum seekers. The lack of clear and concise information had impacted both on asylum seekers, as in many cases they were not availing of appropriate health services, and also on service providers, who found they were spending a great deal of time explaining the system to asylum seekers.

Social Services and Childcare

Women: The range of social services focussing on the needs of women includes services providing protection against domestic violence.

Children: The National Children's Strategy includes key commitments on social service supports for vulnerable young people and commitments to accommodating cultural diversity.

Disability: The Disability Bill and the establishment of the National Disability Authority working in tandem with the Equality Authority and service providers and community sector bodies will provide a significant framework to progress issues of concern to people with disabilities.

Older People: The Equality Authority has urged the development of a comprehensive approach to implementing equality for older people, including those from cultural and ethnic minorities. Equality Authority, (2002). Implementing Equality for Older People

Awareness raising and training: Many health and social service bodies are beginning to undertake anti racism and intercultural awareness training for staff. Provided by bodies such as the NCCRI and Access Ireland. An equal opportunities/accommodating diversity awareness initiative for the health service was launched in March 2003. Health Services Employers Agency (2003).

Social work: There are increasing challenges social work teams working to people in vulnerable circumstances in Ireland, including those from cultural and ethnic minorities.

Childcare: Arising from the National Childcare Strategy, a Childcare Directorate has been established under the aegis of the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform to enhance the quality of childcare provision and availability of places for

parents and children and to continue to develop and support a well structured, proactive and caring childcare sector.

Social welfare: There is increasing “demand from professionals working in the area of social welfare, including community welfare officers (CWOs)” who operate the Supplementary Welfare Allowance Scheme on behalf of the Department of Social & Family affairs, for support and training to help them respond to increasing diversity among their customer base. It is clear that this aspect must figure more prominently in the training programme for CWOs.

Priorities

The overall priority develop a deliberate and proactive approach to combating racism, accommodating cultural diversity and supporting full equality in practise for Black and minority ethnic people within health, social service and childcare policy through strategic planning and though reference to broader equality policy.

Health, Social Services and Childcare: Expected Outcomes

5.1	Develop a national intercultural health service strategy with reference to equality/diversity policy. (M)
5.2	Build an intercultural dimension into health impact assessments. (M)
5.3	Develop a more inclusive, intercultural approach to social service provision, with reference to equality/diversity policy. (M)
5.4	Develop a more inclusive, intercultural approach to childcare policy, with reference to equality/diversity policy. (M)
5.5	Develop a more inclusive intercultural approach to policy focussing on the family, with reference to equality/diversity policy. (M)
5.6	Develop proactive strategies to address health inequalities. (T)
5.7	Evolve data systems within health, social service and childcare provision to accommodate cultural diversity. (B)
5.8	Enhance participation/consultation with cultural and ethnic minorities in within the health, social service and childcare sectors. (E)

5.1 Develop a national intercultural health service strategy with reference to equality/ diversity policy.

A new national intercultural health strategy will be developed, focusing on the reasonable accommodation of cultural diversity and positive action measures within the health service, with reference to the wide range of policies through which health policy is developed. The aim of the national strategy will be to provide strategic direction on developing a more inclusive, intercultural approach to the delivery of health services, with reference to equality/diversity policy.

5.1 Measures

5.1.1 Develop a national intercultural health strategy to provide a blueprint for accommodating cultural diversity at all levels and within all relevant existing policy statements within the Irish health sector, including a focus on:

- The challenges of accommodating cultural diversity within the Irish health sector.
- Developing a whole system approach to implementing the intercultural health strategy focussing on policy mainstreaming, targeting marginalised communities, developing ways of benchmarking progress, and ensuring engagement with key stakeholders.
- The necessary supports needed to realise this overall strategy.
- The linkages with broader equality/diversity policy.

5.1.2 Establish a broadly based advisory group to oversee the development intercultural health strategy

5.1.3 Infuse the national strategy throughout the health service through a range of awareness raising initiatives, training modules, resource materials and policy guidelines.

5.1.4 Build an equality focus into governance within the health sector as part of the current reform strategy. New legislation, new institutional structures and new planning processes will include an explicit equality dimension.

5.2 Build an intercultural dimension into health impact assessment

All major proposed health policy initiatives will include an assessment of their impact on different population groups, and where appropriate recommend changes to enable a more equitable distribution of impacts. As part of this process, measures will be undertaken to assess the impact of health policies on cultural and ethnic minorities.

Measures

5.2.1 Develop guidelines and good practice for assessing the impact of all major proposed health policy initiatives on cultural and ethnic minorities through Health Impact Assessment, and where appropriate recommend changes to enable a more equitable distribution of impacts.

5.3 Develop a more inclusive, intercultural approach to social service provision, with reference to equality/diversity policy.

Responsibility for providing social services is shared by a number of Government departments and agencies with different responsibilities concerning older people; younger people, including children; families, including lone parents, the unemployed and people with long term illnesses and people with disabilities. The breadth of policies and range of bodies, including those in the statutory and community/voluntary sector involved presents a significant challenge to develop a coherent intercultural approach across all social service provision.

Measures

5.3.1 Undertake a high-level action research programme across a range of Government departments involved in providing social services. The aim of the research programme will be to inform the development on an intercultural strategy to social service provision.

5.3.2 Consider the optimum model for developing a social service impact assessment/equality proofing initiative consistent with emerging developments in health and equality policy.

5.3.3 Mainstream the provision of intercultural awareness training within training programmes for professionals working in the social services.

5.3.4 Include a focus on crosscutting equality themes within these initiatives, including a focus on women, younger and older people, families, gay and lesbians and people with disabilities. For example the development of an intercultural approach to the services provided to women and children from cultural and ethnic minorities experiencing domestic violence.

5.4 Develop a more inclusive, intercultural approach to childcare policy, with reference to equality/diversity policy.

Developing a more inclusive intercultural approach to childcare provision requires a multifaceted approach involving the wide range of statutory and non-statutory bodies involved in childcare provision, principally coordinated at a policy level through the National Childcare Coordinating Committee.

5.4.1 Develop an equality/diversity handbook for childcare practitioners to provide practical guidance for those working in the childcare sector to make reasonable accommodation of cultural diversity and take positive action measures.

5.4.2 Develop a range of proactive and targeted measures to ensure equal opportunities for cultural and ethnic minorities in accessing childcare, including targeted information strategies.

5.4.3 Positive action measures to encourage childcare initiatives that promote intercultural interaction.

5.5 Develop a more inclusive intercultural approach to policy focussing on the family, with reference to equality/diversity policy.

There is a broad range of governmental and non-governmental programmes and supports that have both direct and indirect concern to the family. As 2004 is the tenth anniversary of international year of the family there is a renewed focus at both a global and national level on family related policy. This provides an important opportunity to ensure that cultural diversity is recognised within family focussed policy in Ireland.

Measures

5.5.1 Ensure through proofing and impact assessment that there is a reasonable focus on cultural diversity within major policy statements, programmes and supports in family related policy in Ireland.

5.5.2 Ensure that policy targeted on the needs of marginalised families or families and the communities in which they live, such as family resource centres, are inclusive of people from cultural and ethnic minorities.

5.6 Develop proactive strategies to address health inequalities.

Proactive strategies to address health inequalities involve the development/enhancement of a range of targeted strategies based on evidence arising from assessments and health status studies relating to cultural and ethnic minorities.

Measures

5.6.1 Ensure access to primary medical care for cultural and ethnic minorities.

5.6.2 Develop/update existing needs assessments and health status studies on specific cultural and ethnic minorities in Ireland to inform future policy priorities.

5.6.3 Combat health inequalities experienced by Travellers through the full implementation of the National Traveller Health Strategy.

- 5.6.4** Expand the Traveller primary health care initiative to become a national initiative covering all relevant health board areas.
- 5.6.5** Develop and mainstream a primary care partnership initiative focussing on the health care needs of refugees and asylum seekers, including victims of torture
- 5.6.6** Develop an intercultural health service training module, including a focus on effective intercultural communication, for key health service professionals
- 5.6.7** Develop a targeted information strategy to increase awareness of general medical services to cultural and ethnic minorities, including the provision of information in different languages.
- 5.6.8** Make reasonable accommodation of cross-cutting equality issues such as those related to women, older people and people with disabilities and take positive action measures as part of proactive strategies to address health inequalities/additional health needs that can be experienced by cultural and ethnic minorities.

5.7 Evolve data systems within health, social service and childcare provision to accommodate cultural diversity. (B)

Health, social service and childcare data and statistical programmes will be evolved to provide disaggregated data on cultural diversity.

5.7.1 Evolve hospital inpatient (HIPE), perinatal and out patient data collection systems to provide disaggregated data on the cultural and ethnic origin of people using health services on a phased basis, beginning with the addition of an ethnic identifier question to the HIPE/perinatal system, following piloting.

5.7.2 Develop a statistics/data strategy in the health, social service and childcare sectors consistent with the recommendations of recent reports from the National Statistics Board and the Central Statistics Office, to include a focus on cultural diversity (see Part Four, Section 3.6).

5.8 Enhance participation/consultation with cultural and ethnic minorities within the health, social service and childcare sectors.

The participation of culturally diverse groups in consultation and decision-making includes a focus on key stakeholders including a focus on staff and service users from cultural and ethnic minorities in the health, social services and childcare sectors.

Measures

- 5.8.1** Develop long-term consultative mechanisms as part of the national intercultural health strategy, including a focus on Travellers, refugees and asylum seekers and migrants, based on an assessment of need.
- 5.8.2** Continue to support the participation of a wide range of key stakeholders in the National Traveller Health Advisory Committee, overseeing the implementation of the Traveller Health Strategy.
- 5.8.3** Enhance the support given to key NGO's to ensure their effective participation in health related policy to support their engagement in primary health care strategies/partnerships.
- 5.8.4** Ensure an intercultural perspective is included in the national and local structures established to coordinate UN International Years.

6.0 Accommodation

Key challenges

Housing and accommodation was selected as part of *Sustaining Progress*, as one of the special initiatives which should be the subject of a sustained focus of effort from all the social partners. A 'Housing Forum' was established and held its first meeting, in December 2003. The role of the Forum is to 'provide the social partners with an opportunity to contribute to housing policy development'. The housing and accommodation special initiative in *Sustaining Progress*, stipulates that a number of issues are to be examined and progressed under the initiative.

People from cultural and ethnic minorities can experience additional barriers in accessing accommodation, including weaker levels of service provision and discrimination. This section considers the steps needed to build a more inclusive, intercultural approach to all forms of accommodation provision in Ireland including:

- The social/affordable-housing sector.
- The private rented sector.
- The owner occupied sector.
- Accommodation policy related to Travellers
- Accommodation policy related to refugees and asylum seekers.

Because of a range of factors, including present housing market conditions many recent migrants, including migrant workers and refugees, tend to live in the private rented sector. This raises particular challenges to ensure that cultural and ethnic minorities are not concentrated into poorer private rented accommodation and residential areas and there is adequate redress to instances of discrimination in house letting in this sector.

The Government recognises in 'Sustaining Progress' that there are particular challenges to ensure the full implementation of the local authority Traveller accommodation programmes and there is a need to identify and address the barriers encountered to date. Government of Ireland, (2003). *Sustaining Progress*. Social Partnership Agreement, p24.

As part of our international and humanitarian commitments, Ireland must provide adequate accommodation and other forms of social support for asylum seekers. Asylum seekers are accommodated in residential centres throughout the country as part of the direct provision and dispersal policy while their applications are being determined. Key challenges include the need to ensure consistency of standards within and between centres and making reasonable accommodation of diversity and taking positive action measures in respect of issues such as diet, family and cultural needs.

Policy context and developments underway

Affordable and social housing: There are a range of Government policies in place to expand the local authority house building programmes and provide affordable housing for sale to target groups defined in terms of income and housing need. Housing associations play a small but potentially important role in providing targeted accommodation for groups such as refugees Clann Housing Association provides 19 housing units for refugees and 6 residential units for unaccompanied minors.

The Private Rented Sector: The Residential Tenancies Act 2004 includes significant proposals to modernise the private rented sector, including the establishment of a Private Rented Tenancies Board, security of tenure, registration of tenancies, notice to quit periods, rent reviews and dispute assistance.

Equality: Section 6 of the Equal Status Acts prohibits discrimination in the provision of goods and services including accommodation (with some important exemptions) There were no referrals to the Equality Tribunal under the 'race' ground in respect of the private rented sector in 2003.. The transposition of the EU 'Race' Directive into Irish law has strengthened protection against discrimination in accommodation.

Sustainable development: Economic development and social equity are key themes of sustainable development, which recognises that failure to meet housing needs creates constraints on economic growth, competitiveness and social policy.

Balanced regional development: The National Spatial Strategy is a 20-year planning framework, which aims to achieve a better balance of social, physical and economic development between regions focussing on the relationship between people and the places where they live and work.

Travellers: The Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act, 1998 required local authorities to prepare, adopt and implement five year programmes to meet the existing and projected needs of Travellers in their area. : 'Sustaining Progress' includes important commitments on identifying and addressing the barriers encountered to date in the implementation of the local authority Traveller Accommodation Programmes and to push forward implementation Ibid, p24..

Asylum Seekers: The Reception and Integration Agency (RIA) has developed nine self-catering facilities. They have also produced information and guidance on standard rules and procedures in accommodation centres and adapting to life in a new environment. Placements to self-catering facilities comprise persons relocated from direct provision due to extenuating medical circumstances and persons who have resided in direct provision for over two years, subject to availability.

Estate Management Policies: There is increasing recognition of the need to move to a more proactive approach to social housing management, which involves tenant participation and targeted initiatives to address problems such as harassment and other forms of anti social behaviour.

Research and data: The Housing Needs Assessment carried out every three years includes some data on the classification of non-EU nationals.

Consultative bodies: There are a range of consultative bodies focussing on accommodation policy including the Housing Forum, Strategic Policy Committees established by local authorities, the National Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee, the Reception and Integration Agency, and initiatives linked to estate management and homelessness.

Priorities

The overall priority under the theme of accommodation is to ensue reasonable steps

are taken to cater for cultural diversity and to address inequalities across all forms of housing/accommodation policy and linked policy areas, including spatial planning.

Accommodation: Expected Outcomes

6.1	Build an intercultural dimension into key housing and related policy instruments, with reference to equality/diversity policy. (M)
6.2	Address housing related inequalities that impact on cultural and ethnic minorities. (M)
6.3	Ensure greater progress is made in the implementation of the local authority Traveller Accommodation Programmes. (T)
6.4	Ensure there is an equitable approach to the provision of accommodation for asylum seekers, consistent with Government policy. (T)
6.5	Develop the potential of estate management policies to combat racism. (T)
6.6	Evolve statistical programmes and data systems related to accommodation to cater for cultural diversity. (B)
6.7	Enhance participation in the consultative processes related to accommodation policy and provision. (E)

6.1 Build an intercultural dimension into key housing and related policy instruments.

Building an intercultural dimension into key housing strategies is multi faceted issue that includes a focus across the broad range of housing provision within Ireland including social/affordable housing, the private rented and home ownership sectors. To date there has been comparatively limited focus on planning for diversity within general housing and housing related policies, including balanced regional development. Further consideration of how housing and related policy caters for diversity is required to inform future policy in this complex policy area. This will involve research and consultation with key stakeholders.

Measures

6.1.1 Undertake a research programme on the issues arising from increased cultural diversity in housing provision, with reference to emerging good practice in Ireland and at an international level.

6.1.2 Include a focus on the implications of increasing cultural diversity in the housing through a joint initiative between the Housing Forum and the forthcoming Intercultural Forum.

6.1.3 Apply proofing impact/assessment procedures within housing policy to assess the likely impact of forthcoming policy on cultural and ethnic minorities, with reference to equality/diversity policy.

6.2 Address housing inequalities that impact on cultural and ethnic minorities.

Addressing housing inequalities involves wide range of strategies, including ensuring

there is sufficient legislative protection against discrimination in housing provision, promoting greater awareness of rights and responsibilities and ensuring enforcement of under equality and housing legislation.

Measures

- 6.2.1** Promote greater awareness of the Equal Status Acts among housing providers.
- 6.2.2** Promote greater awareness of the Equal Status Acts among tenants and residents.
- 6.2.3** Monitor and if necessary review the effectiveness of Section 6 of the Equal Status Act.
- 6.2.4** Develop awareness raising and training strategies with professionals in the housing sector.

6.3 Ensure greater progress is made in the implementation of the local authority Traveller accommodation programmes.

To fulfil Government commitments in Sustaining Progress specific attention will be paid to ensuring greater progress in the implementation of the local authority Traveller accommodation programmes. There will be a priority focus within the special housing initiative on identifying and addressing the barriers encountered to-date in the implementation of the programmes.

Measures

- 6.3.1** A new High Level Group was recently established to provide a forum for senior policy makers and service providers to meet to discuss barriers to service delivery and explore possibilities of approaching service delivery in a more integrated. The Group is being chaired by the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform.

6.4 Ensure there is an equitable approach to the provision of accommodation for asylum seekers, consistent with Government policy.

Consistent with government policy on the reception and processing of applications from asylum seekers, a range of initiatives will be implemented to continue to ensure that there is an equitable and consistent approach to the provision of accommodation for asylum seekers. Measures will focus on ensuring there is a hospitable and safe environment within accommodation centres, effective consultation and complaint mechanisms, reasonable accommodation of food preferences and dietary needs, reasonable accommodation of cultural and religious diversity including positive action measures, and upholding standards in duty of care to asylum seekers with additional needs including expectant mothers, families, people with a disability and separated children.

It is noted that the RIA meets, on a regular basis, with the Irish Refugee Council, Church Groups, support groups, the UNHCR and Health Board representatives.

Measures

- 6.4.1** Maintain the RIA inspectorate system to ensure that there are

comprehensive inspections of all accommodation centres (commercial and state) to cover all aspects of contracts with proprietors, including reception, management and staff cover, menus and facilities provided, maintenance and health and safety issues.

6.4.2 Consideration should be given to publishing a report on overall progress on an annual basis.

6.4.3 Continue to promote the protocol which sets out the ethos, rights and responsibilities within accommodation centre services applicable to both staff and residents, including standards on consultation, complaints and appeals procedures for all accommodation centres.

6.4.4 In relation to accommodation centres, maintain the existing comprehensive training for proprietors, operators and their staff, including modules on intercultural/anti-racism approaches to service provision.

6.4.5 Reduce time spent in accommodation centres through reducing the time taken to process individual asylum applications.

6.5 Develop the potential of estate/housing management policies to combat racism.

Local authorities and other social housing providers have a key role to play in helping to combat racism through local estate management initiatives. Effective estate management policies, which involve a holistic approach to managing social housing with active tenant participation and coordination between different service providers, can impact on issues such as harassment, graffiti and other forms of anti social behaviour, including behaviour motivated by racism. The same approach can be adapted to the management of multiple occupancy buildings in the private rented and home ownership sector, where there are building management policies and resources in place.

Measures

6.5.1 Include a focus on catering for cultural diversity/combating anti social behaviour, including racism, in revised departmental policy guidelines on estate management circulated to local authorities.

6.5.2 Pilot support initiatives focussing on intercultural approaches to estate management which combat racism as part of the Housing Management Initiatives Grant Scheme.

6.5.3 Integrate estate based initiatives into and Anti Racism and Diversity Plans (see 1.6) and the local police forums (see 1.4).

6.6 Evolve statistical programmes and data systems to accommodate diversity.

Statistical and administrative data programmes related to housing and spatial policy will be evolved to provide a more comprehensive picture of diversity and inequality, related to accommodation in Ireland. These programmes will help inform the development of a more inclusive, intercultural approach to aspects of policy and will assist in the process of setting targets and monitoring policy progress.

Measures

6.6.1 The forthcoming statistical and data strategy to be developed by the Department of Environment and Local Government will take reasonable steps to cater for cultural diversity in Ireland in key accommodation related

statistical/administrative data programmes including a focus on

- Homelessness and social housing waiting lists.
- Housing tenure.
- Spatial distribution

6.6.2 Present information, where available on cultural diversity in housing in the Annual Housing Statistics Bulletin.

6.6.3 Monitor, publish trends and respond effectively to reported racist incidents as part of existing complaint mechanisms developed by social housing providers, including local authorities.

6.7 Enhance participation in the participation and consultative processes related to accommodation policy and provision

There are a number of existing accommodation related consultative bodies that have the potential to make reasonable inclusion of cultural diversity in Ireland.

Measures

6.7.1 Include a focus on accommodation issues related to refugees as part of the consultation concerning the development of a refugee integration implementation strategy.

6.7.2 Ensure consultative mechanisms related to accommodation provision for the homeless, older people and people with disabilities make reasonable accommodation of cultural diversity and take positive action measures.

6.7.3 Ensure that the National Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee continues to play a key role in the implementation of the Traveller accommodation programme.

6.7.4 Ensure that local authority Strategic Policy Committees and estate management initiatives seek to make reasonable inclusion of issues related to racism and cultural diversity.

7.0 Administration of Justice.

Key challenges.

There are key challenges for bodies involved in the administration of justice as they seek to make reasonable accommodation and take positive action measures of the growing cultural diversity in Ireland.

As with the majority communities in Ireland, people from cultural and ethnic minorities can be both the victims of crime and the perpetrators of crime. Objective One of the NPAR includes a focus on protection against racism, including the key role of the Gardaí. This section looks at the range of other bodies involved in the administration of justice, including the Prison Service, the Courts Service, the Probation and Welfare Service and bodies involved in the refugee application and appeals process.

A key concern is the increasing number of people from cultural and ethnic minorities in Irish prisons in recent years. This is a multifaceted issue that can be the result of a range of factors including:

- Increased cultural diversity in Irish society.

- Exploitation of vulnerable people with lack of legal status in Ireland.
- Increased globalisation of some forms of crime.
- Issues related to sentencing.

The Irish Prison Service has been proactive in developing anti racism and intercultural policies, involving both staff and offenders. Recent research undertaken as part of an initiative in Wheatfield prison highlights the range of specific challenges for the prison service as a whole, including:

- An apparent unwillingness among offenders to report unfair treatment
- A need for clarity on reporting culturally related incidents and a need to ensure staff knowledge on how to report such incidents.
- A wide divergence in perceptions between offenders and staff regarding unfair treatment of offenders on cultural grounds. Irish Prison Service, (2002). Research and Training Project for Intercultural Awareness.

The model adopted by the Irish prison service, including the undertaking of research linked to awareness training and policy development has the potential to help inform intercultural strategies by other bodies involved in the administration of justice. For example one of the issues recently identified is the difficulty in providing probation alternatives for some people from cultural and ethnic minorities.

Policy context and developments to date

The Irish Prison Service: The Irish Prison Service administers a number of custodial centres across the country and is in the process of being established as an independent executive agency. As a consequence of an increase in non-national offenders being accommodated in Irish prisons, an intercultural training and awareness initiative was piloted in Wheatfield Prison, Dublin and a further initiative is underway in Cloverhill Prison.

The Courts Service: The Courts Service is an independent body established in 1999 through the Courts Service Act, 1998. Its main functions are to:

- Manage the courts.
- Provide support services for judges.
- Provide information on the courts system to the public.
- Provide, manage and maintain court buildings.
- Provide facilities for users of the courts.

The Probation and Welfare Service: The Probation and Welfare Service aims to reduce the level of re-offending through the use of community-based sanctions. It provides pre-sanction reports to courts, a welfare service in the prisons and undertakes pre-release preparation work with prisoners and families and supports rehabilitative programmes and alternative to prison initiatives.

Refugee Application and Appeals Process: The Office of the Refugee Applications Commissioner is responsible for making decisions at first instance for asylum seekers seeking to become refugees. The Refugee Appeals Tribunal considers appeals from asylum seekers whose application has been appealed at first instance. The Refugee Legal Service is an office established by the Legal Aid Board to provide independent legal services to persons applying for asylum.

Priorities

The key priority is to develop a proactive, intercultural approach to service provision within the work of bodies concerned with the administration of justice, with reference to equality policy in Ireland.

Expected outcomes

7.1	Mainstream an intercultural strategy within the Prison Service. (M)
7.2	Develop an intercultural strategy within the Courts Service. (M)
7.3	Develop an intercultural strategy within the Probation and Welfare Service. (M)
7.4	Develop an intercultural strategy within the refugee application and appeals process. (M)
7.5	Develop targeted intercultural strategies focussing on the inclusion of Travellers, refugees and migrants in services related to the administration of justice. (T)
7.6	Evolve statistical programmes and data systems related to the administration of justice. (B)
7.7	Enhance participation and consultative processes related to the administration of justice. (E)

7.1 Mainstream an intercultural approach within the Prison Service

There has already been considerable progress in developing an intercultural approach within the Prison Service through the pilot initiative in Wheatfield and Cloverhill Prisons. This progress now needs to be mainstreamed throughout the prison service.

Measures

7.1.1 Develop a prison service policy statement and charter on interculturalism, with reference to equality legislation and best practice.

7.1.2 Mainstream and infuse intercultural awareness and anti racism training into other induction and ongoing training for offenders and staff in all centres under the auspices of the Irish Prison Service.

7.1.3 Regularly update strategy and report progress within strategy statements and annual reports.

7.1.4 Ensure wide dissemination/communication of policy position and procedures.

7.1.5 Develop mechanism to overcome offenders the unwillingness of offenders to report incidents related to racism and develop actions to address this issue.

7.1.6 Establish an advisory group on the challenge of increasing cultural diversity within the prison service on an on going basis.

7.2 Develop an intercultural strategy within the Courts Service.

The Courts Service is very aware of the increasingly changing ethnic makeup of the people interacting with the Courts system and has taken measures to ensure that their services and information are easily accessed by people from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds. As part of its central partnership committee, the Service has established a sub-committee to examine equality and diversity issues.

A programme is also underway to make several Courts Service information booklets

available in a range of languages including Chinese, French, Serbo-Croat, Arabic and Portuguese. The Courts also appoints interpreters where necessary.

The Service is also aware that there may be low levels of literacy in certain sectors of the community. Since some communities do not place great emphasis on the written word, and rely more on an oral tradition to transfer information, the Service is considering making information available on a wide range of formats such as audio cassette tape, DVD and CD-ROM.

Developing an intercultural approach within the Courts Service includes a focus on the management of courts, support services for Judges, public information on the courts system and the provision of facilities for users of the courts.

Measures

- 7.2.1** Develop a Courts Service strategy and charter on interculturalism, with reference to equality legislation and best practice.
- 7.2.2** Develop, and mainstream intercultural awareness training into the training and supports provided by the Courts Service.
- 7.2.3** Regularly update strategy and report progress within strategy statements and annual reports.
- 7.2.4** Ensure wide dissemination/communication of policy position and procedures.
- 7.2.5** Undertake research and needs assessments to inform the overall development of policy.
- 7.2.6** Ensure that the Courts Service keeps abreast of the challenge arising from a multi ethnic society and involves key stakeholders to support the development of an intercultural approach within the courts service.

7.3 Develop an intercultural strategy within the Probation and Welfare Service.

Developing an intercultural approach within Probation and Welfare Service includes a focus on the welfare service in the prisons, the preparation of reports to courts, pre-release preparation work with prisoners and families, rehabilitative programmes and alternative to prison initiatives.

Measures

- 7.3.1** Develop a policy statement and charter on interculturalism within the probation and welfare service, with reference to equality legislation and best practice.
- 7.3.2** Develop intercultural awareness training as part of on going training for offenders and staff, including a focus on combating racism.
- 7.3.3** Regularly update strategy and report progress within strategy statements and annual reports.
- 7.3.4** Ensure wide dissemination/communication of intercultural policy position and procedures.
- 7.3.5** Undertake research and needs assessments to inform the overall development of policy.
- 7.3.6** Establish an advisory group on the challenges for the probation and welfare service working in a multi ethnic society, involving key stakeholders to support the development of the intercultural strategy.

7.3.7 To the greatest extent possible, implementation of community sanctions in the case of persons from ethnic minorities should have regard to the language and other difficulties which may be experienced by those minorities.

7.4 Develop an intercultural strategy within the refugee application and appeals process.

Developing an intercultural approach and building on the range of existing initiatives within the refugee application and appeals process, involves the range of bodies with responsibilities in this area, including ORAC, the RAT and the RLS and the supporting role of specialised and expert bodies and the UNHCR. Some details of what is already underway are set out below.

Measures

7.4.1 Continue the development of intercultural strategies and a charter within the ORAC, the RAT and the RLS, with reference to equality legislation and best practice.

7.4.2 Further develop intercultural awareness training, including a focus on combating racism as part of ongoing training for staff working in the ORAC, the RAT and the RLS

7.4.3 Regularly update strategy and report progress within strategy statements and annual reports.

7.4.4 Ensure wide dissemination/communication of intercultural policy position and procedures.

7.4.5 Undertake research and needs assessments inform the overall development of policy.

7.4.1 Office of the Refugee Applications Commissioner & the Refugee Appeals Tribunal

The Office of the Refugee Applications Commissioner's Customer Service focus has been the development and enhancement of communications with all of their customers. The basis of their approach is contained in the Customer Service Action Plan, a new Customer Complaints Procedure and engagement with their Customer Liaison Panel as ongoing commitments /strategies towards guaranteeing quality services to all their customers. In addition, as part of their Sustaining Progress Action Plan, they will produce a Customer Charter which sets out clearly their commitment to ensuring that the service they provide is equitable, non-discriminatory and takes account of increasing cultural diversity.

ORAC training, with UNHCR assistance, has always placed great emphasis on impartiality in the determination process as well as sensitivity to cultural diversity. A key focus for the organisation is ongoing staff training and awareness raising, together with enhancement of their liaison structures with Government Departments, Offices and non-governmental organisations.

In addition, under the Partnership process, an Equality Working Group was established to consider the development and implementation of an Equality Policy

and Programme for ORAC, and it will also address the issue of Racism Awareness and Interculturalism.

The Refugee Appeals Tribunal

The Refugee Appeals Tribunal Customer Service Action Plan 2001-2004 and Customer Service Charter have given due regard to equality legislation and initiatives, and have incorporated all guidelines where appropriate to reflect the requirements of the Tribunal's staff, clients and Members of the Tribunal.

As the clients of the Tribunal are, in the main, non-Irish persons seeking refugee status in Ireland, the Tribunal's Customer Action Plan fully recognises this fact and commits staff and Members of the Tribunal to professionally process the client's appeal in a non-discriminatory manner. To facilitate this endeavour, staff and Members are provided with the Equality Authority's resource pack 'Supporting an Anti-racist Workplace'. Additionally, the Tribunal is an active participant in the annual 'Anti-Racist workplace week'.

7.4.2 Intercultural awareness training, including a focus on combating racism.

A policy initiative undertaken in the Refugee Appeals Tribunal is the inclusion in Induction Training for all staff, of a module presented by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), in addition to a module delivered by the Tribunal's own Training Unit. This training highlights the cultural diversity of the clients of the Tribunal, encourages staff to respect and value such diversity, and demonstrates how best to professionally deliver a service to these clients. Additionally, as required by the nature of their duties, further training is provided for Tribunal staff by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, as necessary. Relevant front-line staff and Managers have received training in relation to the provision of services to a diverse customer base. Furthermore, the Equality Authority's support pack is available to staff. Members of the Tribunal, who decide on appeals of asylum seekers also receive specialist training by the UNHCR and attend International conferences on refugee law and related issues.

7.4.3 Update strategy and report progress within strategy statements & annual reports.

The Refugee Appeals Tribunal Annual Report and Business Plan are fully reflective of any enhancements to existing strategy and of new initiatives. All progress made regarding the business of the Tribunal as it pertains to anti-racism is outlined in both these documents.

7.4.4 Ensure wide communication of intercultural policy position and procedures.

The Refugee Appeal Tribunal is conscious that any action taken by their staff should be appropriate to the individual client and their circumstances as presented to them. When joining the Tribunal, staff are made aware of this issue and are reminded of this

during their induction training. Anti-racism posters and leaflets placed periodically on staff notice boards reinforce this message.

Additionally, the display and availability in the Tribunal's reception and waiting area of our Customer Charter in all the languages reflective of our client base also functions as a reminder to front-line staff and Members of the diversity of their clients.

7.4.5 Undertake research and needs assessments inform the overall development of policy.

Included in the Tribunal's Sustaining Progress Action Plan is the implementation of a feedback facility to staff and clients who wish to comment on the quality of the service they have received in their dealings with the Tribunal. This happens by means of a preprinted feedback form which is processed weekly in each business unit of the Tribunal and supplied to Corporate Services. Any arising issues are addressed and Senior Management informed of emerging trends/patterns.

7.5 Develop targeted strategies focussing on the inclusion of Travellers, refugees and migrants in services related to the administration of justice.

Where appropriate, targeted strategies focussing on groups of people with additional needs will be undertaken by the Prison Service, the Courts Service, the Probation and Welfare Services and the Refugee Applications and Appeals Process in addition to existing initiatives. Examples of such initiatives to include:

7.5.1 Include a focus on the needs of Travellers, refugees and asylum seekers and migrants in the research and needs assessments undertaken by different service providers involved in the administration of justice.

7.5.2 Develop a pilot initiative involving the Irish Prison Service and a range of other stakeholders focussing on providing transition supports for Travellers re-entering the community after serving custodial sentences. A booklet, aimed at ex-offenders including Travellers, was published by the Department of Social & Family Affairs in 2004 and contains information on Social Welfare entitlements, accommodation, money matters, health and legal issues.

7.5.3 Provide general information related to the role/services provided by bodies involved in the administration of justice in a number of different languages.

7.5.4 Include a focus on groups such as Travellers, refugees and migrants as part of an intercultural training module in primary and in service training for staff involved in the administration of justice.

7.5.5 Consider the impact of changes in service provision within the administration of justice for all cultural and ethnic minorities, including women, people with disabilities, families, older and younger people and gay and lesbians, consistent with the grounds identified in the equality legislation.

7.6 Evolve statistical programmes and data systems related to the administration of justice.

Consistent with recent government policy (see 3.6) the range of statistical programmes and administrative data systems developed by bodies involved in the administration of justice will be evolved to make reasonable accommodation of

cultural diversity and take positive action measures. Figures published out of context and without explanation can sometimes damage other policies to accommodate cultural diversity. As a consequence guidelines on the ethical/contextual use of statistics and data generated should be developed.

Measures

7.6.2 Develop data/statistical strategies by all bodies involved in the administration of justice, consistent with the recommendations of the National Statistics Board

7.6.3 Develop guidelines on the use of statistics and data to encourage good practice and to prevent misuse.

7.7 Enhance participation and consultative processes related to the administration of justice.

There are a broad range of consultative mechanisms through which bodies involved in the administration of justice can consult with both staff and external customers, including cultural and ethnic minorities. These include the establishment of advisory committees involving a broad range of stakeholders to advise on service provision and policy development, the establishment of customer liaison committees on an ongoing basis. Action research/needs assessments can also contribute to evidence based policy development.

Measures

7.7.1 Establish advisory committees to help inform the development of intercultural strategies by bodies involved in the administration of justice.

7.7.2 Modernise and update consultative mechanisms through strategy statements and customer action plans, consistent with the public service modernisation programme.