



Equality Policies for Older People

Implementation Issues

Forum Report No. 29
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Foreword

As the age profile of the population is increasing at a significant pace, the question of ageism is nowadays of central importance throughout Europe.¹ This has significant policy implications, especially in the case of pensions and health care provisions.

This country is no exception to these demographic trends. For example, life expectancy at birth was 68 years for men and 72 years for women in 1960 but within the next 30 years this is projected to increase to 78 and 84 years respectively. Or to put it another way round, the number of people over 65 years of age who will be living here will more than double² over this period.

Older people are not a homogenous group, yet they share many common concerns and it is widely accepted that their needs are not adequately taken into account by policymakers. Young people today will be old one day so that, irrespective of age, all generations should have a shared interest in seeking to ensure greater equality for older people and to having their participations and contribution taken into account more fully.

Promoting and supporting active ageing is a complex and demanding challenge. This will require resolute action across a number of fronts such as discriminatory practices in our various institutions (both in the public and private sectors), negative stereotyping and exclusion and, in some cases, isolating older people through threatening and abusive behaviour.

This will call for actions not only by Government but also committed and cooperative efforts by the Social Partners, local communities, neighbours and, in short, everybody in our society.

The Equality Authority recently published a report entitled *Implementing Equality for Older People* which contains a comprehensive strategy for change across an integrated set of policy reforms. The Social Partners committed themselves under the *Programme for Prosperity and Fairness* to considering how best the recommendations in this report can be carried forward. Given its monitoring and evaluation role in relation to equality and social inclusion issues, it was decided that it would be appropriate that the Forum should undertake this work.

The focus of the present report by the NESF is on the implementation of the recommendations contained in the above report, with particular reference to identifying potential implementation barriers and challenges and how best these could be addressed. The Forum has undertaken a similar exercise in relation to equality on the basis of sexual orientation and its report has recently been published.³

1 *Reforms for an Ageing Society* (OECD, 2000).

2 *Population and Labour Force Projections, 2001-2031* (CSO, 1999).

3 *Equality Policies for Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual People* (NESF Report No. 27).

These two pilot projects have proved to be valuable exercises, with positive lessons for other policy areas facing similar challenges, not only at national but also at local community levels.

Finally, in its *Agreed Programme for Government* (June 2001) the present Government is committed to implementing a coordinated programme of measures to address the issues of concern to older people. This includes improvements to pension payments and conditions, encouraging older people (if they so wish) to extend their working lives without financial penalty to suit their personal lifestyle and developing community facilities for the elderly, including community nursing units.

Executive Summary

Executive Summary

- i The Forum established a Project Team entitled *Implementing Equality for Older People* in June 2002. The focus of the Team's work was to identify potential implementation barriers and challenges to fulfilling the main priority recommendations that had been made in the Equality Authority's report on this issue and to comment and make recommendations on how these could be addressed.
- ii The Team included representatives of Employer and Trade Union organisations, of relevant Community and Voluntary Sector organisations, Government Departments, the National Council on Ageing and Older People, the Equality Authority and the Local Authorities.
- iii This is the second time that the Forum engaged in work of this nature, involving as it does a new working method and role for the Forum in the policy-making process.
- iv The Equality Authority report contains 72 recommendations and it is the view of the Team that all of these are important, and to pinpoint that older people organisations are fully supportive of their implementation. This expectation around implementation is based on the following factors:
 - the promotion of equality for older people has widespread support across all strands in our society;
 - many of the recommendations do not attract substantial cost implications;
 - relevant commitments made in the *Programme for Government*;
 - compliance with relevant equality (employment and equal status) legislation; and
 - conformity with declarations of policy intent set out in Departmental Statements of Strategy.
- v During the course of its work, the Team consulted with a wide range of Government Departments and other relevant bodies (see Section III). In the course of these consultations, many Departments undertook to progress implementation in a number of practical ways, through for example: referring specific recommendations to relevant Sections in their Departments or State Bodies for further consideration as well as encouraging the use of the report's findings to inform future work or policy reviews.
- vi As part of this engagement with Departments, a series of over-arching issues were also identified by the Team as representing potentially lasting barriers to implementation. These are set out in Section IV of this document. It is the strong view of the Project Team that these barriers must be addressed if the recommendations contained in *Implementing Equality for Older People* are to stand any realistic prospect of implementation over the medium term.

vii To overcome these implementation barriers, the Project Team considered a number of areas where it wished to make specific recommendations for change. These recommendations are set out in Section V of the Report and a summary of the main issues involved is presented below:

- (a) **Resource Implications** – the Team is mindful of the fact that the implementation of the recommendations will not have cost implications in certain areas. **In these cases, for example, age proofing, awareness training and greater consultation with older people, the Team’s recommendation is that these should be implemented as soon as possible.**

Furthermore, the *Programme for Government* already makes commitments to implementing some of the recommendations which do have cost implications, for example, in relation to pensions and health, and the Team welcomes this.

In relation to the remainder of the report’s recommendations, implementation will undoubtedly require some statement of political support, ideally across all shades of opinion as represented in the Oireachtas. **The Team recommends, therefore, that a statement should be made (on the part of the relevant Minister concerned), indicating the likely timeframe over which the resource-sensitive recommendations included in *Implementing Equality for Older People* will be implemented.**

- (b) **Monitoring and Evaluation** – the Team expressed concern that a certain degree of inaction (or inertia) could arise from the absence of measures to monitor progress on an ongoing basis. Consequently, ongoing mechanisms for the monitoring of progress across Government Departments need to be introduced. **The Team recommends that:**

- **All Government Departments (and indeed all State Agencies within the wider Public Service) should prepare and publish Equality Plans with timetables for action, mechanisms to track these Plans and to publish an Annual Statement of the measures they are adopting (or have adopted) to secure equality on all nine grounds, including age.**
- **For this purpose, all Departments should undertake equality reviews and the Equality Authority should develop a template as a support to preparing these Equality Plans.**
- **The Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, in consultation with the Equality Authority, should take an overview/monitoring role in relation to implementing equality for older people and should review Departmental annual reports, identify over-arching issues and comment generally on progress.**
- **The Team also recommends that it should be reconvened by the Forum in a year’s time in order to review progress in this regard.**

- (c) *Ageism and Social Attitudes* – the Team believes that ageism remains a persistent feature of our society as a whole, including that of Government Departments. **The Team recommends that more investment should be made in age awareness training and in mainstreaming equality across all Government Departments. This should be a mandatory component of induction training provided to all civil servants, and appropriate refresher training should be made available to all relevant staff, including: front line staff dealing with the public (to help them provide a quality service to older people as customers), those involved in the development of relevant policy and others likely to be dealing with issues affecting older people.**
- (d) *Co-ordination and Cross-cutting Services* – on numerous occasions throughout its work, the Team commented on the extent to which so many policy issues affecting older people needed to be addressed on a cross-Departmental basis. This is essential in order to implement some of the Equality Authority report’s recommendations. Indeed it is difficult to envisage progress being made without such coordination. **The Team recommends, therefore, that where cross-cutting issues exist, Government Departments should:**
- **agree on the nature of the joint collaboration required;**
 - **nominate one Department as the “lead agency” on this policy issue;**
 - **work together to resolve policy implementation issues; and**
 - **be in a position to advise callers as to the name of the Individual/Section that can best advise them on the policy issue in question – including those aspects that are not properly within the remit of that official’s own Department.**
- (e) *Staying in the Community* – through all its discussions, it was clear to the Team that older people have a strong preference to remain in their own homes, and to access health and welfare support services to the fullest possible extent within their immediate and local community. **The Team recommends, therefore, that an emphasis on “older people within their community” should be unambiguously established as a core value guiding the implementation of the recommendations in *Implementing Equality for Older People*. As a core value, this approach of supporting “older people within their community” should be tested before any alternative policy responses are considered or adopted.**
- (f) *Data Sources and Research* – the Team was struck by the value and contribution of research to policy implementation, and particularly research which consulted with older people on their preferences and priorities. The absence of such evidence-based research can limit policy evaluation and development. To begin to address this deficiency, **the Team recommends that research and administrative data should be age-proofed and that upper age limits should be removed, for example in relation to education and mental**

health data collection. In the meantime, the Team felt strongly that the absence of research should not be used to block progress on implementing the Equality Authority’s report.

(g) *Age-proofing of Policies and Programmes* – the Team felt that Departments could do much more in terms of age-proofing policies and programmes in the context of equality proofing generally and recommends that this should be introduced across Departments straight away.

- viii The Equality Authority’s report provides a clear framework of actions to be undertaken to advance equality for older people. In the current adverse economic and fiscal climate, the Team accepts that it would be unrealistic to expect movement at the same time and at the same rate on all of the more costly recommendations.
- ix However, the Team wishes to emphasise the importance of moving ahead over time and on a phased basis with the implementation of all the recommendations contained in the report – based on the principles enshrined in our Constitution of equality and human rights for everybody, including that of our older people.

Section I

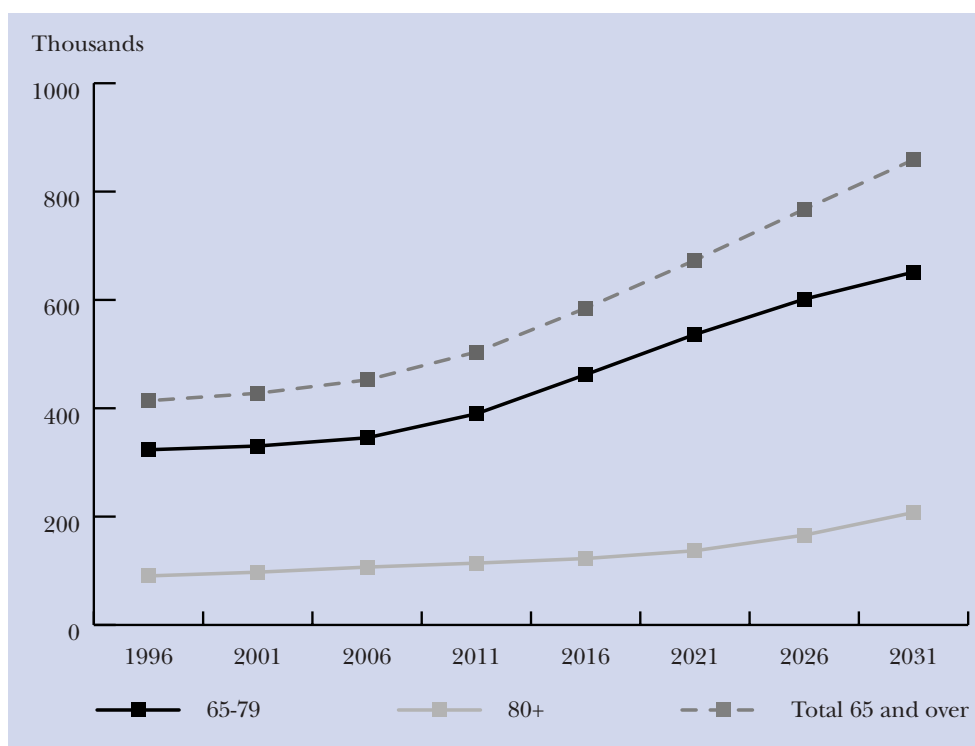
Introduction and Contextual Setting

Introduction and Contextual Setting

- 1.1 The enactment of relatively new equality legislation⁴ is an important first step in the elimination of age-based discriminatory practices. These legislative provisions now need to be put into effect and built on through the adoption of and agreement on an integrated programme of policy improvements for older people. There are a number of interrelated reasons why this is required:
- ageism and institutional practices exclude and discriminate against older people;
 - these are based on assumptions and negative stereotypes which need to be identified and challenged;
 - positive action is required to counter past discriminatory practices;
 - the provision of certain support services is essential to facilitate older people's active participation in society;
 - the more specific yet diverse needs of ill, frail or vulnerable older people also need to be addressed;
 - the contemporary emphasis on the value of youth and youth culture can devalue the experiences and perspectives of older people;
 - overlooking or downplaying the valuable contribution of older people to society can also deprive the younger generation of older people's experiences and insights, discourage intergenerational solidarity and damage our social cohesiveness.
- 1.2 In addition, and as already mentioned in the Foreword, demographic projections anticipate a significant growth in the numbers of older people in Ireland over the coming years. It is estimated that the proportion of people aged 65 and over will represent 14.1 per cent of the general population in the year 2011, up three percentage points in ten years. The Central Statistics Office (1999) estimated that the population aged 65 years and over will double between 1996 and 2031 from 414,000 to 850,000. The number aged 80 years and over is projected to increase from its 1996 level of 90,000 to over 200,000 in the same time period. These trends are shown in Figure 1.1 below.

4 The Employment Equality Act, 1998 and the Equal Status Act, 2000.

Figure 1.1 Population Projections, 65 years plus, 1996 – 2031



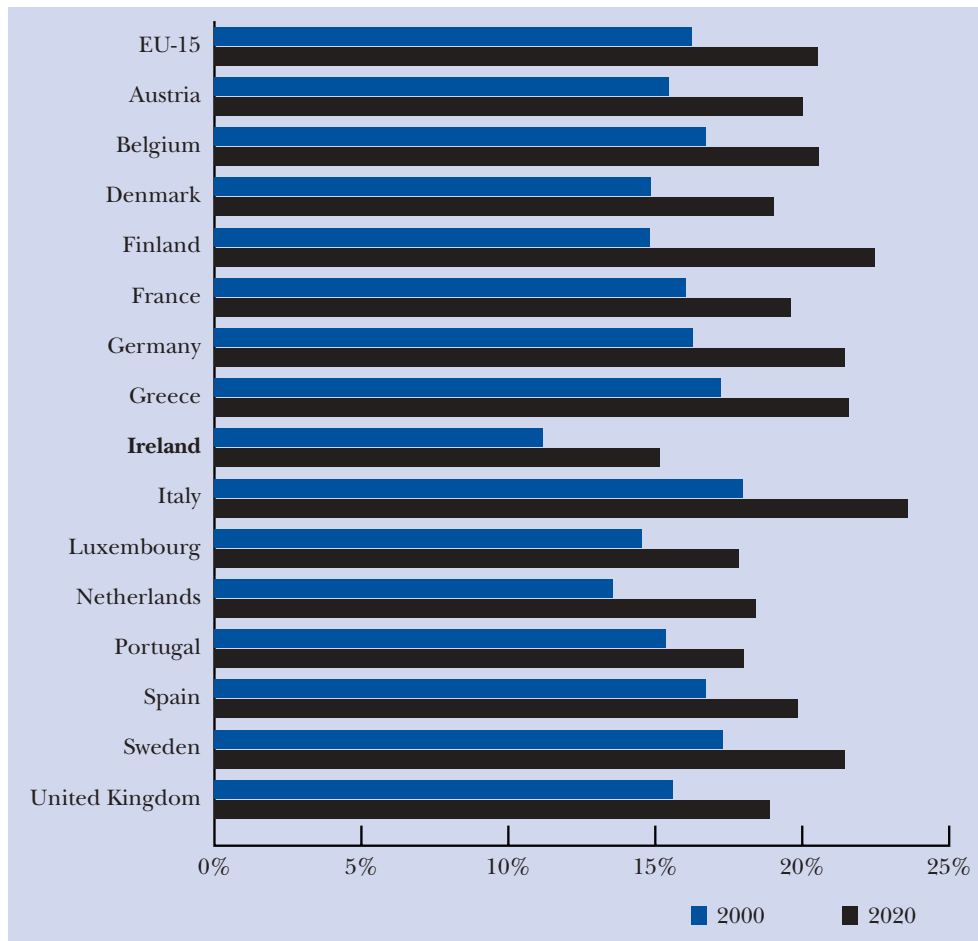
Source: Central Statistics Office (1999) *Population and Labour Force Projections 2001 – 2031*.

- 1.3 Comparing the projected growth of the Irish population of older people with our EU neighbours (see Figure 1.2), however, shows that our population ageing may be less pronounced compared to other countries over the next twenty years. By the year 2020, Eurostat estimates that about one-in-five Europeans will be aged 65 years or over, five percentage points above the Irish projection. Finland, Germany, Greece, Italy and Sweden are projected to have above average populations aged 65 years plus, while Ireland will maintain its position as having the youngest population in the EU-15.

Equality Authority’s Report on Implementing Equality for Older People

- 1.4 The Equality Authority published a wide-ranging report on *Implementing Equality for Older People* in June 2002. This was prepared for the Authority by an Advisory Committee, comprised of non-governmental organisations representing older people, Social Partners and representatives of a number of statutory bodies.

Figure 1.2 Projected Percentage of People aged 65 and over in the Total Population of the European Union, 2000 – 2020



Source: Eurostat *European Social Statistics Demography*: 2002 Edition.

1.5 The report contains 72 recommendations. These cover the following themes:

- Legal status;
- General upper age limits;
- Policy making;
- Working;
- Income of Older People;
- Health and Community Services; and
- Lifelong learning.

1.6 The recommendations are built around the following key strategies or actions:

- Age proofing or assessing decisions made for their impact on older people;
- Positive action to address a past history of exclusion of older people;
- Participation by older people and their organisations in decisions that affect them;
- Training in age awareness and skills in combating ageism; and
- Underpinning access to key services through legislative entitlements.

Annex II lists all of the report's recommendations.

1.7 The report was published against the background of a number of domestic and international developments which have the potential to serve as hooks in having accepted and putting into effect the recommendations, namely:

- The new Social Partnership document, *Sustaining Progress: Social Partnership Agreement 2003 – 2005*, makes a number of specific commitments regarding pensions rates and qualifying conditions and care arrangements for older people.
- The *Programme for Government* undertakes 'to help older people to live in the dignity which their immense contribution to the development of our country deserves' (Fianna Fáil and the Progressive Democrats, 2002: 26). It makes specific commitments for older people in the areas of employment, health and community care, pensions and social partnership participation.
- The present Government includes a Minister of State with Special Responsibility for Services for Older People, Mr. Ivor Callely, T.D. at the Department of Health and Children, and he has established an Inter-departmental Group on the Needs of Older People. The Group is charged with examining matters which impact on the lives of older people to ensure that a coordinated approach is adopted. Priority is being given to areas of particular difficulty to ensure that appropriate action is taken to resolve them.
- The Employment Equality Act, 1998, and the Equal Status Act, 2000, provide protection against discrimination on the grounds of age. The Employment Equality Act, however, does not cover those aged over 65.
- At a European level, Article 13 of the Amsterdam Treaty enables the EU to take appropriate action to combat discrimination based on six grounds, including age.⁵ The EU Employment Directive includes age as one of its grounds and is to be transposed by the Member States by end-2003. But they have the option to extend this deadline by 3 years.

⁵ The six grounds are: sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age and sexual orientation.

- The Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement committed us to an equivalence of rights North and South.
- The Strategic Management Initiative, particularly in relation to the development of the Quality Customer Service initiative and Departmental Strategy Statements and Business Plans should be linked to equality of services for older people.
- The range of equality initiatives introduced in recent years in the Civil Service.
- The National Anti-Poverty Strategy (NAPS) and the EU Member States' National Action Plans against poverty and social exclusion (NAPincl) both identify poverty reduction and social inclusion targets. This is particularly significant in the context of research which has shown high risk of poverty and social exclusion among older people (Layte *et al*, 1999).
- More recently, the National Economic and Social Council (2002) placed particular emphasis on the need for the necessary services to be developed to help workers to access caring services for older or disabled dependants in more tailored ways.

1.8 It should also be noted at the outset that it was agreed in the *Programme for Prosperity and Fairness* that recommendations emerging from the Authority's report 'will be considered by the Social Partners to establish how they might be carried forward' (PPF, para. 3.11).

Rationale for NESF involvement

1.9 The National Economic and Social Forum, given its mandate from the Government in relation to equality and social inclusion issues, agreed to examine the implementation issues arising from the Equality Authority's report.

1.10 As the most representative of the social partnership institutions, the NESF is specifically charged with evaluating the implementation of policies dealing with equality and social inclusion. Since the publication of its Report Number 10 *Equality Proofing Issues* (February, 1996), the Forum has produced a series of reports⁶ focused specifically on equality issues.

1.11 Its *Strategic Policy Framework for Equality Issues* (Report Number 23, March 2002) is widely acknowledged to have made a notable contribution in providing a conceptual model for policy analysis and implementation purposes. It identifies four interrelated social settings within which inequalities are generated:

6 *The Employment Equality Bill* (December 1996), *The Development of the Equality Provisions* in Partnership 2000 (November 1997), *A Strategic Policy Framework for Equality Issues* (March 2002).

- **Economic** – economic development is not shared equally;
- **Political** – some people remain disempowered and outside the spheres of decision-making;
- **Respect and Recognition** – combining paid employment, family responsibility and participation is difficult and an obstacle to the achievement of equality; and
- **Affective** – these relate to the unequal distribution of love, care and of solidarity with others. Although sometimes defined as private matters, they are publicly regulated and as such are open to Government policy changes and influences; action here involves the potential to shape policy in relation to sexual relations between adults, care relations between children and parents, relations between adult carers and adult dependants and relations between peers at work.

1.12 The Forum also proposed four associated equality objectives:

- **Redistribution**, that is the maximisation of human welfare and the sharing of benefits equally;
- **Recognition**, that is the according of visibility and value to diversity;
- **Representation**, that is the maximisation of participation of those experiencing inequality in decision-making; and
- **Respect**, that is maximising opportunities to value the interdependence and mutual support of aspects of human welfare.

1.13 In its Report, the Forum argues that inequalities must be addressed on an integrated and coherent basis and by way of a multi-dimensional approach. In this regard, seven dimensions of an equality strategy are identified, namely:

- **Legislation**, enacted to protect rights and promote equality but also legislation that is enacted to change social and economic conditions, particularly where they directly alter the rights, circumstances and opportunities of groups experiencing inequality;
- **Institutions**, primarily those established as part of the infrastructure to protect rights and promote equality by all public bodies that are charged with delivering public policy, and particularly those Government Departments and Agencies that are delivering public services for those experiencing inequality;
- **Mainstreaming**, involving a range of mechanisms to mobilise all policy, provision and practice in all public bodies behind the goal of equality, but particularly led by Government Departments and Agencies that are responsible for the design and monitoring of public policy;
- **Targeting**, necessitating investment of resources to address current and past discrimination experienced by the groups across the nine grounds, to provide for needs and aspirations specific to particular groups and identities, and create the conditions for equality of outcome from mainstream provision;

- **Participation and Decision-Making**, entailing the inclusion of organisations articulating the interests of those experiencing inequality in all strands of governance, mobilising the democratically elected representatives behind the achievement of equality objectives and building greater diversity within this representation;
- **Agenda-Setting**, involving mechanisms to develop specific agendas for particular groups or with regard to emerging issues; and
- **Monitoring and Review**, entailing data gathering across the nine grounds of the equality agenda, the development of indicators to measure progress towards equality and public reporting and other opportunities to enhance public discourse on equality issues.

1.14 Examining the policy implementation issues arising from the Equality Authority's report, therefore, provided the Forum with a further opportunity to test this strategic approach to the policy-making arena in a very real way.

The Project Team

1.15 In July 2002, the Forum established a Project Team to examine the policy implementation issues arising from the Equality Authority's report. Membership of the Team was as follows:

Ina Broughall	Irish Country Women's Association
Bob Carroll	National Council on Ageing and Older People
Joan Condon	ICTU Centres for the Unemployed
Wendy Conroy	National Council on Ageing and Older People
Peter Coyle	General Council of County Councils
Charlie Hammond	Irish Congress of Trade Unions
Greg Heylin	Equality Authority
Catherine Maguire	Irish Business and Employers Confederation
Mamo McDonald	Age and Opportunity
Ros McFeely	Northside Partnership
Maurice O'Connell	Alzheimer Society of Ireland
Mary O'Donoghue	Department of the Environment and Local Government
Sylvia Meehan	Irish Senior Citizen's Parliament
Robin Webster	Age Action Ireland
Aidan Pender	PA Consulting Group, Project Team Leader
David Silke	Secretariat

Report's Purpose and Structure

1.16 The purpose of this Report is to:

- detail the work of the Team;
- identify potential implementation barriers and challenges to the main priorities to achieve greater equality for older people, as identified by the Team; and
- comment and make recommendations on how these may be addressed.

1.17 The next Section of the Report outlines the work process of the Team. Section III outlines the main points to emerge from the consultations it undertook with Government Departments and State Agencies. Section IV of the Report draws together the key points relating to the barriers to policy implementation, as considered by the Team. The Final Section of the Report reflects on the Team's contribution to policy implementation and also indicates areas requiring further work by Departments and State Agencies to achieve greater equality for older people.

Section II

Project Team's Methodology

Project Team's Methodology

- 2.1 Examining the implementation issues of a particular report involves a relatively new way of working for the Forum.⁷ Again on this occasion, it was envisaged that the Project Team's added value would be to help to ensure that the Equality Authority report's recommendations are acted on and that any implementation difficulties were identified and effectively addressed. At the outset, the Forum made clear that the Team's work was not to evaluate or monitor the role and performance of Government Departments, but should limit itself in the time available to opening up, on a pilot basis, a dialogue with them relating to policy implementation and the policy-making cycle, as was envisaged under the original commitment in the PPF.
- 2.2 The Team undertook in its terms of reference (see Annex III) to consult with relevant bodies regarding the main recommendations of the Equality Authority's report – *Implementing Equality for Older People*. It agreed to pay particular attention to identifying potential implementation barriers and challenges and to comment and make recommendations on how these might be addressed, and to report back to the Forum within six months.
- 2.3 All relevant Departments⁸ were contacted by the Forum's Chairperson, on behalf of the Project Team, and in relation to the recommendations falling within their scope Departments were asked to outline:
- the actions which have already been taken, or which they planned to undertake, in relation to these recommendations;
 - any barriers they envisaged in implementing these recommendations; and
 - how the Department might resolve these barriers.
- 2.4 Departments were asked to respond to this request by 23rd September 2002. The Team considered these in due course and made the following general observations:
- responses varied considerably in terms of detail and approach;
 - in general, Departments felt that they had not undertaken much work in this area in the past;
 - Departments provided useful information on current policy, but were less detailed in outlining policy implementation plans and/or barriers;
 - in policy areas spanning more than one Department, a lack of cross-Departmental co-ordination was evident on occasion.

7 As already mentioned, the Forum has examined in parallel the implementation issues arising from the Equality Authority's report on *Implementing Equality for Lesbians, Gays and Bisexuals*.

8 Departments of: Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs; Education and Science; Enterprise, Trade and Employment; the Environment and Local Government; Finance; Health and Children; Justice, Equality and Law Reform; Social and Family Affairs; and the Taoiseach.

2.5 Following consideration of the written replies, the Team invited Departments individually to attend a consultation meeting to discuss the policy issues that had emerged in more detail. The next Section reports on the outcome of this process.

Section III

Consultations with Departments on Policy Implementation Issues

Consultations with Departments on Policy Implementation Issues

3.1 In this Section, the main outcomes from Departmental consultations regarding priority issues are summarised. The sources drawn on are the written replies from each of the Departments and follow-up consultation meetings. The material is presented in the following sequence:

- Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs
- Department of Education and Science
- Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment
- Department of the Environment and Local Government
- Department of Finance
- Department of Health and Children
- Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform
- Department of Social and Family Affairs
- Department of the Taoiseach.

Suggestions made by the Team, as a result of these consultations, are italicised in the text of this Section, while the main undertakings and suggestions by Government Departments are outlined in Box 3.1 on pages 39-40.

Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs

3.2 This Department was established in June 2002 to carry out a range of functions previously held by five different Government Departments. The Department is firmly committed to the principle of equality and full regard will be given to equality issues in the review of schemes being undertaken as part of the establishment of the new Department.

3.3 The Community Development Support Programme (CDSPP), a key feature of which is investment in capacity-building to empower disadvantaged groups and individuals to participate more fully in society, now operates under the aegis of this Department. It does not specifically address the needs of older people; however, the Team was informed that some of the Projects under the Programme include older people as a target group, and in such cases they are represented on the relevant Management Committees. The Team highlighted the challenges associated with getting older people (particularly those in or at risk of poverty) to volunteer and get involved in such Projects.

- 3.4 The Department agreed to a Team suggestion that the Equality Sub-committee to the National Advisory Committee of the CDSP could be asked to look at how the issues regarding older people could be addressed within the context of the Programme. The Team emphasised that a proactive campaign to engage with older people was needed. The Department also stated that it would welcome applications from older people's organisations to participate on the Rural Development Forum.
- 3.5 The Department also operates a Scheme of Community Support for Older People, the purpose of which is to provide funding (€4.4 million in 2002) for initiatives to improve the security and social support of vulnerable older people. This funding is provided by way of grant aid to voluntary groups and organisations that have undertaken to identify those people in need of assistance under the Scheme. The Department highlighted that the outcomes from the involvement of local voluntary groups in the administration of the Scheme were positive. It reported that a review of the Scheme conducted in 1998 found that, while its focus is on security, it was also beneficial in terms of dealing with medical conditions/disabilities. Some individuals were able to continue living independently where previously they may have required residential care following an illness or due to infirmity or disability.
- 3.6 Members of the Team were particularly interested in the Community Application of Information Technology (CAIT) initiative.⁹ This initiative funds 145 projects, almost half of which include older people as a target group. Members of the Team welcomed this initiative, but raised some concerns regarding the funding and application procedures.¹⁰
- 3.7 The Team also referred to the lack of social indicators data on older people, as a barrier to policy implementation and monitoring and the need to consider cross-cutting issues in equality and rural proofing processes – older people living in rural areas were cited as one such example.

Department of Education and Science

- 3.8 Lifelong learning was singled out as a key theme for the consultation with the Department of Education and Science. The Team stressed that education should be considered to have economic, social and *cultural* dimensions. Literacy, Information Technology and consulting with older people were identified as major recommendation areas in the Equality Authority report, and ones which the Team

9 Another related initiative is that of the *New Connections Programme* to address e-inclusion for disadvantaged communities and areas (Government of Ireland, 2002).

10 In light of a reduction in the budget of the Department, it was decided not to launch a third CAIT initiative. The Department is involved in a consultation process on the reorganisation of community development structures. It was felt that the best way to deliver access to ICT to those who had previously benefited from the CAIT programme was through community development organisations that are already working on the ground in these areas and which are by definition focused on CAIT target groups.

felt that the Department should actively progress. The ongoing development of specific targeting and linkages between the Department and other State agencies and groups catering for older people was also flagged as important.

- 3.9 Education was seen by the Department as a key aspect of positive ageing – in terms of coping with change and the promotion of health in later life. Low literacy skills/lack of formal education qualifications and social inclusion were named as the Department’s priorities. Lower literacy rates are evident among older people, and the Department reported that it was on course to meet National Development Plan targets in relation to participation in literacy training. Older People are also at high risk of experiencing social exclusion. The Team particularly welcomed, therefore, the correspondence between the Department’s priorities and its own focus. Data provided to the Team by the Department, however, showed that only 2.9 per cent of adult literacy students are aged 65 years or over and only 1 per cent of those on Post-Leaving Certificate Courses¹¹ are in this age bracket.¹²
- 3.10 The Green Paper on Adult Education stressed the value of community education models as successful ways of reaching those most distanced from the education system. Women’s groups have been particularly successful in this regard and the Department is now targeting men’s groups. It was agreed that the lack of transport and childcare facilities (older people may have childcare responsibilities for grandchildren, for instance) were the main barriers to participation. The Team noted that older people might be engaged in other caring roles, which, if not adequately taken into account by service providers, may also act as a barrier to participation. It was noted that 34 Community Education Facilitators are currently being recruited to work in the VECs to help community groups to access funding.
- 3.11 Older people are not a specific target group for the Department, but some VECs run courses in nursing homes, for example. *The Team felt that the Department could be more age aware (in structuring courses, teaching methods, flexible hours) and it was recommended that age breakdowns should also be included in all data collection.* Age breakdowns are available for funded programmes (Adult Literacy, VTOS, Youthreach, Traveller and PLC) and are being gathered for the new Back to Education Programme which will involve 6,000 part-time places.¹³ However, there are an estimated 147,000 adults availing of part-time self-funded courses in schools and colleges locally and some 30,000 students also benefit from Community Education through contributions of teaching hours and financial supports from the VECs, for which age breakdowns are not available.¹⁴

11 There are no age limits for participation on these Courses or Community Education modules or for third-level student support grants.

12 Twenty-seven per cent of adult literacy students and 10.3 per cent of PLC students are aged 45 years and older, however. In addition, 37 per cent of VTOS students are over 40 years.

13 This Programme specifically targets older unemployed people and those in urban and rural disadvantaged communities.

14 Funding has been provided under the National Development Plan for the establishment of a database to track participants in Further Education. A feasibility study for this has been completed, and the design and build stage is scheduled to start in April. The initial focus will be on ensuring adequate management information in relation to learners on funded programmes.

- 3.12 In relation to consultation, in addition to *ad hoc* consultation with organisations representing the interests of older people, the Department consulted with a wide range of groups regarding the Green Paper on Adult Education. The National Adult Learning Council, established on foot of the Green Paper, is charged with the task of convening regular education fora at national level to ensure a wider input into its work. The White Paper envisaged that Local Adult Learning Boards, if established, would also have a local consultation function.
- 3.13 There was some discussion of the workings and the reorganisation that is now planned in the Department, following on the ‘Cromien Report’. It is currently being restructured to allow more time for strategic development. In relation to corporate affairs, it is likely that the Strategy Statement will reflect older people in the context of the Department’s focus on literacy and anti-poverty. The Department had not been in a position to provide a written reply to the Team in advance of the consultation meeting, but agreed to do so as soon as possible afterwards. The Team particularly welcomed the Department’s focus on lifelong learning.

Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment

- 3.14 The Department identified four key issues which it felt informed the debate on participation by older people in the workplace. These are:
- *Choice* – people of a certain age and circumstance should be able to choose if they want to work – be it part-time, full-time or voluntary – or whether they want to take advantage of the benefits which they have earned over their working life to date.
 - In the key area of retaining people and skills in the workplace for as long as possible, *the onus is on employers* to provide the conditions to allow that to happen.
 - The relationship between *tax, pensions and benefits* needs to be examined to see if it can provide a greater incentive to extend working life, rather than encourage early retirement, as would have been the objective in the past.
 - There is also a need, in conjunction with employers, to ensure that *training and other actions* to support workers and those seeking work are appropriate to all age groups.
- 3.15 The Team agreed to leave aside further consideration of implementation issues in relation to the work-place to avoid duplication of effort in two respects. Firstly, in the Equality Authority report it was agreed that Congress, IBEC, the Authority and the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment would pursue a number of work and retirement issues separately. Secondly, the Forum had earlier established a Project Team on Older Workers, defined as those aged between 45 and 64 years, to focus on mobilising the participation/continued participation of such workers in the labour market.¹⁵

15 See Forum Report Number 26 *Labour Market Issues for Older Workers*, February 2003.

Department of the Environment and Local Government

- 3.16 The Department drew attention to the greater level of local consultation now taking place under *Better Local Government: A Programme for Change*.¹⁶ Strategic Policy Committees and the strategic planning process of the City and County Development Boards provide opportunities for older people to input on policy planning and implementation. It agreed to refer the recommendations in the Equality Authority report regarding the participation of older people and their organisations in mainstream policy-making to Local Authorities for observations and consideration.
- 3.17 The Department listed the following grant schemes as of specific interest to older people:
- *Essential Repairs Grant Scheme* – administered by Local Authorities and directed primarily at older people living in poor housing conditions to have basic repairs carried out.
 - *Disabled Persons Grant Scheme* – administered by Local Authorities, grant aid for the adaptation of houses for the proper accommodation of those suffering from a disability or mental handicap.
 - *Special Housing Aid for the Elderly Scheme* – operated by the Health Boards and administered by a Task Force under the aegis of the Department, this is an emergency scheme established in 1982 to improve the housing conditions of elderly people living alone in unfit or unsanitary accommodation.
- 3.18 A core issue covered in this consultation was the impact of the absence of income limits or means-testing in Schemes run by Local Authorities, such as the Disabled Persons Grant (DPG) Scheme. The Department mentioned the very significant increase in demand for assistance under this Scheme and the current financial climate in which the Local Authorities operate. Capital funding for the Scheme had increased from €15.8 million in 1999 to €41.7 million in 2001 and the cost of recouping two-thirds of grant expenditure to Local Authorities had increased from €6.3 million for 2,512 grants in 1998 to over €31 million for 5,070 grants in 2002.
- 3.19 Putting the Scheme in perspective, the Team noted that a core objective of *The Years Ahead: A Policy for the Elderly* (Department of Health, 1988) was to maintain people at home for as long as possible. The Scheme has not been the subject of an independent evaluation. The complexities of means-testing were discussed, together with the need to balance universal coverage with local flexibility. Low-interest loans were also raised as a possible way forward.

¹⁶ Department of the Environment (1996) *Better Local Government* had four core principles: enhancing local democracy, serving the customer better, developing efficiency and providing proper resources.

- 3.20 The Department indicated that it was reviewing the operation of the Scheme and the question of prioritisation was among the issues which have been raised by a number of stakeholders. In addition, the Inter-Departmental Working Group on the needs of older people established by the Minister of State with responsibility for Older People, Mr. Ivor Callely T.D., had also addressed issues relating to the Disabled Persons Grant Scheme. In this context, Dublin City Council and the Eastern Regional Health Authority are, together, examining their joint procedures to ensure a more integrated operation of the Scheme and to simplify, as far as possible, the application process.
- 3.21 The Team raised the lack of accommodation choice open to many older people.¹⁷ The cost of nursing home accommodation was noted in particular. The Team commended the operation of the Capital Assistance Scheme operated by the Department under which funding is provided to the Voluntary Housing Sector to provide housing accommodation for those with special needs, including older people.¹⁸ *In order to maximise the benefit of this Scheme, the Team considered it essential that adequate resources be made available to meet the care/support needs of the people in these dwellings.*

Department of Finance

- 3.22 The Team focused on three main issues during its consultation with this Department:
- the first issue was in relation to the Department's roles regarding employment conditions across, and the promotion of equality awareness within, the Civil Service;
 - the second area of interest was in relation to recruitment and retention of older people in the Civil Service; and
 - the third area related to pension abatement.
- 3.23 The Department outlined the range of equality initiatives that have been introduced in recent years. A new policy on gender equality in the Civil Service was announced in 2001 by the Taoiseach and in 2002 the Minister for Finance launched a policy on the prevention of direct and indirect discrimination covering the statutory equality grounds other than gender. Considerable effort has already been given to the area of gender equality within the Service.
- 3.24 It was generally acknowledged that the advancement of employment equality in the Service in relation to age would benefit from approaches similar to gender and disability, and that this in turn could have positive outcomes regarding levels of

17 The most recent Assessment of Social Housing Need (2002) found a total of 3,215 older people in need of social housing (this included 1,209 people classified under other categories of need, e.g. disabled, medical grounds or unfit accommodation) (Department of the Environment and Local Government, 2002).

18 Almost half of the projects that received funding approval under the Capital Assistance Scheme in 2000 and 2001 were for the accommodation of older people.

customer service. *The Team stressed the need to monitor age profiles within the Service and for the Department to be more proactive in identifying and addressing age equality issues.* The Department agreed with the Team that there was a strong case for the introduction of age awareness training within the Service.

- 3.25 The introduction of Civil Service equality policies is closely linked to the modernisation measures being adopted under the Strategic Management Initiative (SMI). Departments must now present in their Strategy Statements the measures they propose to adopt to improve equality of opportunity in their organisations. As Departments have also to report on the implementation of their Strategy Statements, progress on these issues will be monitored in the same way as the other elements of their Strategy. In addition, the equality policy documents make proposals on the specific steps that Departments can take in the main human resource management areas of recruitment, placement and mobility, training, promotion and work/life balance to support equality of opportunity.
- 3.26 The Civil Service Equality Unit in the Department is considering what further measures could be taken to reinforce the reporting arrangements that are already in place under the SMI. One approach that might be adopted is to ask Departments to report on the steps they had taken on equality issues and what measures they are planning to take in the future. Such a report would provide information and guidance on best practice for all Departments.
- 3.27 While the main focus of the above policies is the establishment of equal opportunity for staff working in Government Departments, the Department also referred to the Quality Customer Service (QCS) Initiative, which is aimed at bringing about a definite improvement in the way services are delivered to members of the public. Under this initiative, which is being managed by the Department of the Taoiseach, Departments must put in place a range of policies and procedures to ensure that their staff are both aware of and take account of the diverse needs of their customers. The Department confirmed that equality issues are now a major element in the development of QCS for all Departments.
- 3.28 The Team also raised with the Department the difficulties in co-ordinating services at a local level. The Department suggested that this was an issue that could be taken up by the Strategic Management Initiative.
- 3.29 As regards the recruitment and retention of older people, the Office of the Attorney General has advised the Department that Section 8 of the Civil Service Regulation Act, which sets a retiring age of 65 for the generality of civil servants, precludes the hiring of people over that age. The Human Resource Management (HRM) sub-group of the SMI Implementation Group of Secretaries General has identified a number of amendments to the Civil Service Regulation Act to modernise human resource practices in Government Departments. In the interest of employment flexibility, one of the proposals put forward would enable the hiring of people over the age of 65, at the discretion of the Head of the

Department or Office. The staff side is currently considering a general package of modernisation measures, including this proposal. This flexibility would not alter the current mandatory retirement age of 65.

3.30 The Department also explained that civil servants may be retained beyond the compulsory retirement age of 65 in certain circumstances. These conditions are set out in Department of Finance Circular Letter 13/75. In summary, officers may be retained only:

- to allow an officer increase his or her pension, lump sum or gratuity in cases where, within three months of the officer reaching maximum retiring age, averaging of salary would be avoided or a further increment or the maximum of the relevant scale would be reached, or
- on grounds of public interest, or
- on grounds of hardship.

3.31 The Equality Authority report recommended that pension abatement in the public service, when civil service and local authority pensioners go back to work in the Civil Service or Local Authorities respectively in the same area where they worked previously, should be reviewed by the Departments of Finance and the Environment and Local Government and the relevant trade unions. Under the abatement rules, an employee may receive an amount, made up of pay and pension, equal to the salary of the post that the person served in on his or her last day of pensionable service.

3.32 The Department recalled that the Commission on Public Service Pensions had reviewed all aspects of pensions in the public service, including abatement. In Section 15.15.12 of its final report, the Commission recommended that the present approach be retained, but that in circumstances where it was difficult for the public service to recruit staff because of a tight labour market, consideration could be given to changing the rules on abatement. The Department stated that the Government has accepted the general thrust of the Commission's recommendations.

Department of Health and Children

3.33 The Department welcomed the Equality Authority's report and the NESF's involvement in examining the implementation issues arising from it. The Team commented that implementation of the report should be assisted with the welcome appointment of a Minister of State with responsibility for Services for Older People, Mr. Ivor Callely, T.D. and his establishment of an Inter-Departmental Group on the Needs of Older People.¹⁹ The Team commended the aims of this Group and

¹⁹ The Group has representation from the Departments of Health and Children; Environment and Local Government; Social and Family Affairs; Enterprise, Trade and Employment; and Public Enterprise. Its terms of reference are: (a) to examine, on an Inter-Departmental basis, matters which impact on the lives of older people and to ensure that a co-ordinated approach is adopted in relation to them; (b) to examine on a priority basis areas of particular difficulty and ensure that appropriate action is taken to resolve these; (c) to follow up individual matters referred to it from time to time by the Minister of State; (d) to issue regular progress reports on its work.

particularly the focus on the development of an integrated action plan for all services for older people. The Department agreed to refer the Equality Authority report in relation to IT training/education needs of older people (recommendation 9.1) to the Group to consider progressing these.

- 3.34 The Department accepted the importance of involving older people in consultation and pinpointed the progress made in the establishment of Regional Advisory Panels/Co-ordinating Committees (including service providers and consumers) in this regard. Some Health Boards have already established such committees or consultative fora for older people, while others are in the process of doing so.
- 3.35 In relation to the need for clarity in relation to eligibility/entitlement, it was noted that the Government was examining this issue in relation to disability. *In relation to the specific case of older people, the Team underlined the need for equality of entitlement to quality care in both institutional and community settings; and in relation to services to support community living (including home helps, accommodation services, etc.) equality of entitlement within and across available services.* The Department cited the Ombudsman's interpretation of the Health Act, 1970 that any person in need of nursing home care has a statutory entitlement to the provision of that service by a Health Board.²⁰ The Department pointed out that its legal advice is at variance with this view but that the Health Strategy sets down a commitment to introduce new legislation to provide for clear statutory provisions on entitlement.
- 3.36 In relation to some of the other recommendations from the Equality Authority report, the Department argued that a political response was required. A case in point was medical card cover. In Budget 2001, the Government announced its intention to extend the eligibility for a medical card to all people aged 70 and over regardless of means, effective from 1 July 2001. The Equality Authority report recommended that this level of eligibility be extended to all over 65.
- 3.37 The Department noted that, as outlined in its Health Strategy *Quality and Fairness: A Health System for You* (2001), the Government is committed to broadening the scope of the eligibility framework through increasing the medical care income guidelines, the timing of which will have regard to the prevailing budgetary situation. These guidelines are revised annually in line with the Consumer Price Index. The issuing of medical cards is for decision by the CEOs in each Health Board area.
- 3.38 The Department felt that other recommendations may have industrial relations implications, for example, the inclusion of preventative health services for medical care holders in GP contracts, as the current scheme is predicated on a curative regime. The Department noted, however, that its Health Promotion Unit is supporting and participating in the development of the Healthy Ageing Programme with the National Council on Ageing and Older People. *On a related*

²⁰ See Ombudsman (2001).

point, the age limits which apply to the BreastCheck initiative was raised by the Team. This pilot initiative is currently targeted to those aged 50 – 64 only, but the consensus of the Team was that no such age limits should apply.

- 3.39 The needs of the most vulnerable older people were raised, particularly those in mental institutions. Members felt that an independent advocacy service was required. It was stated that Health Boards are currently at various stages of delivery in terms of introducing advocacy services. *Members, however, stressed the need for greater independent support for individual service users.*
- 3.40 The issue of standards and quality of long-term care was raised and the National Council on Ageing and Older People's proposed framework of standards was outlined. In its recent publication *A Framework for Quality in Long-Term Residential Care* (2000), the Council drew attention to the need for significant increases, in real terms, in financial resources for older people to ensure that they have access to community and residential services at levels appropriate to their needs and that these services are of a sufficiently high standard to deliver the benefits they were set up to achieve.²¹ The Council's Quality Framework is outlined in Box 3.1 opposite.
- 3.41 The *Health Strategy*, the Department said, has commitments to the development of national quality standards for community and long-term residential care of older people (Department of Health and Children, 2001: Action 63) and the establishment of the Social Services Inspectorate on a statutory basis. The remit of the Inspectorate will be extended to include residential care for people with disabilities and older people.
- 3.42 The Department envisaged that age awareness training will be undertaken as part of Sensitivity and Awareness Training on all the nine grounds set out in the Equality Acts, and it has had an exploratory meeting with the Equality Authority on this issue. The lack of sufficient trainers to undertake awareness training was flagged. A Team Member gave a practical example of the need for age awareness. This related to the need for staff making public announcements in hospitals, etc. to be more aware of the possibility of hearing problems among service users.
- 3.43 The Equality Authority report recommended that research and evaluations should, where relevant, build in age-related considerations and the Department referred to commitments in the Health Strategy to continue to develop support information and quality initiatives and the establishment of a Forum for Health and Social Care Research to advise on an agreed research agenda addressing the main objectives of the health service.

21 See Working Party on Services for the Elderly (1988) *The Years Ahead: A Policy for the Elderly*. Dublin: Stationery Office.

Box 3.1 A Framework for Quality in Long-Term Residential Care

- An authoritative statement of policy from the Department of Health and Children on prevention, assessment, rehabilitation and standards of care and on the maintenance of independence and dignity in continuing care is required.
- A uniform raising of standards throughout the long-term residential care sector, including in public facilities.
- An independent inspectorate of extended care facilities for older people within the Department, ideally within its new Social Services Inspectorate.
- The Department should require all long-term residential care institutions to produce a quality assurance policy statement and a quality assurance service plan. It should publish national quality standard guidelines for long-term care and introduce mechanisms to promote, encourage and foster quality assurance equally in all private, voluntary and health-board long-stay facilities.
- A representative working group on quality assurances in long-term residential care should be established.
- Research on, for example, effectiveness in long-term care in terms of availability and of admission waiting times as well as alternative community provision is needed.

Source: National Council on Ageing and Older People (2000: 20 – 23) A Framework for Quality in Long-term Residential Care for Older People in Ireland.

3.44 At present, all health insurers must offer ‘community rating’ which means that all adults pay the same for the same benefits. This is set to change with the commencement of the relevant section of the Health Insurance Act, 2001. The Equality Authority report called for a communication campaign to ensure that people are aware of the effect these changes may have on them. The Department noted that the regulations to give effect to this measure require positive affirmation by both Houses of the Oireachtas before they can be introduced and that before implementation the proposed changes will be widely publicised.

Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform

- 3.45 The Department began by outlining aspects of the Amsterdam Treaty of relevance to the Team's deliberations. Article 13 of the Treaty empowers the Council, acting unanimously, to take appropriate measures to combat discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation. During 2000, two Directives were adopted under Article 13 – the Race Directive (2000/43/EC) and the Framework Employment Directive (2000/78/EC).
- 3.46 The purpose of Directive 2000/43/EC (Race Directive) is to provide a flexible general framework for combating discrimination on the grounds of racial or ethnic origin in both the employment and non-employment areas. The proposed deadline for implementation was 19 July 2003. The purpose of Directive 2000/78/EC (Framework Employment Directive) is to provide a general framework for the prohibition of discrimination in relation to employment on grounds of religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation. This Directive must be implemented by 2 December 2003. In order to take account of particular conditions, Member States may, if necessary, have an additional 3 years from 2 December 2003 (i.e. to 2 December 2006) to implement the provisions of the Directive on age and disability discrimination. However, the Department stated that it is intended to implement these Directives, along with Directive 2002/73/EC (Gender Equal Treatment Directive), into national law within the next year.²²
- 3.47 Implementation of the Directives will necessitate amendments to the Employment Equality Act. In July 2002, a consultation document was issued to Government Departments, the Equality Authority, the Office of the Director of Equality Investigations, the Labour Court and the Social Partners inviting submissions in relation to the implementation of Directives 2000/43/EC (employment aspects) and 2000/78/EC. These submissions formed the basis of a consultation process which was completed at the end of 2002. Following this process, proposals for amendment of the Employment Equality Act, 1998 to give effect to the Directives are currently being drafted with a view to submitting them to Government. Any decision on the abolition of the upper age limit in the Employment Equality Act, the Department said, will be taken in this context.
- 3.48 The Equal Status Act, 2000²³ although it is mainly compliant with the Race Directive, some amendments will be required to effect transposition. Proposals for these amendments are currently being drafted with a view to submitting them to Government. The Race Directive does not allow for many exemptions and any

²² Employers (IBEC) are of the view that Ireland should wait until 2006 to transpose the EU Employment Directive that relates to age, to ensure that the correct approach is followed. In its view, Ireland should not be in position to have properly considered the issue before then as it involves not only a fundamental change to many different pieces of employment legislation but also has substantive implications for Government policies in the areas of social welfare and employment. Government, employers and trade unions will need time, therefore, to ensure that whatever changes (if any) are made are based on a full consideration of the issues involved so that all of the parties can make an informed decision.

²³ No upper age limit applies to this Act. In responding to a Team query about its impact, the Department stated that some complaints on the age ground have arisen, particularly in relation to insurance issues.

decision in relation to these would be taken in this context.

- 3.49 Regarding Department-wide responsibility for equality issues, the *Support Pack on Equality/ Diversity Aspects of the Quality Customer Service for the Civil and Public Service*, produced by the Strategic Management Initiative Quality Customer Service Working Group and the Equality Authority (2001) and *Diversity in the Civil Service: A Policy on Equality of Opportunity* produced by the Department of Finance (2002) were cited as useful publications. The Department agreed to advise its Corporate Affairs Unit of the need to ensure older people are represented on its Customer Panel.
- 3.50 The Team was particularly interested in policy regarding age limits. The Equality Authority report recommends that as a general principle, upper age limits should not apply unless there is objective justification. The Department suggested that the Inter-Departmental Working Group on the Needs of Older People (mentioned above) could be asked to examine the age limits applying to Ministerial appointments.
- 3.51 In relation to mainstreaming equality, the Department reported that it does have some monitoring functions, for example in relation to the Traveller Community and gender. Gender proofing is a requirement for all projects and programmes funded under the Irish National Development Plan 2000 – 2006 (NDP). Within the Department, the NDP Gender Equality Unit has been set up to support and advise policy makers and implementers on how to incorporate a gender equality perspective into the development, implementation and evaluation of policies. In addition, the Unit has advised on developing appropriate indicators to assess the gender impact of NDP spending. It also monitors how NDP commitments in the area of gender equality are being met.²⁴
- 3.52 Two pilot projects are underway regarding equality proofing, one in relation to lifelong learning (Members felt that this should not stop at age 65) and the other in relation to FÁS. Equality issues were also incorporated into the recently-completed City and County Development Boards' Strategy Plans. An assessment of the Plans was carried out by the Equality Authority (2003). It found a significant number of actions on the Age ground; and, specifically in relation to older people, these related to access to health, transport and accommodation supports.
- 3.53 The Department noted that age awareness was beginning to be developed and that good practice was evident in some Departments. The Team argued that this should form part of general staff training, covering all nine grounds.
- 3.54 At the time of the consultation meeting, the Department's Statement of Strategy was nearing completion, and the officials present understood that it was likely to cover equality issues in a similar manner to the previous Strategy.

24 For further details, see www.ndpgenderequality.ie. The Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform is also supporting gender mainstreaming under the Equality for Women Measure, which is funding seventy projects nation-wide. Funded activities include the development of gender mainstreaming strategies and employer reviews of the gender effects of their human resource policies.

Department of Social and Family Affairs

- 3.55 The Department outlined its consultation mechanisms, including: customer panels²⁵, surveys, a standardised comment and complaint system, ongoing staff training regarding customer relations and independent research on customer satisfaction levels. The Team's attention was drawn to the Department's Working Group on Correspondence, which has consulted with older people's organisations. The Department also consults with older people regarding policy issues, for example the Pre-Budget Forum, which the Team welcomed, and rolling reviews of official schemes. The consultation mechanisms under the National Anti-Poverty Strategy were also flagged as opportunities for relevant interests to be consulted. This process will include the Opinions of the NESF as well as the NAPS Social Inclusion Forum that will be convened annually by the NESF.
- 3.56 Members raised concerns about staff age awareness, commenting that this can be uneven. The Department agreed that there were different levels of knowledge among staff and agreed that age awareness will be included in the Department's current review of staff training programmes and will also be incorporated in its Information Seminars. It was also agreed that the Department should take account of any relevant points that came from the National Council on Ageing and Older People's recent publication (2002) and conference regarding health, social care and welfare services information needs. The Council considered that Citizen Information Centres should be a key information provider.
- 3.57 The Department also mentioned that it has organised a Forms Review Committee to ensure that its written information material is user-friendly and that it will be consulting older people organisations on this.
- 3.58 The Department stressed that pension rates were a matter for the Government to decide. Recent policy has been focused on achieving a minimum target rate of €127 per week for personal rate payments made to people 66 years and over by 2002, and this was exceeded by that date. The Government has set a target for the lowest basic pension of €200 per week to be achieved by 2007 and also by that time is committed to bringing the rate of payment for dependent spouses and partners, who are over 66 years of age, up to the level of the basic pension.
- 3.59 The Equality Authority report had recommended that the Homemakers Scheme be extended to allow for as many women as possible, who were obliged to leave the labour force on marriage, to qualify for pension entitlements in their own right. The qualifying conditions of the Homemakers Scheme were outlined and the Department stated that it would not of itself provide a pension payment for someone as the Scheme operates by disregarding time spent on caring duties (up to a maximum of 20 years) when a person's insurance record is being averaged for

25 Over 20 customer panel meetings with older people have been held since 1997.

pension purposes. In the circumstances, any allowance made under the Scheme would have to be combined with the requisite number of paid/credited contributions at the appropriate rate before a person would qualify for a pension.

- 3.60 The Department confirmed that this issue was being looked at as part of its Phase II Review of Contributory and Retirement Pensions, due this year, and agreed that the Equality Authority report would be considered in the drafting of that report.
- 3.61 Turning to work-life balance, the Department mentioned that the *Programme for Government* includes a reference to removing the retirement condition associated with the Retirement Pension that applies for just one year. Currently, people aged 65 cannot avail of this Pension unless they cease to be in insurable employment. This condition dates from the early 1970s when the scheme was introduced to bridge the gap between retirement at 65 years of age and the general pension age for social welfare purposes which at that time was 70 years of age. *The Team stressed the importance of personal choice in relation to work and retirement options* and noted that the identification and removal of options to those aged 65 and over to seek employment²⁶ is being pursued separately by Employer and Trade Union organisations, the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment and the Equality Authority.
- 3.62 As regards the recommendation to increase occupational pension cover from its present level of 50 per cent to at least 70 per cent of the workforce, the Department responded by stating that the new Personal Retirement Savings Accounts is the main vehicle designed to achieve this target.
- 3.63 The Equality Authority report drew attention to the importance of access to adequate transport to facilitate older people to remain living in the community. It recommended that a comprehensive package of transport and other arrangements be devised to ensure mobility for this age group. The Inter-Departmental Working Group on Rural Transport (2002) identified older people (and especially older women) as a priority target group having higher than average rural transport needs. In consultations with the Team, the Department of Social and Family Affairs explained that while it has responsibility for the Free Travel scheme, any expansion of the transport service was an issue for the newly-formed Department of Transport.²⁷ *The Team considered it imperative that the two Departments work together to improve access to transport for older people.*

26 Acknowledging that there should not be an additional cost to the older person, in relation to contributory State benefits or benefits from occupational pension schemes, in return for active participation in the labour market over the age of 65.

27 The Department of Transport is currently funding a Rural Transport Initiative. The operational phase of the Initiative was launched in November 2002 – 34 groups were selected for funding, and some eighty new transport services are in operation.

3.64 One of the Equality Authority report's recommendations was that Comhairle²⁸ should develop and support advocacy services for older people at local community level. Comhairle's current Strategic Plan sets objectives in relation to consultation, research and pilot projects and policy development to inform the planning of advocacy work in the future at national, regional and local level. It felt that it was important that the development of advocacy networks should include those organisations working with older people and that any development in this area should only happen within a code of good practice and in partnership with the individuals and organisations representing older people. *The Team drew attention to the difference between information provision and advocacy and argued that State agencies should particularly support the latter, given that this is undertaken primarily by the voluntary sector/older people's organisations themselves.*

Department of the Taoiseach

3.65 The Equality Authority report recommended that national social partnership arrangements should be reviewed to incorporate organisations representative of equality interests generally and older people in particular. The *Programme for Government* undertakes to review models of participation in the social partnership process, including participation of older people. The Department informed the Team that this review is currently underway.

3.66 In addition, the Department also said that, in general, through its involvement in the National Anti-Poverty Strategy process, it supports the development of policies that specifically target vulnerable groups, including older people. This would cover the identification of research and data issues that arise as part of NAPS and would also apply to older people.

Conclusions

3.67 The Team's consultation process with Departments has, on the whole, been very useful in ascertaining progress to-date in implementing the recommendations in the Equality Authority's report and identifying possible implementation barriers. The main undertakings and suggestions that were made by Departments in the above consultations with the Project Team are outlined, for ease of reference, in Box 3.1 opposite.

3.68 The next Section of the Report outlines the Team's views on over-arching barriers to policy implementation and achieving greater equality for Older People.

28 Comhairle is responsible for the provision of information, advice and advocacy on a broad range of social services to all citizens. It also contributes to the development of social policy, offers a range of services to support voluntary organisations and supports a network of 85 Citizens Information Centres.

**Box 3.1 Summary of Main Undertakings and Suggestions
by Government Departments²⁹
(References are to corresponding paragraph numbers in the Report)**

- 3.2 Full regard will be given to equality issues by the *Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs* in its review of schemes.
- 3.4 The *Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs* agreed to a Team suggestion that the Equality Sub-committee to the National Advisory Committee of the Community Development Support Programme could be asked to look at how the issues regarding older people could be addressed within the context of the Programme.
- 3.4 The *Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs* welcomes applications from older people's organisations to participate on the Rural Development Forum.
- 3.13 The *Department of Education and Science* agreed to provide a written reply to the Team.
- 3.16 The *Department of the Environment and Local Government* agreed to refer the recommendations in the Equality Authority report regarding the participation of older people and their organisations in mainstream policy-making to Local Authorities for observations and consideration.
- 3.24 The *Department of Finance* supported the case for the introduction of age awareness training within the Civil Service.
- 3.26 The Civil Service Equality Unit in the *Department of Finance* is considering what further steps could be taken to reinforce the reporting arrangements which are already in place under the Strategic Management Initiative, asking Departments to report on the steps they had taken on equality issues and what measures they were planning to take in future.
- 3.33 The *Department of Health and Children* agreed to refer for consideration the Equality Authority report in relation to IT training/education needs of older people (recommendation 9.1) to the Inter-Departmental Group on the Needs of Older People.
- 3.42 The *Department of Health and Children* envisaged that age awareness training will be undertaken as part of Sensitivity and Awareness Training on all nine grounds set out in the Equality Acts.

²⁹ Suggestions made by the Team, as a result of these consultations, are italicised in the text of this Section.

- 3.44 The *Department of Health and Children* will widely publicise changes to the current health insurance conditions ('community rating') prior to their implementation.
- 3.49 The *Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform* agreed to advise its Corporate Affairs Unit of the need to ensure that older people are represented on its Customer Panel.
- 3.50 The *Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform* suggested that the Inter-Departmental Working Group on the Needs of Older People could be asked to examine the age limits applying to Ministerial appointments.
- 3.56 The *Department of Social and Family Affairs* agreed to include age awareness in its review of staff training programmes and to take account of the National Council on Ageing and Older People's recent publication on Health, Social Care and Welfare Service Information Needs of Older People.
- 3.60 The *Department of Social and Family Affairs* agreed that the Equality Authority report would be considered in the drafting of the Phase II Review of Contributory and Retirement Pensions report.
- 3.65 The *Programme for Government* undertakes to review models of participation in the social partnership process, including participation of older people.

Section IV

Over-arching Points Regarding Barriers to Policy Implementation Issues

Over-arching Points Regarding Barriers to Policy Implementation Issues

- 4.1 Based on its consultations with Departments and subsequent consideration of the policy issues that had arisen, the following over-arching points are made in relation to barriers to policy implementation and achieving equality for Older People:
- 4.2 **Legislation on Entitlements** – The Team noted that legislation in relation to entitlements³⁰ to services has been promised for sometime now, most recently in the Health Strategy *Quality and Fairness: A Health Strategy for You* which committed that:
- Existing legislation will be reviewed to update and rationalise the framework for entitlement. The objective will be to provide a clear national framework for entitlement to health and personal social services.* (Department of Health and Children, 2001: 75)
- 4.3 Progress, however, has been sluggish and in relation to policy for older people a lack of consistency is evident between official policy, which is to support older people to live at home for as long as possible, and the reality, which is insufficient supports for many older people to exercise the choice of doing so. An inability to move beyond discretionary support to allocate sufficient funding to address all needs adequately was identified by the Team as the main barrier here. It also stressed the need to make more user-friendly information available to potential service users and develop better customer-centred services.
- 4.4 **Consultation Process** – the Team encountered varying levels of commitment across the Government Departments to the inclusion of older people in the consultative processes involved in policy development and implementation. Some Departments indicated that they had established panels of older people as part of their *Quality Customer Service* initiative, and were well-positioned, therefore, to respond to the views of older people on policy development and service delivery. Others had not done so, however, and were, therefore, less likely to be sufficiently sensitive to the particular needs of older people as a stakeholder group and as users of Departmental services.
- 4.5 **Age Limits** – the Team found that the continuing operation of age limits serves to disadvantage older people in a number of fundamental respects. For example, access to funding support for participation in further and continuing education is age-limited. In relation to education more generally, the Team was of the view that existing policy unduly accentuated education programmes associated with employment, and diminished thereby the place of education in support of the participation of older people in social and cultural activities.

30 See also NESF (2002) *Equity of Access to Hospital Care*. Forum Report Number 25.

- 4.6 Access to motor insurance is also age-limited, with most companies imposing additional age-related loadings on older people in response to an unsubstantiated higher risk – this can have the effect of diminishing the mobility of older people and their consequential opportunities for social interaction. Existing employment legislation with stipulated age limits affecting retirement and social insurance contributions also disadvantages those older people who wish to continue working beyond the age of 65. Obstacles to exercising that option successfully for this age group should be identified and removed as recommended in the Equality Authority report in discussions between the Social Partners.
- 4.7 However, as mentioned in the previous Section, Member States have been given the option to wait three years before implementing the Directive on age grounds, in order to take account of particular conditions. As the issue of a mandatory retirement age is a complex one, employers are of the view that Ireland will not be in a position to have considered the issue properly before then. This involves not only a fundamental change to many different pieces of employment legislation but it also has implications for Government policies in the areas of social welfare and employment. Government, employers and workers will need time to ensure that whatever changes (if any) are made are based on a full explanation of all of the issues so that all parties can make an informed decision on such a fundamental and complex matter.
- 4.8 Yet another example of age-limited policies arose in the area of healthcare. The current BreastCheck initiative operated by the Department of Health and Children is targeted at those aged between 50 – 64, although there would appear to be little conclusive evidence that those above this upper age limit are somehow less susceptible to the illness in question.
- 4.9 **Adequate Income** – the recommendation on income for older people in the Equality Authority’s report was that “*as a minimum the old age pension should be set at 34% of average industrial earnings.*” In its consultations with Government Departments, it was mentioned that in the current budgetary environment the likelihood of movement to implement this recommendation was slim. The Team was also informed that similar political misgivings arise in the case of the extension of the medical card to all over 65.
- 4.10 **Ageism and Social Attitudes** – the Team was pleased to note the efforts being made in some Departments to involve all staff in age-awareness training – particularly those engaged in front-line service roles. However, these endeavours are not uniform across the Civil Service and the Team believes that ageism, and ageist attitudes on the part of some public servants are likely to remain a barrier. Not enough emphasis is placed on age-awareness training and on equality training in general as an integral part of all staff training.

- 4.11 **Information for Older People** – two points were noted by the Team. The first relates to the need generally for more readily accessible information in relation to entitlements and schemes. In general the Team would like to see more emphasis on the “one-stop shop” concept as a means of facilitating older people seeking to access government services. In particular, the Team believes that absence of relevant information – at local level – could serve as a barrier to equality for older people. The role of Comhairle and of the network of Citizen Information Centres needs to be strengthened and more focused in this respect. The second point relates to the fact that some older people – perhaps because of diminished hearing or because of a lack of confidence in engaging with State bureaucracy – may require particular support in accessing information or in transacting their business. There is also the additional consideration that many of our older people have not gone beyond the Junior/Intermediate Certificate or equivalent in terms of education attainment (McCoy *et al.*, 2002).
- 4.12 **Cross-Departmental Working** – the Team welcomed the establishment of an Inter-Departmental Group on the Needs of Older People, chaired by a Minister of State at the Department of Health and Children. However, following its discussions with a number of Government Departments, the Team was still unsure if sufficient acknowledgement and emphasis was being placed on the need for cross-Departmental collaboration. A strong view prevailed that most areas of public policy of immediate concern to older people – housing, healthcare, mobility, income support, social inclusion, education – were essentially cross-cutting issues. As such it is unlikely that they can be fully addressed unless those Departments responsible for individual components of the policy matrix, deliberately seek to collaborate with their counterparts on the development and implementation of policy.
- 4.13 The establishment of the above Inter-Departmental Group represents a first step to tackle at least one enduring barrier to integrated policy implementation. It is, however, too early as yet to comment on the success or otherwise of this initiative. The Team remained mindful of the disjoint that can arise between the articulation of good intentions on this matter, and the day-to-day practicalities within Government Departments that can serve to limit the realisation of a fuller and more meaningful collaboration. Areas identified by the Team as examples of the need for collaborative working include the Departments of Social and Family Affairs and Transport in relation to Free Travel (especially in rural areas) and the Local Authorities and Health Boards in relation to accommodation and community care services.
- 4.14 On a related note, there is also a need for more effective integration and delivery of services at local level and the City/County Development Boards’ role should be explored for this purpose.

- 4.15 **Staff Retention** – the Team recalled a point made in consultation with some Departments that difficulties in the recruitment and retention of good staff could emerge as a barrier to implementation. Staff turnover can serve as a constraining feature in Departments, as investment in previous staff is lost, institutional memory across the Department is diminished, and negative attitudes (including behaviours discriminatory to older people) begin to re-emerge. While this may not represent an insurmountable barrier, it does, nevertheless, require constant monitoring and an ongoing investment in staff training (from training budgets that are likely to be under pressure in the future). A cross-Sectional and cross-Departmental focus on equality, however, means that good practice will move with staff.
- 4.16 **Monitoring Equality Implementation** – some concern was expressed in relation to day-to-day compliance with equality obligations at the level of the individual organisation. It was not clear to the Team from its discussion with Government Departments that arrangements existed within those Departments to monitor the extent to which their practices are compliant with their obligations under the Equality Legislation.
- 4.17 **Strategy Statements** – over the period of its discussions with Government Departments (October/November 2002), all Departments were engaged at that stage in the preparation of Strategy Statements for the period 2003-2005. In the course of these discussions, it was not possible, therefore, for the Team to establish to what extent the implementation of equality for older people was being mainstreamed in these new Statements of Strategy. This was of particular concern to the Team, as an explicit reference to equality of treatment for older people in these Statements would represent a valuable “hook” in the pursuit subsequently of implementation issues.
- 4.18 Equally, the omission of such a reference – or the inclusion of only a vague statement indicating a broad intent to comply with statutory obligations – could serve as a barrier to subsequent implementation. Any ambiguity surrounding the timeframe and detail of policy implementation can serve as a refuge for those who find it inconvenient (for the time being) to engage with a particular policy issue. In this respect, the tracking of equality implementation for older people – from the Statement of Strategy through to the detail of Business Plans – provides a better indication as to whether specific actions have been drawn up to support the implementation of equality for older people.
- 4.19 Another helpful approach would be the suggestion made by the Department of Finance, in its discussions with the Project Team (see Section III), that Departments be asked to report on the steps they had taken on equality issues and what measures they were planning to take in the future. Such a report would provide information and guidance on best practice for all Departments.

- 4.20 **Social Indicator Data** – the lack of social indicator data was cited as another possible barrier to implementation of the equality agenda for older people. It was argued that data deficiencies were evident across a range of areas from an understanding of demographic changes currently underway in society, through to specific policy areas such as the numbers of older people who act as carers, the numbers of older people involved in child-minding, the numbers of older people with literacy difficulties which limit their access to further education and participation in society generally, or the number and circumstances of older people living in rural areas. This makes the task of establishing targets and benchmarking progress impossible to undertake. In relation to accommodation, for example, it was noted that while only 5% of older people are resident in nursing homes, this form of accommodation can become a disproportionate focus of policy – perhaps to the detriment of the remaining 95% of older people who wish to remain in – and maintain – their own homes.
- 4.21 In making this point, the Team does not wish, however, to place such alternative approaches to accommodation in opposition to each other. It is certainly not intended to create a false dichotomy in this instance – which might seem only capable of being resolved once one approach was favoured over the other. Rather it is the purpose of the Team to emphasise that the design and delivery of services for older people should take full account of their particular needs and preferences. Above all, the articulation of official policy on older people’s issues must reflect the reality of older people’s circumstances. It appeared to the Team that there could, on occasion, be a lack of consistency between policy and reality.
- 4.22 **Literacy** – in discussion with Government Departments, access to education was presented as a key aspect of positive ageing – in terms of coping with change and the promotion of health in later life. Yet, as a social grouping, older people experience significant literacy difficulties that act as a barrier to accessing further education and participation in society generally. Increasingly, literacy around information and communication technologies has become important as a means of accessing and participating in education. In this respect, some older people have benefited from participation in the Community Application of Information Technology (CAIT) initiative, and this support was welcomed by the Team. However, it is likely that literacy problems – whether conventional literacy around reading/writing or a lack of familiarity with ITCs – could endure as a barrier to equality implementation in the future.
- 4.23 **Investment in People** – a further barrier to future equality implementation could emerge through a policy focus that emphasises access to healthcare – and particularly education – as an evidently worthwhile investment only in relation to people as productive assets. Economic expansion in recent years has tended to underline the importance of such investment as a priority area of public policy. Given the competing demands upon limited budgetary resources, it is conceivable that investment in education in particular may be prioritised and linked to a

perceived economic “pay-back”, rather than as an enabler of full participation in society for all social groups – including older people.

- 4.24 The eventual implementation of policy issues such as this, illustrates once again the importance of a strong monitoring mechanism to track the conversion of policy statements of intent into practical results on the ground – and the extent to which this is done in such a way as to be compliant with equality obligations. In the next Section, the Team recommends that the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform should undertake this overall monitoring role.

Section V

Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1 **Recommendations on Equality for Older People – *Implementing Equality for Older People*** made 72 recommendations across seven separate categories in support of equality for older people. These are summarised below in Box 5.1:

Box 5.1 Summary of Recommendations in *Implementing Equality for Older People*

Category	Number of Recommendations
1. Legal Status	5
2. General Upper Age Limits	8
3. Policy Making	10
4. Working	13
5. Income of Older People	6
6. Health and Community Services	18
7. Lifelong Learning	12
Total	72

5.2 Throughout its work, the Team was firmly of the view that it was not its purpose to re-state these recommendations, or to re-iterate their validity. Rather it has been the concern of the Team to consider these recommendations, to identify potential implementation barriers and challenges on the main priorities, and to reach conclusions on how best these might be addressed. It is the view of the Team that all 72 recommendations are important, that they are to be welcomed, and that older people expect them to be implemented. This expectation around implementation derives from five sources as follows:

- the promotion of equality for older people in an ageing society;
- many of the recommendations do not attract substantial cost implications;
- relevant commitments made in the Programme for Government;
- compliance with relevant equality legislation; and
- conformity with such relevant declarations of intent as are set out in Departmental Statements of Strategy.

5.3 In addition, the Team would also wish to record its clear expectation that those recommendations involving little or low cost, should be implemented as soon as possible.

- 5.4 **Moving Ahead on Implementation** – based on the foregoing considerations, it would be invidious to “prioritise” among the recommendations, or to strip them down to an A list and a residual B list. Equally, however, the Team is cognisant of the fact – based upon its discussions with representatives of a number of different Government Departments – that it would be an unfounded belief to imagine that all Departments will, as a matter of priority, proceed directly to implement all the recommendations pertaining to their respective areas of policy responsibility.
- 5.5 In fact, it is clear from these discussions that this will not happen. Consequently, it is more likely that organisations representing the interests of older people will need to maintain an activist stance in advocating and monitoring follow-up on these recommendations where some movement can be discerned, and in particular in identifying those others which are encountering a marked lethargy or indeed a downright opposition to their implementation.
- 5.6 In terms of adopting an activist stance in this regard, older people’s organisations need to establish an appropriate focus for their efforts. On a number of occasions in its discussions with Departmental representatives, the Team came up against references to the need for continuing “ministerial or political will”. The Team fully accepts the importance of political will to ensure the implementation of the recommendations of the Equality Authority report, and looks forward to seeing further evidence of this over the life of this Government. In general, it is clear that the appropriate Minister must be the proper focus for any subsequent engagement on matters requiring political will and direction for their eventual implementation. Such matters are more typically likely to arise in relation to recommendations having budgetary implications.
- 5.7 **Understanding the Barriers to Implementation** – the Team has identified two principal barriers to the implementation of the recommendations:
- the first relates to those recommendations that have direct budgetary implications – for example the recommendation relating to the provision of an adequate income for older people (7.2), or that relating to the provision of medical cards for all citizens over the age of 65 (8.10); and
 - the second relates to recommendations that carry no apparent budgetary implications, but which may nevertheless not be implemented because of organisational inertia, or because they have simply lost out in terms of priorities. While lack of action in respect of the first of these two categories may be at least understandable (if not excusable) because of the particular vulnerability of these recommendations to prevailing circumstances in the public finances, continuing lack of action in respect of the second category (involving little or no significant budgetary effects) is not acceptable.

- 5.8 **Addressing the Barriers: Recommendations for Change** – the terms of reference for the Project Team require it to make recommendations indicating how the barriers to implementing the equality agenda for older people may be addressed. In reflecting on this matter, the Team observed that some of the barriers identified were more problematic than others, and were therefore perhaps less susceptible to short-term resolution. Others, however, are less problematic. The implication of this comment is simply to underline the fact that while the Team is anxious to see progress in respect of all 72 recommendations, some could (and therefore should) be implemented immediately without any great difficulty or resource commitments. The Team considers that a lack of will – or a lack of interest – should not be allowed to stand as enduring barriers to implementing equality for older people. Some specific recommendations for change are outlined in the following paragraphs.
- 5.9 **Resource Implications** – the Team believes that all stakeholders with an interest in implementing equality for older people should acknowledge that this is not an agenda that is “resource free”. Nevertheless, cost cannot be offered as a reason for inaction. This is an agenda that cannot be ignored, particularly as Ireland’s population profile is projected to age over the coming years. This demographic pattern will inevitably carry cost implications, not only in terms of pension funding but also in respect of a wide range of support services that will be required by a greater number of older people in society.
- 5.10 A mature and informed debate is required, therefore, and one that acknowledges that cost is a factor in some instances, but in certain others all that may be required is a change in practice or the adoption of new approaches. An action plan for implementation is needed, therefore, to map out how the recommendations can realistically be implemented, and indicative timetables and monitoring mechanisms put in place to track progress and achievements.
- 5.11 Many of the recommendations have little cost implications, for example, age proofing, awareness training and greater consultation with older people, and **the Team recommends that these should be implemented as soon as possible.**
- 5.12 The *Programme for Government* already makes commitments in relation to implementing some of the remaining recommendations which do have cost implications, and the Team welcomes this.
- 5.13 In relation to the remainder, the Team believes that implementation will undoubtedly require some statement of political support. **The Team recommends, therefore, that an indication of political will should be made (on the part of the relevant Minister concerned), indicating the likely timeframe over which the resource-sensitive recommendations included in *Implementing Equality for Older People* will be implemented.** Lack of commitment on these matters – and the non-articulation of such a timeframe – could only be construed as reluctance on the part of Government to engage meaningfully in the implementation of the report.

5.14 **Monitoring and Evaluation** – the Team believes that the best way to address barriers is to establish some tracking mechanism whereby progress on implementation can be monitored. From its discussions with Government Departments, it was not evident to the Team that such monitoring arrangements are currently in place. **The Team recommends the following:**

- **All Government Departments (and indeed all State Agencies within the wider Public Service) should prepare and publish Equality Plans with timetables for action, mechanisms to track these Plans and to publish an Annual Statement of the measures they are adopting (or have adopted) to secure equality on all nine grounds, including age.**
- **For this purpose, all Departments should undertake equality reviews and the Equality Authority should develop a template as a support to preparing these Equality Plans.**
- **The Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, in consultation with the Equality Authority, should take an overview/monitoring role in relation to implementing equality for older people and should review Departmental annual reports, identify over-arching issues and comment generally on progress. It would be helpful if the findings emerging from this process were published by the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform as an annual statement on the implementation of the equality agenda across the Civil Service and laid before both Houses of the Oireachtas.**
- **The Team also recommends that it should be reconvened by the Forum in a year's time in order to review progress in this regard.**

5.15 **Ageism and Social Attitudes** – the Team is of the view that ageism remains a significant feature of social attitudes in our society as well as inter-personal relationships in the Civil Service. The Team also considers that this can be particularly pernicious as it is seldom overt, but rather remains as part of the “sub-text” of everyday social interaction. As such, it can mean that individuals carry expectations of what older people can and cannot do. These may not always be voiced but they can influence perceptions of older people – it is therefore important that, in their dealings with older people and in the formulation and implementation of policy affecting older people, civil servants are trained to be aware of ageist attitudes.

5.16 **The Team recommends that more investment should be made in age awareness training and in mainstreaming equality across all Government Departments. This should be a mandatory component of induction training provided to all civil servants, and appropriate refresher training should be made available to all relevant staff, including: front line staff dealing with the public (to help them provide a quality service to older people as customers), those involved in the development of relevant policy and others likely to be dealing with issues affecting older people.**

- 5.17 *Coordination and Cross-cutting Services* – older people in particular can suffer from ineffective coordination across Government Departments. This can result in a frustrating round of visits or phone calls to a number of different agencies, simply to obtain fuller information on what particular services may be available (or of how to access those services) in a particular policy area.
- 5.18 **The Team recommends, therefore, that where cross-cutting issues exist, Government Departments should:**
- **agree on the nature of the joint collaboration required;**
 - **nominate one Department as the “lead agency” on this policy issue;**
 - **work together to resolve policy implementation issues; and**
 - **be in a position to advise callers as to the name of the Individual/Section that can best advise them on the policy issue in question – including those aspects that are not properly within the remit of that official’s own Department.**
- 5.19 This might, for example, involve the Department of Social and Family Affairs leading on travel entitlements for older people (as opposed to crossing over to the Department of Transport), or the Health Boards leading on entitlement to accommodation (as opposed to crossing over to the Department of the Environment and Local Government).
- 5.20 *Staying in the Community* – the Team is strongly of the view that older people have a clear preference to remain within their communities for as long as possible, and to enjoy access to support services they may need within those communities. **The Team recommends, therefore, that an emphasis on “older people within their community” should be unambiguously established as a core value guiding the implementation of the recommendations in *Implementing Equality for Older People*. As a core value, this approach should be tested before any alternative policy responses are considered or adopted.**
- 5.21 *Data Sources and Research* – in its discussions with Government Departments, the Team was struck by the influence of applied research to move the agenda along in a particular sector. One example of this was that of the National Council on Ageing and Older People’s (2001) study of *Health and Social Services for Older People*, which consulted with older people regarding their preferences. The Team wishes to take this opportunity to acknowledge this valuable work, and to call for the continuation and expansion of this type of work.
- 5.22 Nevertheless, in some equality and related policy areas, a sense can prevail that – “we don’t yet know what we don’t know”. In other words, an absence of clarity and evidence-based research around a particular issue, can limit progress in dealing with it. To begin to address this deficiency, **the Team recommends that research and administrative data should be age-proofed and that upper age limits should be**

removed, for example in relation to education and mental health data collection.

In the meantime, the Team felt strongly that the absence of research should not be a block to making progress on implementing the Equality Authority's report.

- 5.23 ***Age-proofing of Policies and Programmes*** – it was evident to the Team that adequate age-proofing of policies and programmes has not yet begun to take place across Government Departments. For instance, in relation to health screening, adult education and customer consultation. Indeed, **the Team felt that Departments could do much more in terms of age-proofing policies and programmes in the context of equality proofing generally and recommends that this should be introduced across Departments straight away.**
- 5.24 **Next Steps** – from its discussions with representatives of Government Departments, the Team is not encouraged that early action can be anticipated in the implementation of each of the 72 recommendations. The Team accepts that in a period of budgetary restraint, it would be unrealistic to expect that some trade-offs would not be made in prioritising across different areas of public policy. Nevertheless, the Team is firmly of the view that in adopting an activist stance in pursuit of these recommendations, organisations representing the interests of older people are at least entitled to expect that they are afforded an opportunity to articulate their position, and to believe that their views have been given a fair hearing and are decided on their objective merits.
- 5.25 If for reasons of budgetary restriction, it is considered not feasible to move ahead immediately with the implementation of certain recommendations, representative organisations are entitled to have such a decision – and the supporting reasoning behind it – fully explained to them. Above all, however, older people should have a right to expect that those recommendations involving little public expenditure implications should be implemented quickly and that progress should be made on the remainder within a reasonable and specified timeframe. A commitment from Government Departments to articulate such timeframes would in itself mark a significant step forward.

Annexes

Annex I

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Annex II

Recommendations from the Equality Authority Report

Implementing Equality for Older People

Legal Status

- 3.1 In the context of an overall review of the Constitution, the changed wording for the equality clause proposed by the Constitution Review Group should be adopted.
- 3.2 There should be no upper age limit in the Employment Equality Act, 1998 as recommended in the submission of the Equality Authority to the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform on the review of discriminatory grounds covered by the Act. Also, the specific exceptions contained in subsections 17(3) and 17(4) of the Employment Equality Act, 1998 should be reviewed in the context of the transposition of the EU Directives on ‘racial’ equality and employment equality.
- 3.3 The opportunity provided by the transposition of the EU Directives on ‘racial’ equality and employment equality should be taken to review and amend the existing age provisions of the equality legislation and will require the removal of many of the existing statutory exclusions. A levelling up of provision in relation to all grounds should be maintained as the Directives are transposed into Irish equality legislation – both in the Employment Equality Act, 1998 and in the Equal Status Act, 2000.
- 3.4 The opportunity provided by the transposition of the two EU equality Directives should be taken, to introduce a statutory obligation into the Employment Equality Act, 1998 and the Equal Status Act, 2000, for Government Departments, local and regional public authorities and non-commercial public sector organisations to promote equality. In the meantime such an obligation should be introduced on an administrative basis.
- 3.5 The legislative changes recommended in this report and elsewhere should be introduced by changes in mainstream legislation and not in a single statute dealing with older people.

General Upper Age Limits

- 4.1 As a general principle, upper age limits should not apply unless there is objective justification.
- 4.2 There should be no upper age limit for membership of state bodies.
- 4.3 There should be no upper age limit for jury service but everyone over 65 should be excusable as of right.
- 4.4 We recommend that people aged between 60 and 70 should be charged the same per annum rate for their driving license as those under 60 who opt for 10 year licenses.

- 4.5 The proposed changes in health insurance rules on community rating should be the subject of a major information campaign, before the Health Insurance (Amendment) Act, 2001 is implemented, to ensure that people are aware of the problems they may subsequently encounter if they do not join a scheme before age 35.
- 4.6 The recommendations of the Motor Insurance Advisory Board insofar as they impact on the availability of motor insurance for those over 65 should be implemented as soon as possible and where relevant in consultation with older people and their organisations.
- 4.7 The terms of reference of the Motor Insurance Advisory Board should be extended or a separate mechanism established to consider the actuarial or other commercial basis, if any, for the loadings and exclusions experienced by older people in relation to travel insurance.
- 4.8 The Equality Authority should give priority to case work in these areas as part of its strategic enforcement approach.

Policy Making

- 5.1 Policy makers must adjust their consultative processes to allow for the participation of older people and their organisations in mainstream policy making, and in particular in areas where older people have not been involved traditionally.
- 5.2 Policy makers need to ensure that relevant staff engage in age awareness training to assist policy making that takes account of the experience, situation and identity of older people.
- 5.3 National social partnership arrangements should be reviewed to incorporate organisations representative of equality interests generally and older people in particular.
- 5.4 Equality proofing of policies should be widely deployed and should include age proofing.
- 5.5 Policy makers engaged in commissioning pure research, or in policy related research or evaluation should build age related considerations into research specifications where relevant and should consider whether specific research of relevance to older people is required.
- 5.6 Older people should be assisted by the Combat Poverty Agency as part of their national network programme in further developing appropriate national lobbying organisations. This assistance should involve capacity building and funding but must not be at the expense of any diminution of independence.
- 5.7 Older people and their organisations should negotiate common agendas and develop mechanisms to bring forward those agendas in order to be more fully and effectively involved in the policy process. In this work, systems of accountability need to be further developed and resourced within organisations of older people. In particular, systems need to be developed to allow for the representation of vulnerable older people by advocates if necessary.
- 5.8 Comhairle should develop and support advocacy services for older people at local community level.
- 5.9 The Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs should support the emergence and ongoing work of local community organisations of older people.
- 5.10 The Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs should consider, stimulate and support the emergence of community advocacy in this area as an important dimension to community development through the Community Development Programme.

Working

- 6.1 While acknowledging that it is possible for older people over the usual upper retirement age of 65 to seek employment at present, obstacles to exercising that option successfully for this age group should be identified on an ongoing basis by the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, Congress, IBEC and the Equality Authority and should be removed. There must not be a cost to the older person in relation to contributory state benefits or benefits from occupational pension schemes, in return for active participation in the labour force after the age of 65.
- 6.2 The upper age limits in the full range of employee protection legislation, for example, the Redundancy Payments Acts and the Unfair Dismissals Acts, should be reviewed by the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, Congress, IBEC and the Equality Authority in the context of the abolition of the upper age limit in the Employment Equality Act, 1998.
- 6.3 While acknowledging that older people in the age group 50-65 can seek employment at present, obstacles to exercising that option successfully for this age group should be identified on an ongoing basis by the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, Congress, IBEC and the Equality Authority and should be removed.
- 6.4 Imaginative efforts should continue to be made to increase coverage of occupational pension schemes to at least 70% of the workforce over the age of 30, building on the objective in the Programme for Prosperity and Fairness (Framework 1, Section 1.2, Page 13).
- 6.5 Work arrangements should be made more flexible in order to facilitate people who may wish to work part time or in other atypical ways. The solution to the problem of creating a new work life balance lies with government, employers, trade unions and employees. Particular efforts are required in order to facilitate older people (aged 50 to 65 or over 65) who may wish to work part time or in other atypical ways. All must cooperate to provide the supports necessary to enable older people to exercise their option to seek employment after the age of 65. Recruitment agencies in the private sector and FÁS in its placement work should seek to attract older clients under or over 65 offering themselves for employment whether that is for full-time or more flexible attendance patterns. The Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment should coordinate an initiative to facilitate phased retirement and to promote greater work life balance particularly for older workers.
- 6.6 When engaging in collective bargaining the social partners whether at the national or enterprise level should include measures to promote age equality and to facilitate phased retirement. One objective of such negotiations should be the development of workplace policies to facilitate workers up to the age of 65 to continue and develop in employment and to facilitate those who wish to seek employment after the usual upper retirement age of 65. The facilitation of those over the age of 65 must be done without adversely affecting state or occupational pension entitlements.
- 6.7 Equality training in the workplace for managers, trade unions and employees generally should include elements in relation to age awareness training.
- 6.8 Employers should be encouraged, in dialogue with trade unions and employees, to establish practical workplace policies to facilitate those seeking employment over the age of 65.
- 6.9 The rules about pension abatement in the public service when civil service and local authority pensioners go back to work in the civil service or the local authorities respectively should be reviewed by the Department of Finance, the Department of Environment and Local Government and the relevant trade unions.
- 6.10 People who are receiving the Pre-Retirement Allowance should be informed of the new arrangements which will make it easier for them to return to work.

- 6.11 Full use should be made of the positive action provisions in the equality legislation, which currently apply. Positive action in the provision of education and training for older people could facilitate their return to work. Amongst the issues identified as barriers to the return to work which might be addressed by positive action are engaging with the recruitment interview/selection process, perceptions of the age structure of particular organisations, and induction into the workplace.
- 6.12 FÁS should make further provision to assist the return to work of older people. This should involve new targeted training provision, and outreach initiatives by the employment services.
- 6.13 The Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment should coordinate the identification of a series of new initiatives targeting older workers and older people seeking to return to work in each annual national action plan under the EU Employment Guidelines.

Income of Older People

- 7.1 Older women and older men should have an adequate income from their pensions after the age of 65.
- 7.2 Older people and their organisations should be actively involved in determining what constitutes an adequate income. They should, therefore, have a major role in the formal and regular review of issues covered in the Income Adequacy Group Report under the monitoring and review structures of the Anti-Poverty Strategy. That process should take into account the particular needs of older people and the likelihood that older people will not have access to other sources of income. As a minimum the old age pension should be set at 34% of average industrial earnings, and continue to track this proportion, as recommended by the National Pensions Policy Initiative and as noted in the Programme for Prosperity and Fairness (Framework I, section 1.2, Page 13, Point 1).
- 7.3 The question of extending the Homemakers Scheme to older women – in particular those who were obliged to leave the labour force on marriage – should now be addressed with a view to allowing as many of the women concerned as possible to qualify for pension entitlements in their own right.
- 7.4 A system should be put in place to allow people retrospectively to buy social insurance contributions for pension purposes.
- 7.5 The qualifying age for the old age pension should be 65, thus abolishing the Retirement Pension.
- 7.6 The Department of Social and Family Affairs should build on its existing best practice in enhancing its consultations with older people and their organisations in relation to all aspects of their provision for older people, including rates of payment, conditions of schemes, means testing and the quality of service to the citizen. Relevant staff should engage in age awareness training. New information strategies should be developed that target older people.

Health and Community Services

- 8.1 The development of a coordinated action plan to meet the needs of ageing and older people outlined in the health strategy statement is endorsed. It should build on the objectives set out in *“The Years Ahead – A Policy for the Elderly”* and it should be needs driven and person centred.
- 8.2 The proposed coordinated action plan to meet the needs of ageing and older people should include special provisions for vulnerable older people. Proposals in relation to specific health promotion projects aimed at preserving and improving the quality of life of older people should also be included in the action plan.

- 8.3 Older people and their organisations should be involved in the development of the action plan for older people mentioned in the health strategy and in the implementation of the action points in the health strategy which have an impact on older people. This involvement should be with Health Boards, with the Department of Health and Children and with other relevant departments and service providers. Relevant staff should engage in age awareness training.
- 8.4 Community care should be underpinned by clear legislative entitlement and dedicated funding provided to ensure that this legislative entitlement is delivered. Amongst the community care services to be covered by this entitlement are home help, night sitting services, respite care inside and outside the home, day care and social activity centres, social work services for older people, community and domiciliary paramedical services especially chiropody, and day hospital care.
- 8.5 Older people and their organisations should be involved in the detailed negotiations around the new Care Allowance, and the funding of respite care should be included as one of the items to be funded under the new allowance.
- 8.6 The housing grant schemes should be seen as part of the core community services and should be underpinned by clear legislative entitlement. They should operate as nationally consistent schemes, administered by the local authorities, with accessible information and a statutory appeals system, and should be applied to all regardless of housing status.
- 8.7 Future housing surveys should undertake a comprehensive assessment of housing circumstances including the collection of data at household level of data on social, economic and tenure circumstances as well as physical characteristics of accommodation. This would enable the housing circumstances of older people in particular to be assessed more precisely, the demand for the different schemes to be forecast and appropriate budgets to be secured.
- 8.8 The needs of older people should be consciously included in establishing the level of investment in social or sheltered housing schemes and in the planning and implementation of any such schemes being considered now or in the future by local authorities or housing associations, in consultation with older people and their organisations.
- 8.9 A review of all relevant transport schemes should be carried out by the Department of Social and Family Affairs and a comprehensive package of transport and other arrangements should be devised to ensure mobility for older people in the community.
- 8.10 Medical cards should be available for everyone over the age of 65.
- 8.11 Preventative health services should be part of the service provided to medical card holders.
- 8.12 The proposed 7,000 day centre places should be provided in consultation with older people and their organisations, so that their full potential for service provision, social contact, information exchange and respite care can be realised.
- 8.13 Entitlement to long-term care should be clarified and there should be clear equality of entitlement for people who are cared for in the community.
- 8.14 The quality of long-term care places should be of paramount importance and core standards in this regard should be established by the Department of Health and Children in partnership with older people and their organisations.
- 8.15 The Department of Health and Children should establish an independent advocacy service for older people in or considering entering in to long-term care.

- 8.16 A clear information policy adapted to the needs of older people should be devised and implemented by the relevant service providers in relation to services, healthier lifestyles, and health promotion generally.
- 8.17 The information needs of older people availing of services should be catered for by relevant service providers, to enable them to make informed decisions in relation to their care. This may require the involvement of relatives or an advocacy service in some cases. There should be provision in relation to the particular information needs of carers of older people.
- 8.18 Formal, statutory appeals systems should be put in place for all health and community services.

Lifelong Learning

- 9.1 *The White Paper on Adult Education – Learning For Life* provisions on literacy and numeracy are very important. The proposed increase of learners in receipt of tuition by the adult education system from 13,000 to 18,000 by 2006 is central. The opportunity to avail of this tuition must be made available on an equal basis to older people (i.e. all those over 50) by the VECs, FAS and any other providers who incorporate literacy and numeracy modules into their training/education. This will require positive action, supported by the establishment of targets and indicators for participation and outcomes for older people.
- 9.2 Second level education providers, the VECs, and third level education institutions generally should take active measures to encourage older people to avail of formal education. Learning from existing supports for mature students and, where relevant, students with a disability is one means of developing such measures. Flexibility in the organisation of education provision and in the manner in which grants are made available should be considered. Research may also be required into needs, and barriers to meeting those needs in order to develop policies, programmes and practices to address the needs of older people and the particular barriers they face.
- 9.3 In the context of education/training for work the VECs and third level institutions generally should make relevant and specific targeted provision for older people attempting to return to work in unfamiliar work areas.
- 9.4 FÁS in partnership with employers and trade unions should adapt a number of traineeships to the specific needs of older workers, to facilitate their return to work.
- 9.5 FÁS in partnership with employers and trade unions should make provision for training initiatives for those in work targeting older workers, to facilitate their retention in changing workplaces, and to facilitate phased retirement.
- 9.6 Any organisation involved in the development and implementation of policies in relation to training/education of relevance to older people, involved in reviewing existing training/education provision, or in the development of new provision should draw on the experiences of older people through consultation with older people and their organisations. This should take place as part of an equality proofing exercise which includes an age proofing element.
- 9.7 FÁS, VECs, and third level education institutions generally should tailor some training and education provision specifically to the needs of older people through, for example, adopting appropriate adult learning models in teaching, ensuring the learning area is suitable for older people, focussing on subject areas of particular interest to older people, or providing courses on a part-time or modular basis.

- 9.8 Pre-service and in-service age awareness training should be provided to all involved in the provision of education and training.
- 9.9 The National Qualifications Authority of Ireland, the Further Education and Training Awards Authority (FETAC), and the Higher Education and Training Awards Authority (HETAC), should ensure a coherent certification system with accreditation of prior learning, and transferable credits from one institution to another or from one course to another.
- 9.10 FÁS, VECs, and third level education institutions generally should address the training/education needs of older people in relation to IT. Local authorities and Health Boards, possibly in partnership with third level institutions with appropriate expertise, should explore the possibility of providing assistive technology for older people in communities as well as for individuals – for example, voice recognition software, and video links to assist the provision of services and expertise in more remote areas.
- 9.11 Information in relation to education and training generally and those courses targeted at the needs of older people, either because of subject matter, structure of course (e.g. modular, part-time, more flexible opening hours), or teaching methodologies, should be provided to older people in accessible formats and in places accessible to older people, by FÁS, VECs and third level institutions generally.
- 9.12 Appropriate older people’s organisations should be resourced by bodies such as FÁS, VECs, or Health Boards, to provide education and training relevant to the needs of older people or particular categories of older people.

Annex III

Project Team on Implementing Equality for Older People

Terms of Reference

The Project Team on Implementing Equality for Older People will consult relevant Government Departments and other bodies regarding implementation of the main recommendations of the Equality Authority's recent report – 'Implementing Equality for Older People'.

The Team will, adopting a problem-solving approach, pay particular attention to identifying potential implementation barriers and challenges on the main priorities, as identified by the Team, and comment and make recommendations on how these may be addressed.

Once established, the Team will report back its findings and recommendations to the Forum within six months.

Terms of Reference and Constitution of the Forum

1. The main task of the Forum will be:
 - to monitor and analyse the implementation of specific measures and programmes identified in the context of social partnership arrangements, especially those concerned with the achievement of equality and social inclusion;
 - to do so through consideration of reports prepared by teams comprising the social partners, with appropriate expertise and representatives of relevant Departments and agencies and its own Secretariat;
 - with reports to be published by the Forum with such comments as may be considered appropriate; and
 - to ensure that the teams compiling such reports take account of the experience of implementing bodies and customers/clients, including regional variations in such experience.
2. The Forum may consider such policy issues on its own initiative or at the request of the Government.
3. Membership of the Forum will comprise representatives from the following four strands:
 - the Oireachtas;
 - employer, trade unions and farm organisations;
 - the voluntary and community sector; and
 - central government, local government and independents.
4. The terms of office of members will be for an initial period of at least two years during which alternates may be nominated. Casual vacancies will be filled by the nominating body or the Government as appropriate and members so appointed shall hold office until the expiry of the current term of office of all members. Retiring members will be eligible for re-appointment.
5. The Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson of the Forum will be appointed by the Government.
6. The Forum will decide on its own internal structures and working arrangements.
7. The Forum will be under the aegis of the Department of the Taoiseach and funded through a Grant-in-Aid which will be part of the overall Estimate for that Department. The annual accounts of the Forum will be submitted for audit to the Comptroller and Auditor General.
8. Finally, the staffing and conditions of employment of the Forum's Secretariat will be subject to the approval of the Department of the Taoiseach.

Membership of the Forum*

Independent Chairperson: Maureen Gaffney

Deputy Chairperson: Mary Doyle

(i) Oireachtas

Fianna Fáil:

Noel Ahern T.D.
Seán Haughey T.D.
Beverley Cooper-Flynn T.D.
Michael Kitt T.D.
Senator Margaret Cox
Senator Pascal Mooney

Fine Gael:

Gerry Reynolds T.D.
Paul McGrath T.D.
Bill Timmins T.D.
Senator Mary Jackman
Senator Therese Ridge

Labour:

Derek McDowell T.D.
Senator Joe Costello

Progressive Democrats:

Senator Jim Gibbons

Independents:

Michael Lowry T.D.

(ii) Employer/Trade Unions

(a) *Employer/Business Organisations:*

IBEC:

Jackie Harrison
Heidi Loughheed

Small Firms Association:

Pat Delaney

Construction Industry Federation:

Mirette Corboy

Chambers of Commerce/Tourist
Industry/Exporters Association:

Carmel Mulroy

(b) *Trade Unions:*

Eamonn Devoy
Blair Horan
Jerry Shanahan
Manus O’Riordan
Paula Carey

*The membership shown was that at the time work on this report was initiated.

(c) *Agricultural/Farming Organisations:*

Irish Farmers Association:	Betty Murphy
Irish Creamery Milk Suppliers Association:	Pat O'Rourke
Irish Co-Operative Organisation Society:	Seamus O'Donoghue
Macra na Feirme:	Eileen Doyle
Irish Country Womens Association:	Breda Raggett

(iii) Community and Voluntary Sector

<i>Women's Organisations:</i>	Gráinne Healy Susan McNaughton Joanna McMinn
<i>Unemployed:</i>	Eric Conroy Joan Condon Mary Murphy
<i>Disadvantaged:</i>	Joe Gallagher Frances Byrne Janice Ransom
<i>Youth:</i>	Valerie Duffy
<i>Older People:</i>	Paddy Donegan
<i>Disability:</i>	John Dolan
<i>Environment:</i>	Jeanne Meldon
<i>Others:</i>	Fr. Seán Healy Audry Deane

(iv) Central Government, Local Government and Independents

(a) *Central Government*

Secretary-General, Department of Finance
Secretary-General, Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment
Secretary-General, Department of Social, and Family Affairs
Secretary-General, Department of Tourism, Sport and Recreation
Secretary-General, Department of the Environment and Local Government

(b) *Local Government*

General Council of County Councils: Councillor Constance Hanniffy
Councillor Tom Kelleher
Councillor Patsy Treanor

Association of Municipal Authorities: Councillor Tadhg Curtis

County and City Managers Association: Donal O'Donoghue

(c) *Independents*

Professor Gearóid Ó Tuathaigh, National University of Ireland, Galway

Ms. Marian Vickers, Northside Partnership

Ms. Helen Johnston, Surg Equipment Ltd.

Mr. Niall Fitzduff, Rural Communities Network

Ms. Noreen Kearney, Trinity College, Dublin

Secretariat

Director: Seán Ó hÉigearthaigh

Policy Analysts: Sarah Craig
David Silke
Gerard Walker

Executive Secretary: Paula Hennelly

Forum Publications

(i) Forum Reports

Report No.	Title	Date
1.	<i>Negotiations on a Successor Agreement to the PESP</i>	November 1993
2.	<i>National Development Plan 1994 – 1999</i>	November 1993
3.	<i>Commission on Social Welfare – Outstanding recommendations</i>	January 1994
4.	<i>Ending Long-term Unemployment</i>	June 1994
5.	<i>Income Maintenance Strategies</i>	July 1994
6.	<i>Quality Delivery of Social Services</i>	February 1995
7.	<i>Jobs Potential of Services Sector</i>	April 1995
8.	<i>First Periodic Report on the Work of the Forum</i>	May 1995
9.	<i>Jobs Potential of Work Sharing</i>	January 1996
10.	<i>Equality Proofing Issues</i>	February 1996
11.	<i>Early School Leavers and Youth Employment</i>	January 1997
12.	<i>Rural Renewal – Combating Social Exclusion</i>	March 1997
13.	<i>Unemployment Statistics</i>	May 1997
14.	<i>Self-Employment, Enterprise and Social Inclusion</i>	October 1997
15.	<i>Second Periodic Report on the Work of the Forum</i>	November 1997
16.	<i>A Framework for Partnership – Enriching Strategic Consensus through Participation</i>	December 1997
17.	<i>Enhancing the Effectiveness of the Local Employment Service</i>	March 2000
18.	<i>Social and Affordable Housing and Accommodation: Building the Future</i>	September 2000
19.	<i>Alleviating Labour Shortages</i>	November 2000
20.	<i>Lone Parents</i>	July 2001
21.	<i>Third Periodic Report on the Work of the Forum</i>	November 2001
22.	<i>Re-integration of Prisoners</i>	January 2002

23.	<i>A Strategic Policy Framework for Equality Issues</i>	March 2002
24.	<i>Early School Leavers</i>	March 2002
25.	<i>Equity of Access to Hospital Care</i>	July 2002
26.	<i>Labour Market Issues for Older Workers</i>	February 2003
27.	<i>Equality Policies for Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual People: Implementation Issues</i>	April 2003
28.	<i>The Policy Implications of Social Capital</i>	June 2003
29.	<i>Equality Policies for Older People Implementation Issues</i>	July 2003

(ii) Forum Opinions

Opinion No.	Title	Date
1.	<i>Interim Report of the Task Force on Long-term Unemployment</i>	March 1995
2.	<i>National Anti-Poverty Strategy</i>	January 1996
3.	<i>Long-term Unemployment Initiatives</i>	April 1996
4.	<i>Post PCW Negotiations – A New Deal?</i>	August 1996
5.	<i>Employment Equality Bill</i>	December 1996
6.	<i>Pensions Policy Issues</i>	October 1997
7.	<i>Local Development Issues</i>	October 1999
8.	<i>The National Anti-Poverty Strategy</i>	August 2000

(iii) Forum Opinions under the Monitoring Procedures of Partnership 2000

Opinion No.	Title	Date
1.	<i>Development of the Equality Provisions</i>	November 1997
2.	<i>Targeted Employment and Training Measures</i>	November 1997

(iv) NAPS Social Inclusion Forum: Conference Reports

1.	<i>Inaugural Meeting on 30th January 2003</i>
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