

DEFENCE FORCES

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY

And

EQUAL STATUS POLICIES

Issued by Human Resource Management Section

On behalf of the

Deputy Chief of Staff (Support)

Foreword: Deputy Chief of Staff (Support)

**DEFENCE FORCES
EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND
EQUAL STATUS POLICIES**

Our first Equality policy and Equal Status policy was introduced in December of 2006. Today, we are introducing newer and amended versions. The recommendations of Brigade and Formation Commanders have been taken into consideration in these new versions.

It is fitting that we introduce these amended policies at this time when 2007 has been declared the European “Year of Equal Opportunities”. The purpose of the “Year of Equal Opportunities”, launched in Berlin in January, is to celebrate progress in the promotion of equality and to support a renewed commitment across all sectors of Irish and European society towards a more equal and diverse Europe. The Defence Forces is an equal opportunities employer and is fully committed to the values of equal opportunities in all its procedures, regulations and employment policies and will function in a discrimination free environment, which these policies are designed to create.

These amended policies demonstrate that the Defence Forces continues to fully commit to its equality and diversity agenda. Our Equality, Diversity and Equal Status policies are integral to all our policies, functions and services.

Our people are our most important asset. The Defence Force’s contribution to fulfilling government decisions must come from the combined best endeavours of each individual. Therefore, it behoves each one of us to ensure that nobody in the Defence Forces suffers any indignity or is subject to any forms of racism, harassment, sexual harassment, discrimination or bullying. It is also equally important that members of the Defence Forces treat all personnel, both at home and abroad with equal respect and dignity.

The Defence Forces will create a culture that encourages and enables potential recruitment from all sectors of Irish society. The elimination of any perceived or real barriers of discrimination, prejudice, fear or misunderstanding is essential for a new Defence Forces moving forward in an evolving and multi cultural Irish society. This will also promote operational effectiveness.

Life in the Defence Forces is anything but ordinary. Personnel are expected to deploy at home and abroad for extended periods and sometimes in harsh environments and in areas of armed conflict.

Each one of us must ensure that the intent and ethos of the Equality, Diversity and Equal Status policies are pursued and that we have a Defence Forces worthy of serving the Irish State in the twenty first Century.

Pat O’ Sullivan

DEFENCE FORCES EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICIES

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CHAPTER 1. DEFENCE FORCES EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY STATEMENT

1.1 Background

Life in the Defence Forces is indeed less ordinary. Personnel can expect to operate for extended periods at home and abroad, at sea and in the air in harsh and difficult terrain, with extremes of climatic conditions and in areas of armed conflict. As members of trained Units, all ranks are required to undertake operations that are demanding, and possibly life threatening, in order to realise the mission. A wide-ranging number of Human Resource initiatives have been introduced over the past five (5) years, particularly in regard to developing positive work relations and a safe and supportive work environment. These policies mark the latest development in this area and commit the Defence Forces to mainstreaming equality at every level in the organisation.

The legislative foundation for equality in the workplace are the Employment Equality Acts, 1998 & 2004 (known as The Equality Acts) which promote equality and prohibit discrimination in the workplace across the seven (7) grounds applicable to the Defence Forces of gender; marital status, family status, sexual orientation, race, religion and membership of the Traveller community (the Defence Forces has a derogation from the grounds of age and disability). It is from this foundation that further steps can be taken to further equality in the Defence Forces.

The Equality Acts also define and deal with harassment, sexual harassment and bullying. Interpersonal Relationships in the Defence Forces (Administrative Instruction A7, Ch 1), outlines policy and procedures regarding interpersonal relationships in the Defence Forces in order to deter unacceptable behaviour and promote a service environment based on mutual respect, equality and professionalism. Complaints relating to harassment, sexual harassment and bullying should normally be made under the procedures outlined in Administrative Instruction A7, Ch 1.

1.2 Policy Statement

The Defence Forces will operate in an environment without discrimination in areas as provided by the Equality Acts and will ensure that the principles of employment equality are implemented in recruitment, promotion, training and work experience. All regulations and Administrative Instructions concerning service in the Defence Forces will be set out in a manner consistent with this policy of equal opportunity, diversity and non-tolerance of racism. These policies will be reviewed along with Defence Force Regulations on an ongoing basis by the Deputy Chief of Staff (Support) to ensure compliance with best practice and to maintain a working environment that treats all members of the Defence Forces in a manner consistent with equal opportunities. The issue of dissemination of Defence Forces Equality, Diversity and Equal Status policies is crucial to its success. Our Policies apply equally to the Reserve Defence Force (RDF). The Defence Forces is committed to the principles of equal opportunities in all its employment policies, procedures, regulations, deters unacceptable behaviour and promotes a service environment based on mutual respect, equality and professionalism.

1.3 Equality in the Defence Forces - Chapters

Equality in the Defence Forces will be covered under the following headings:

- Gender, Diversity and Anti Racism (Chapter 2).
- Organising for Equality in the Defence Forces (Chapter 3).
- Equality of Opportunity in Recruitment and Advertising of Jobs (Chapter 4).
- Equality of Opportunity in the Interview Process (Chapter 5).
- Equality of Opportunity in Job Orientation and Job Induction (Chapter 6).
- Equality of Opportunity in Daily Routine, Overseas Service, Career Promotion and Progression (Chapter 7).

- Interpersonal Relationships in the Defence Forces (Chapter 8).
- Redress and Protection (Chapter 9).
- Human Rights and Gender Based Violence (Chapter 10)

CHAPTER 2. GENDER, DIVERSITY AND ANTI RACISM

2.1 Gender Equality Policy

2.1.1 The Defence Forces, as a career, is open to both female and male applicants. The Defence Forces encourages its women and men to attain successes and achieve a rank commensurate with their ability and merit. Defence Forces policy is gender friendly and this is evident in all its chapters of these policies, i.e. equality of opportunity, recruitment, job advertisements, interview processes, overseas, career promotion and advancement.

2.1.2 Discrimination, on grounds of gender, is prohibited. The Defence Forces Equality Policies are equally supportive of both men and women. Women and men have equal opportunities for employment and for advancement on the basis of merit and ability. Differences between women and men will not be used unjustly or unfairly to favour a man over a woman or visa versa. It is unacceptable to promote someone simply because they are a woman or a man. Society recognises that men and women, from a biological standpoint, may differ in view and approach to problem solving. Such an approach may provide a more varied method of dealing with daily routine and non-routine tasks. This difference or gender perspective is encouraged.

2.1.3 Equality legislation allows measures to promote equal opportunity for men and women by removing existing inequalities, which affect women's opportunities in access to employment, vocational training, promotion and working conditions. The ethos and spirit of the Defence Forces promote such measures. The Defence Forces Equality Officer and Brigade and Formation Equality Officers must monitor and ensure that policies are implemented in a uniform manner.

2.2 Management of Cultural Diversity Equality Policy

2.2.1 Diversity means to be different. Discrimination, on grounds of diversity, is prohibited. The Defence Forces organisational approach to the challenge of embracing a national changing demographic profile and providing for multiculturalism within the organisation is both proactive and efficient. Diversity is also emphasized and encouraged in the Defence Forces Customer Service Action Plan of 2001. Individuals are valued for their abilities regardless of their race, religion, ethnic background, gender and /or sexual orientation. The Defence Forces is an integrated workplace where persons from diverse backgrounds will not be discriminated against and will have equal opportunities for employment and advancement.

2.2.2 Cultural Diversity Management is a relatively new and complex area, both in civilian and military life. While our organisational approach embraces diversity, it is incumbent on the Defence Forces, as leaders and managers, to continually review our procedures and ensure that our policies are up to date and in accordance with best practice. The Defence Forces can create a culture which encourages and enables people throughout society to join, make distinctive contributions, achieve their full potential, and which does not tolerate any form of intimidation, humiliation, harassment, sexual harassment, bullying or discrimination. This will ensure that each individual is treated fairly, with dignity and respect. These approaches will break down any perceived or real barriers, which can damage operational effectiveness. The Defence Forces will be proactive in managing diversity rather than being reactive. Harnessing the talents and skills of individuals from different backgrounds/groups can actually enhance operational effectiveness.

2.2.3 Defence Forces commitment to diversity will also be reflected in our recruitment publications. Personnel from ethnically diverse backgrounds will feature in advertising literature

campaigns. Our continuous recruitment policy embraces the concept of equality and diversity. The policy is to recruit both EU and non-EU nationals provided that they satisfy the residency/work requirements as laid down by the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform and the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, as well as meeting the medical fitness standards, educational Personnel from ethnically diverse backgrounds will feature in advertising literature campaigns standards and good conduct required of all potential members of the Defence Forces. It is important to ensure that recruitment policy facilitates recruitment from among cultural and ethnic minorities. .

2.2.4 Recruitment Section in Human Resource Management (HRM) Section will liaise with ethical and cultural groups in the State. Such liaison can assist in ensuring that our policy of a supporting a multicultural Defence Forces reaches such groups. This can also reflect the organisation as being progressive and proactive with regard to cultural and ethnic diversity.

2.2.5 Building an integrated, cohesive and diverse Defence Forces, which mirrors Irish society in general, requires more than compliance with legislation and Administrative Instruction A7, Ch 1. This challenge must be embraced and Commanders at all levels must be seen to support and adopt policy. Reviews will be periodically carried out and procedures monitored by the Officer in Charge (OIC) Recruitment Section and the Equality Officer in HRM Section, Defence Forces Headquarters (DFHQ). Diversity is very closely associated with the Defence Forces Anti Racism Equality policy.

2.3 Anti Racism Equality PolicyEquality

2.3.1 The Defence Forces operates in a diverse Irish society and in a multinational, multi ethnic international arena. Racism is a specific form of discrimination and exclusion faced by minority groups. It is based on the spurious assumption that some 'races' are inherently superior to others because of different skin colour, nationality, ethnic or cultural background. In effect, racism deprives people of their basic human rights, dignity and respect. Racism can potentially damage social and economic cohesion. Racism will not be tolerated in the Defence Forces.

2.3.2 The National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism (NCCRI), in conjunction with the Equality Authority, has produced an. overall national framework for an awareness programme. This programme coordinates activities to address racism, both at national and local level. The Defence Forces has participated in a number of such initiatives over recent years. The focus on these organised activities is to raise an educational awareness through the media, communications and public education. An awareness programme increases our understanding of racism, inform the Defence Forces of what racism is and how to recognise it in its various forms. This will also contribute to our knowledge of how to respond to and discourage racism. It is not sufficient to recognise racial tendencies, what is important is to deal with any such concerns immediately.

2.3.3 T an policyhe Defence Forces Dignity Charter clearly enunciates the requirement for all Defence Force personnel to uphold values of tolerance, dignity and understanding and to respect the right of each individual to dignity in their work environment and in all activities of their service. The Dignity Charter should be placed in prominent positions in barrack locations. Interview boards for new entrants should be briefed on Defence Forces policies of diversity and racism. The Defence Forces Equality Officer and the Brigade/Formation Equality Officers will be proactive in addressing potential racism, by engendering mutual respect, through awareness briefings on racism, in conjunction with ongoing briefings on A7, Chapter 1.

It also allows measures to facilitate the integration into employment of persons from a diverse background

CHAPTER 3. ORGANISING FOR EQUALITY WITHIN THE DEFENCE FORCES

3.1 Discrimination and Promotion of Equality

The Equality Acts promote equality of opportunity and prohibits discrimination in the Defence Forces across the seven (7) grounds of gender, marital status, family status, sexual orientation, race, religion, and membership of the Traveller community. The Defence Forces have policies, practices and procedures in place to prevent discrimination and to promote equality. Defence Forces Equality and Diversity Policies are not an end in itself, but a means to an end. It provides the foundation for a workplace culture of equality and a workplace characterised by equality outcomes. Each Brigade and Formation will appoint a Staff Officer with responsibility for Equality matters in order to assist a progressive implementation of Defence Forces policy

3.2 Responsibilities

‘We are all responsible, as soldiers, for ensuring equality happens’.

3.2.1 General Staff, Brigade/Formation Commanders and Directorates

- Provide leadership in developing an organisational culture, which supports Equality in the Defence Forces.
- Ensuring that equality of opportunity is a central concern and that equality is mainstreamed in all Defence Forces policies, strategies, instructions and regulations.
- Creating awareness at all levels of the issues and the benefits of equal opportunity policies, including family-friendly working arrangements.
- Ensuring that instructions to counter harassment, sexual harassment and bullying are supported and implemented.
- Ensuring that training is undertaken to support the implementation and ownership of equality in the Defence Forces.

- Setting strategic objectives and equality goals for the advancement of gender equality over a specific period of time.
- Developing gender and diversity equality action plans to encourage the promotion of gender balance and diversity in the Defence Forces.
- Ensuring that family-friendly measures are developed in the context of the Defence Forces ethos and available to serving personnel.

3.2.2 Unit Commanders, Section Heads and Brigade/Formation Equality Officers/Staffs

- Taking a proactive role in ensuring effective implementation of equality in their areas of command.
- Ensuring that serving personnel are aware of their responsibility to treat colleagues fairly, with respect and not to discriminate against them on any of the seven (7) grounds.
- Ensuring a working environment free of harassment, sexual harassment and bullying.
- Supporting serving personnel in their career and personal development.
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- Provision of family-friendly measures for serving personnel in the context of Defence Forces ethos.

3.2.3 Serving Personnel

- Adhering to the Defence Forces Dignity Charter.
- Treating colleagues with respect and not discriminating against colleagues on any of the seven (7) grounds applicable to the Defence Forces.
- Being familiar with 'Interpersonal Relationships in the Defence Forces' administrative instruction on harassment, sexual harassment and bullying.
- Using non-discriminatory language in all communications, documents, publications, E-mails, etc for internal and external use.
- Availing of career opportunities for promotion and advancement.
- Taking part in training and development programmes.

3.2.4 Human Resource Management Section

- Supporting General Staff, Brigade/Formation Commanders, DFHQ Sections, Unit Commanders, Section Heads and Brigade/Formation Staffs and Serving Personnel in the implementation of equality in the Defence Forces.
- Supporting General Staff, Brigade/Formation Commanders, DFHQ Sections, Unit Commanders, Section Heads and Brigade/Formation Staffs and Serving Personnel in the implementation of procedures for countering harassment, sexual harassment and bullying complaints.
- Reviewing Human Resource Management policies, practices and regulations to ensure that they effectively support equality of opportunity.
- Developing effective communication mechanisms on equality initiatives.
- Appointing an Equality Officer in HRM Section.

3.3 Defence Forces Equality Officer

The Director of HRM Section will appoint a senior officer from within HRMS to the appointment as the Defence Forces Equality Officer.

3.3.1 The Equality Officer responsibilities are:

- Advise D COS (Sp) and D HRMS on equality related issues,
- Implement equality-related actions,
- Liaise and co-ordinate with Brigades/Formations and DFHQ on equality related issues,
- Organise equality training and awareness,

- Arrange the distribution of literature on equal opportunities from HRM Section and the Equality Authority,
- Monitor the implementation of all Equality Policy.
- Review the Equality, Diversity and Equal Status Policies annually.

3.4 Promoting the Defence Forces Equality Policy

Defence Forces policies will be communicated at every level in our organisation and to all agents, suppliers and contracting agencies in a range of formats and through various media. The Defence Forces HRM Section annual report will include a section on equality. The Defence Forces New Entrants Information Handbook will contain a section on Equality and include extracts from the Defence Forces policies on equality, Diversity and equal status. Equality Policies will be issued, available in Units, Brigade/Formations and sections and on the Defence Forces Intranet.

3.5 Training for Equality

Training, information and briefings in relation to equality of opportunity will be provided to personnel at all levels of the organisation. Equality awareness briefings will be included on all basic training syllabi, on all career courses, leadership seminars and interpersonal training courses. All selection and recruitment boards will receive equality briefings.

3.6 Foundations for Equality Practice

The Defence Forces will develop practices and procedures on foot of this policy and monitor and report on their impact. We will undertake, on our own initiative, an equality review.

3.7 Personnel/Workforce Information

Factual knowledge about the workforce is important for equal opportunities. The Defence Forces will comply with the Data Protection Act, 1988 and 2003 in relation to information on serving personnel. The Defence Forces is committed to respect for individual privacy and confidentiality and will commit to undertake periodic voluntary studies to increase knowledge of the workforce with a view to improving equality policies.

3.7.1 Personal data may be maintained in a confidential manner on the following:

- Ethnic or Cultural Background,
- Gender,
- Family Status,
- Marital Status,
- Primary Language,
- Political opinion,
- Religious beliefs,
- Physical or mental health,
- Sexual Orientation; and
- Criminal convictions.

3.7.2 The Equality Officer, in conjunction with Military Career Planning Office, may maintain Equality Disaggregated Statistics in relation to induction and selection process, career development, overseas service and the promotion process.

3.8 Decisions

Decisions by Unit Commanders, Section Heads and Brigade/Formation Staffs regarding allocation and assignment of work (selection for military and career courses, selection for overseas, recommendations for promotion etc) will be made fairly and objectively and procedures will be open and transparent.

3.9 Open and Transparent Procedures

Open and transparent procedures are important in relation to career and development opportunities as well as in the daily routine. As much information as is possible, consistent with individuals' right to privacy and data protection considerations will be made available in relation to Human Resource matters. However, the following statutory and internal mechanisms are available to allow personnel access personal information.

3.9.1 *The Freedom of Information (FOI) Acts*, 1997 & 2003 established three (3) statutory rights:

- a legal right for each person to access information held by public bodies,
- a legal right for each person to have official information relating to him/herself amended where it is incomplete, incorrect or misleading and
- a legal right to obtain reasons for decisions affecting oneself.

3.9.2 *Serving Personnel - Administrative Access to Personal Files*

Administrative access to personnel files held at Brigade/Formation/Unit in respect of NCOs & Ptes and held at Brigade/Formation/Unit and DFHQ in respect of Officers will be granted. Defence Forces personnel may access information held in personal files, (outside Freedom of Information Acts), by submitting an application form in accordance with Administrative Instruction A8, Ch 2, Para 228.

CHAPTER 4. EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY IN RECRUITMENT AND ADVERTISING OF JOBS

4.1 Advertisements

Advertisements that indicate the intent to discriminate or might reasonably be understood as indicating such intentions are prohibited under the Equality Acts. It is our policy to avoid displaying intentionally or unintentionally, advertisements or wordings that suggest, implicitly or explicitly, that jobs are NOT open to candidates from within all seven (7) grounds of the Equality Acts. The Defence Forces will seek to ensure a creative approach to our advertising that affirms diversity and attracts the widest pool of applicants. The Defence Forces will ensure that public relations and communications concepts are kept under review to ensure they are aligned with our employment equality policy and ensure their capacity to attract employees from within the seven (7) grounds.

4.2 The Application Forms

The Defence Forces application forms will conform with the provisions of the Equality Acts and to best practice in equal opportunities.

4.3 Equality Issues and Recruitment Agencies

The Defence Forces will advise employment and recruitment agencies and agents of our organisation's commitment and policy position on employment equality across the seven (7) grounds of the equality legislation.

4.4 Recruitment Office and Web Site Managers

The Recruitment Section, IT technical section, webmaster, and web host agent and their operations which fall within the ambit of the Equality Acts will be included in the development of employment equality policies in relation to recruitment and advertising of jobs.

4.5 Communicating Job Opportunities to Enhance Gender Balance and Diversity

Advertisements for jobs should signal that candidates from all seven (7) grounds named in the equality legislation are welcome to apply. The Defence Forces encourages a gender balance and diversity.

CHAPTER 5. EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY IN THE INTERVIEW PROCESS

5.1 Interviews and Interview Boards

The Defence Forces will conduct interviews on the basis of ability, so that all qualified candidates have an equitable opportunity to compete. Interviewing will be fair and transparent.

5.2 Guidance and Briefing for Interviewing

The Defence Forces will provide interviewers and selection boards with detailed guidance in relation to non-discrimination and equal opportunity issues.

5.3 Conducting the Interviews

The Defence Forces is committed to objectivity in selection systems of rating candidates for recruitment by experience, skill, qualifications, or job record as appropriate and relevant, or other objective criteria.

5.4 Diversifying Interview Boards

The Defence Forces will strive to ensure a balance of persons from within the seven (7) grounds, and to achieve a gender balance on the interview board, where appropriate.

5.5 Monitoring the Interview Process

The Defence Forces will conduct relevant statistical checks, where feasible and appropriate, of candidates at different phases of the interview process, for the success rates of candidates of different/diverse grounds in a manner that does not interfere with the specific interview process.

5.6 Positive Action on Grounds of Gender and Diversity in Recruitment

The Defence Forces is committed to undertaking positive actions on the grounds of gender and diversity to promote employment and integration in the Defence Forces.

CHAPTER 6. EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY IN JOB ORIENTATION AND JOB INDUCTION

6.1. Job Orientation

The Defence Forces will introduce a pro-active equality approach in job orientation programmes for new recruits and undertake awareness raising and equality skills training activities with existing staff.

6.2 Non-Discrimination and Equality Awareness in the Workplace

The Defence Forces is committed to identifying and valuing difference in the staff to take account of the promotion of equality of opportunity on the grounds of race, gender, sexual orientation, family and marital status, religious belief and membership of the Traveller community. Recognising differences, naming them and taking account of them are part of the new culture of equality in a Defence Forces that is becoming more diversified. The Defence Forces reflects society in general. Cadets, Direct Entrants, Recruits and Apprentices should receive briefings on Equality matters in conjunction with briefings on A7.

6.3. Unit Commanders, Section Heads and Brigade/Formation Staffs

The Defence Forces will develop information, awareness sessions and resources on employment equality policies for Unit Commanders, Section Heads and all Brigade/Formation staffs. The Defence Forces encourages contact with the Defence Forces Equality Officer, HRM Section, DFHQ, to clarify any issue in relation to equal treatment or discriminatory treatment.

CHAPTER 7. EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY IN DAILY ROUTINE, OVERSEAS SERVICE, CAREER PROMOTION AND PROGRESSION

7.1 A Chance for All

It is Defence Forces policy to encourage promotion and progression of personnel within the Defence Forces regardless of their gender, marital status, family status, religious belief, race, sexual orientation, or membership of the Traveller community. Promotion is a matter dealt with in the representative process. All candidates have equality of opportunity for promotion and advancement based on merit and ability. The system will not discriminate on the grounds of gender or personnel from diverse backgrounds. Discrimination is prohibited. All personnel are encouraged to prepare, plan and consider themselves for promotion.

7.2 Maintaining Records and Reviewing Files

The Defence Forces is committed to monitoring promotion processes to assess equality of opportunity and demonstrate openness and fairness. Commissioned Officers Management Office (COMO), HRM Section will retain records from each Officer promotion competition. Enlisted Personnel Management Office (EPMO) will peruse relevant files before forwarding to the relevant Data Management office.

7.3 Equal Opportunities in Training and Broadened Experience

The Defence Forces will not discriminate in the selection of personnel for training, career or development courses.

7.4 The Family-Friendly Workplace and Work-Life Balance

The Defence Forces will enhance the opportunities to reconcile work-life balance among our employees. Personnel, who avail of family friendly work arrangements, will not be discriminated against and will be treated equally with other serving personnel. The achievement of an effective balance by members of the Defence Forces between the demands of the workplace and the home is of crucial importance to the long-term welfare and development of the Defence Forces. Family-friendly working conditions and operational effectiveness are not contradictory in terms. The Defence Forces will work with members of the Defence Forces to achieve equitable work life balance through a partnership approach, in the context of the Defence Forces ethos.

7.5 Performance Appraisal

Performance appraisals will be conducted on a basis which is non- discriminatory to all personnel.

7.6 Equal Pay

The principle and practice of equal pay will be respected and kept under review and will be a feature of any collective agreements.

7.7 Overseas Service

Service overseas is considered an essential part of military service and contributes to the career development of soldiers. The opportunity to serve overseas is available to all trained personnel and selection for overseas service (volunteer or mandatory selection) will be based on agreed criteria and conducted in a manner that is non-discriminatory. Bearing in mind the Mission area, discrimination may take place on the grounds of gender or race, to take into account local customs, religious beliefs, culture and the rules and procedures of international organisations under whose aegis such missions are undertaken.

7.8 Re-engagement, Extension of Service, Continuance in Service and Exit

The Defence Forces will keep Re-engagement, Extension of Service, Continuance in Service and Exit procedures under review to ensure that no direct or indirect discrimination on any of the seven (7) grounds exists. This ongoing review will be carried out in a partnership manner in consultation with the Representative Associations.

CHAPTER 8. INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS IN THE DEFENCE FORCES

8.1 Interpersonal Relationships in the Defence Forces

The Defence Forces Administrative Instruction A7, Ch 1, 'Interpersonal Relationships in the Defence Forces', outlines policy and procedures regarding interpersonal relationships in the Defence Forces in order to deter unacceptable behaviour and promote a service environment based on mutual respect, equality and professionalism. Complaints relating to harassment, sexual harassment and bullying should normally be made under the procedures outlined in Administrative Instruction A7, Ch 1 (formal and informal procedures). The Defence Forces is committed to providing a service environment based on mutual respect, equality and professionalism.

8.2 The Defence Forces Dignity Charter

"We the Defence Forces of Ireland commit ourselves to working together to maintain a service environment, whether within the STATE or when deployed overseas that encourages and supports the right to dignity at work. All personnel of the Defence Forces are expected to respect the right of each individual to dignity in their work environment and in all activities of their service.

Command and authority will be exercised in such a manner that all personnel are respected for their individuality and diversity.

Bullying, sexual harassment or harassment in any form is NOT accepted by us and will NOT be tolerated. Our policies, procedures and actions will underpin the principles and objectives of this Charter.

All service personnel and civilians employed by us have a duty and a responsibility to uphold this Charter."

Commanders at all levels have a specific responsibility to promote the provisions of this Charter. (Nothing in the Charter overrules individuals' legal and statutory rights).

8.3 Sexual Harassment, Harassment and Bullying

Sexual harassment, harassment and bullying of a serving member (including members of the Reserve, civilians employed or contracted by the Defence Forces) are prohibited in the Defence Forces workplace or in the course of service by

- Another serving member (employee)
- A superior officer (the employer)
- Clients, customers or other business contacts of an employer including any other person with whom the employer might reasonably expect the victim to come into contact and the circumstances of the harassment/bullying are such that the employer ought reasonably to have taken steps to control it.

Victims of harassment, sexual harassment or bullying will not be treated differently as a result of rejecting or accepting such behaviour.

CHAPTER 9. REDRESS AND PROTECTION

9.1 Sexual Harassment, Harassment and Bullying

Administrative Instruction A7, Ch1, provides for redress and protection for members of the Defence Forces (including the RDF) in relation to sexual harassment, harassment and bullying.

9.2 Complaints Procedures

Administrative Instruction A7 Ch 2 provides effective protection and redress for all ranks. It provides an internal complaint mechanism for all members of the Defence Forces to seek redress against discrimination and victimisation on the seven (7) grounds. Complaints will be submitted, in the first instance, to Unit Commanders, Section Heads and/or Brigade/Formation Staffs.

9.3 Complaints not related to Discrimination or Victimisation

Personnel may also submit complaints under Section 114 of the Defence Act 1954, as amended (Redress of Wrongs) on unfair treatment, or a wrong, not covered by the seven (7) grounds.

9.4 The Defence Forces Ombudsman

Where serving personnel are not satisfied with the outcome of a complaint or a redress/appeal, they may make a case to the Defence Forces Ombudsman to adjudicate on the outcome.

9.5 Equality Authority

Members of the Defence Forces must exhaust all internal redress/appeals mechanisms before they can submit a case to the Equality Authority.

9.6 Discipline

The Defence Forces disciplinary process backs up the complaints procedure. Any victimisation against a complaint, the person complained of, or, a witness will be treated as a disciplinary offence.

9.7 Time Limit for Pursuing Complaints

A complaint must normally be referred within six (6) months of the last occurrence of the alleged discriminatory act. This may be extended for a further six (6) months where there is “reasonable cause” to explain the delay for not referring the claim within six (6) months.

9.8 Investigations

Commanders, when investigating a complaint, will ensure that the principles of natural justice and fairness are applied.

10.1 Participation in Overseas Missions - Human Rights and Gender Based Violence

10.1.1 Peace Support Operations (PSO). Peacekeeping personnel of PSOs are required to maintain the highest standard of integrity and conduct. Any involvement of peacekeeping personnel in human trafficking or any form of sexual exploitation constitutes an act of serious misconduct and grounds for disciplinary measures, such as dismissal or repatriation. They are specifically:

- Sex with anyone under eighteen (18) years of age is prohibited.
- Exchanging money or goods or employment for sex is prohibited.
- Sex with prostitutes is prohibited.
- Mission 'Off-limits Locations' directives are enforced.

10.1.2 Protection and Redress. Serving soldiers are subject to Military Law at all times whilst serving overseas (with UN mandated Missions or on secondment to International Organisations). Allegations (of racism, sexual assault, abuse, harassment, and gender based violence or for breaches of the code of conduct) against serving personnel whilst on overseas duty will be investigated by Military Police (or the relevant Force/Mission/Organisation disciplinary process). Disciplinary proceedings may ensue. All overseas Units should include prohibitions contained in this chapter in their respective Unit Standing Orders.

10.1.3 Training. One of the Defence Forces Strategic Goals is "To participate in multinational peace support, crisis management and humanitarian relief operations". The Strategy Statement for 2005 – 2007 states that "...The following considerations will influence the nature of Defence Forces' preparations: ...Peace support operations [will develop] in conjunction with tasks such as humanitarian assistance and the protection of human rights".

TI 03/2007 is the current Training Instruction on the Defence Forces 'Policy on Human Rights Training in Peace Support Operations'. The objective of Human Rights training for Defence Forces personnel travelling overseas is to ensure that they are equipped with the knowledge, skills and attitude necessary to make them active players in promoting and protecting human rights in keeping with the goals, ethos and aspirations of the UN Charter. These skills and knowledge should be commensurate with the level of command and appointment of personnel being deployed. The attitude to Human Rights must be uniform among all members serving in Peace Support Operations and must reflect a positive attitude. It is essential that sufficient female personnel are trained to ensure a gender balance on the ground where it can be anticipated that the Human Rights of women and children are at serious risk. Consequently, all members of the Defence Forces will receive training on International Humanitarian Law prior to deployment overseas.

10.1.4 Code of Conduct. All members of the Defence Forces will be issued with and are required to follow a code of conduct whilst serving overseas (Mission Codes of Conduct and Mission Standing Orders regarding conduct will be adhered to). The Defence Forces code contains the following sections relevant to Human Rights:

- Respect the people and culture, traditions, customs, religious beliefs and practices of the host country. Always be polite and courteous in your dealings with them.
- Do not engage in any form of trafficking in people and in particular, do not commit any act of sexual, physical or psychological abuse or exploitation of the local population. Some women and children may be particularly vulnerable.
- Do not participate in any illegal activities, corrupt or improper practices.
- Respect and regard the Human Rights of all. Support and aid the infirm, sick and weak. Do not act in revenge or in malice, in particular when dealing with detainees, people in your custody or under your control.

Appendix 1 DEFINITIONS

The Equality Acts promote equality of opportunity and prohibits discrimination in relation to and within employment. The Acts prohibit discrimination and victimisation in employment on the seven (7) grounds applicable to the Defence Forces.

What are the seven (7) grounds applicable to the Defence Forces and covered in the law?

- **The gender ground:** A man, a woman or a transsexual.
- **The marital status ground:** Single, married, separated, divorced or widowed.
- **The family status ground:** A parent, of a person under eighteen (18) years or the resident primary carer or a parent of a person with a disability.
- **The sexual orientation ground:** Gay, lesbian, bisexual or heterosexual.
- **The religion ground:** Different religious belief, background, outlook or none.
- **The race ground:** a particular race, skin colour, nationality or ethnic origin.
- **The Traveller community ground:** People who are commonly called Travellers, who are identified as an ethnic people with a shared history, culture and traditions. They are identified historically with a nomadic way of life on the island of Ireland.

All aspects of employment are covered by the Act:

- Equal pay
- Access to employment
- Vocational training
- Conditions of employment
- Work experience
- Promotion
- Dismissal
- Sexual harassment, harassment and bullying
- Training
- Job Classification

The legislation applies to:

- Public service and public sector employment
- Private sector employment
- Vocational training bodies
- Advertisements
- Trade Unions
- Professional bodies
- Full-time and part-time workers
- Collective Agreements; Employment Regulation Orders, and Registered Employment Agreements
- Contracts of employment
- Employment Agencies

What is discrimination in law?

There are different types of discrimination covered by the Acts including indirect discrimination, and discrimination by association. (Discrimination is further explained in Administrative Instruction, A7 Ch 1)

Discrimination is described as the treatment of a person in a less favourable way than another person is, has been or would be treated in a comparable situation on any of the seven (7) grounds, which exists, existed, may exist in the future, or is imputed to the person concerned. The instruction to discriminate is also prohibited.

Indirect Discrimination – this happens where there is less favourable treatment in effect or by impact. It happens where people are, for example, refused employment or training not explicitly on account of a discriminatory reason but because of a provision, practice or requirement, which they find hard to satisfy. If the provision, practice or requirement puts people who belong to one of the grounds covered by the Acts at a particular disadvantage then the employer will have indirectly discriminated, unless the provision is objectively justified by a legitimate aim and the means of achieving that aim are appropriate and necessary.

Discrimination by Association – this happens where a person associated with another person (belonging to a specified group) is treated less favourably because of that association.

Victimisation

It is unlawful for an employer to penalise an employee for taking action around the enforcement of the Equality Acts and the Equal Status Acts. Victimisation occurs where the dismissal or other adverse treatment of an employee is a reaction by the employer to:

- A complaint of discrimination made by the employee to the employer,
- Any proceedings by a complainant,
- An employee having represented or otherwise supported a complainant,
- The work of an employee having been compared with that of another employee for any of the purposes of these Acts or any enactment repealed by these Acts,
- An employee having been a witness in any proceedings under these Acts or any such repealed enactment,
- An employee having opposed by a lawful means an act which is unlawful under these Acts or any such repealed enactment, or
- An employee having given notice of intention to do any of the actions mentioned in the preceding paragraphs.

Any victimisation against a complainant, the person complained of, or a witness will be treated as a disciplinary offence.

The Equality Acts define Sexual Harassment, Harassment and Bullying.

All are conduct that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity and creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for the person. (Sexual harassment, harassment and bullying are further explained in Administrative Instruction, A7 Ch 1)

Sexual Harassment - any form of unwanted verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature, which has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity and creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for the person.

Such conduct may consist of:

- Acts,
- Requests,
- Spoken words, and/or
- Gestures or the production, display or circulation or written words, pictures or other material.

Harassment - any form of unwanted conduct related to any of the discriminatory grounds, and which has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity and creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for the person.

Such conduct may consist of:

- Acts,
- Requests,
- Spoken words, and/or

- Gestures or the production, display or circulation or written words, pictures or other material.

Bullying - is direct or indirect repeated inappropriate behaviour

- whether verbal, physical or otherwise,
- conducted by one or more persons against another or others,
- at the place of work and/or in the course of employment,
- which could reasonably be regarded as undermining the individual's right to dignity at work.

An isolated incident of the behaviour described in this definition may be an affront to dignity at work but *as a once off incident* is not considered to be bullying.

Bullying can be perpetrated not only

- by a superior on a subordinate, but also
- by a peer on another peer, or
- by a subordinate on a superior, or
- by a group.

To constitute unacceptable behaviour, bullying must be distinguished from the proper use of rank and authority. Bullying is, in fact, a misuse of rank and authority.

Appendix 2 List of Compatible Defence Forces Information and Legislation

Interpersonal Relationships in the Defence Forces - Administrative Instruction A7, Ch 1.

Complaints Procedure - Administrative Instruction A7, Ch 2.

Ombudsman Act (Defence Forces), 2004.

Defence Forces Health and Safety Instruction

Redress of Wrongs Procedure, Section 114 Defence Act 1954, as amended.

Military Codes of Practice for Students & Instructors in the Training Environment - TI 06/2004

New Entrants Information Handbook, 2006

Legislation

Employment Equality Acts 1998 and 2004 (The Equality Acts),

The Equal Status Acts 2000 and 2004

Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Acts 1989 and 2005

Appendix 3 Sources of Further Advice

The Equality Authority
2 Clonmel Street
Dublin 2

Tel: (01) 4173336

Locall: 1890 245545

Text phone: (417) 3385

Fax : (01) 417 3331

E-mail: info@equality.ie

Web: www.equality.ie

The Equality Authority is an independent body set up under the Employment Equality Act, 1998 and established in 1999. Among its functions is the goal to work towards the elimination of discrimination in employment and to promote equality of opportunity in matters to which the legislation applies.

The Office of Director of Equality Investigations was established under the Employment Equality Act, 1998. It provides a legal remedy and an enforcement system for persons who complain of discrimination on any of the nine (9) grounds (seven (7) grounds applicable to the Defence Forces) of the Act.

DEFENCE FORCES EQUAL STATUS POLICY

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CHAPTER 1 BACKGROUND

1.1 General

The Equal Status Acts 2000 to 2004 prohibit discrimination in the provision of goods and services, accommodation and educational establishments. They cover the nine (9) grounds of gender, marital status, family status, age, disability, sexual orientation, race, religion and membership of the Traveller community.

The Defence Forces Equal Status Policy is an important policy to address our liabilities under the Equal Status Acts.

The policy is a planned and systematic approach to workplace equality that;

- Commits the Defence Forces to equality for serving personnel across the seven grounds (the Defence Force has a derogation from the disability and age grounds in the Equality Acts) and across the nine grounds for customers,
- Will provide equality and diversity training and information for serving personnel and
- Will provide protection and redress for customers.

1.2 Rationale

The Defence Forces operates in a diverse Irish society and in a multinational, multi ethnic international arena. The Defence Forces is liable for the actions of serving personnel during the course of their employment. The liability exists (vicarious liability) even if the actions took place without the Defence Forces knowledge or approval. The onus is on the Defence Forces to take reasonable practical steps to prevent serving personnel from engaging in prohibited conduct under the Acts.

The Equal Status Act 2000 promotes equality of opportunity and prohibits discrimination in the provision of goods and services, accommodation and educational establishments. This is a broad area and designed to cover our customers (persons) to whom the Defence Forces provides goods or a service to and with whom we interact with in the performance of our Mission and Roles.

1.3 Defence Forces Customers

The Defence Forces have a very broad customer base. In general terms, customers fall into two categories, internal and external. Internal customers are defined as serving members of the Defence Forces, i.e. all members of the PDF and all members of the RDF and colleagues of the Department of Defence. External customers can be subdivided into the general public, Government agencies, An Garda Siochana and retired members of the Defence Forces.

This customer base derives from the functions and roles carried out by the Defence Forces. Customer services impinge upon all four (4) high level strategic goals outlined in the Strategy Statement 2005-2007, aid to the civil power (external customers), a positive secure and supportive working relationship (internal customers), peace support operations (overseas customers), and emergency and non-emergency support (Government agencies). The Defence Forces Customer list is outlined in more detail in Appendix 1.

1.4 The Equal Status Act, 2000/2004

- Promotes equality of opportunity,
- Prohibits discrimination subject to exemptions on nine (9) specified grounds,
- Prohibits sexual harassment and harassment on the discriminatory grounds,
- Requires the reasonable accommodation of people with disabilities and
- Allows for a wide range of positive actions.

1.5 Grounds

The nine (9) grounds on which discrimination is prohibited are:

Gender, marital status, family status, disability, sexual orientation, age, religion, race and membership of the Traveller community.

1.6 The Equal Status Act, 2000/2004 applies to

The Equal Status Act, 2000/2004 applies to the Defence Forces where it provides a wide range of goods and services to the public, at home and abroad, and also on the occasions where it allows the use of its premises for functions.

1.7 Commitment

The Defence Forces will endeavour to provide an excellent service and to do this the expertise of all serving personnel is crucial. We seek to equip all serving personnel with the knowledge and expertise to deal confidently with the issues involved and to be professional in dealing with customers. We desire to have a well-motivated workforce, which takes pride in our work. This Equal Status Policy sets out our commitment to meet our obligations under the Equal Status Act, 2000, to proactively promote equality and to work to prevent discrimination. In this we seek to ensure:

- That the service we provide is free from discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment and victimisation,
- That all customers, service providers and employees are treated with respect and dignity,
- That the service we provide is accessible and relevant,
- That the service accommodates diversity and seeks to meet needs specific to particular groups of customers,
- That the service seeks to benefit across all the nine (9) grounds by promoting equality and implementing positive action,
- That discrimination, sexual harassment or harassment of, or by personnel employed in the Defence Forces and non-employees such as customers and business contacts, will not be tolerated and may lead to disciplinary action (in the case of serving personnel) and other sanctions, for example the suspension of contracts or services or exclusion from premises (in the case of non-employees); and
- That complaints by customers will be treated with fairness and sensitivity and in as confidential a manner as possible. This policy should be read, and is operated, in conjunction with the Defence Forces policies on Health and Safety, Interpersonal Relationships in the Defence Forces and the Defence Forces Equality Policy.

CHAPTER 2 ACTIONS

2.1 Materials

This policy and all of the Defence Forces materials are provided in a relevant and accessible manner to people from across the nine (9) grounds.

2.2 Reasonable Accommodation of People with Disabilities

2.2.1 The Defence Forces has an obligation to reasonably accommodate customers with disabilities by providing special treatment or facilities so that it is not impossible or unduly difficult for the customer to avail of the service. This obligation is limited to the extent that there is no obligation to provide reasonable accommodation, which costs more than a nominal cost.

2.2.2 The Defence Forces expects that a percentage of its customers will have disabilities including physical, intellectual and sensory disabilities and mental health issues. The Defence Forces seeks to anticipate the requirements of customers with disabilities and to ensure that customers with disabilities will not be excluded (from Defence Forces establishments) by barriers including physical, systemic, communications and attitudinal barriers.

2.2.3 The Defence Forces seeks to ensure that staff does not use inappropriate or disrespectful language, speak too quickly or unclearly or provide information only in small print. The Defence Forces seeks to ensure that personnel do not display patronising attitudes and make assumptions about people's abilities or inabilities. The Defence Forces seeks to ensure that the physical environment is accessible and will seek to avoid barriers such as narrow doorways, steep staircases, cluttered layout, poor lighting and signage. It seeks to ensure that its services are provided using flexible systems, well-briefed staff and straightforward procedures.

2.2.4 The Defence Forces will provide, where appropriate and reasonable, alternative methods of making services available or auxiliary aids or services. Each person has unique needs and must be considered, assessed and accommodated individually. On occasions it may be appropriate to ask customers to identify whether they have any particular requirements. The Defence Forces seeks to provide an environment where a person with a disability can identify what their needs are and how these might best be met through dialogue with personnel.

2.3 Reasonable Accommodation of Diversity

The Defence Forces is committed to the reasonable accommodation of diversity in the manner in which our services are provided. The Defence Forces will take steps to address needs specific to customers from all of the other grounds in order to enable them avail of our services. The Defence Forces will endeavour to ensure a physical environment that is welcoming to all.

2.4 Customer Relations

The Defence Forces will deal with customers in a considerate, courteous and open manner and will be straightforward, consistent and professional. We seek to provide a harassment free environment for our customers. We seek to treat all customers fairly and not to discriminate, while respecting individual differences and needs.

2.5 Communications Strategy

The Defence Forces will endeavour to ensure that people across the nine (9) grounds are aware of our service and we implement a communications strategy that uses channels of communication, formats and media that are accessible to all across the nine (9) grounds.

2.6 Outcomes

The Defence Forces will strive to realise benefits for all groups across the nine (9) grounds. This is reflected in the criteria that are used in prioritising our work, using positive action measures targeting specific groups and by investing in accommodating diversity as appropriate.

2.7 Official Language Equality

The Defence Forces will comply with the requirements of the Official Languages Act 2003.

2.8 Advertising

The Defence Forces will keep all advertising under review to ensure that it complies with the Equal Status Act 2000/2004, and that it includes a positive reflection of diversity and promotes equality.

CHAPTER 3

RESPONSIBILITY

3.1 General

The Defence Forces Equality and Freedom of Information Officer is responsible to the Director of Human Resource Management Section for the Defence Forces Equal Status policy. The Defence Forces Equality Officer may adopt a participative approach and consult with the Defence Forces stakeholders in the development and implementation of the Equal Status Policy. Liaison will also take place with interlocutors dealing with equality, diversity and non-discrimination.

3.2 General Staff

The General Staff are responsible for implementing the Equal Status Policy.

3.3 Unit Commanders and Section Heads

Unit Commanders and Section Heads and others in positions of authority have a particular responsibility to ensure that discrimination against Defence Forces customers does not occur and that equality is promoted. Responsibilities include:

- Provide good example by treating customers with courtesy and respect,
- Promote awareness of the equality policies and procedures,
- Be vigilant for signs of discrimination and take action before a complaint escalates,
- Respond sensitively to a customer who makes a complaint of discrimination,
- Explain the procedures to be followed if a complaint of discrimination is made,
- Ensure that a customer making a complaint is not victimised for doing so; and
- Monitor and follow up the situation after a complaint is made so that discrimination does not recur.

3.4 Representative Associations

Representative Associations can play a role in the prevention of discrimination and the promotion of equality, in the provision of services provided by the Defence Forces, through their information and training services and when representing their members in fora such as collective bargaining.

3.5 Serving Personnel

All members of the Defence Forces can contribute to achieving a discrimination free environment and to promoting equality through cooperating with policies and procedures to eliminate discrimination and promote equality. Discrimination, sexual harassment and harassment or bullying of Defence Forces customers by members of the Defence Forces will not be tolerated and may lead to disciplinary action.

3.6 Non-employees

Discrimination against customers or personnel by non-employees will not be tolerated and may lead to termination of contracts or suspension of services, or exclusion from the premises or the imposition of other sanctions (as appropriate).

3.7 Communication of this Policy

The Defence Forces is committed to the effective communication of this policy. It will be communicated to:

3.7.1 Serving Personnel

Current Serving Personnel will be made aware of the policy at meetings and through the ongoing work of Unit Commanders and Section Heads. New entrants into the Defence Forces will be made aware of the policy as part of the formal induction process and will form part of the Defence Forces New Entrants Information Handbook.

3.7.2 Customers and Business Contacts

A summary of the Policy will be prominently displayed in the reception area, messes, and on the website. A short statement confirming the policies in existence and the Defence Forces commitment to it will be displayed in the reception areas. Any contract with a service provider for the Defence Forces will provide that discrimination against customers (and staff) will constitute a repudiation of the contract and may be a ground for the Defence Forces to terminate the contract.

3.8 Training

The Defence Forces provides training to staff on quality customer service, on equality in particular about issues related to the nine (9) grounds covered by the equality legislation, on the prevention of discrimination, bullying, harassment and sexual harassment, and on effective strategies in accommodating diversity and promoting equality.

3.9 Complaints Procedure

3.9.1 The Defence Forces will endeavour to provide an excellent service to all our customers. While doing this, the Defence Forces also maintains an accessible, easy-to-use system for dealing with any complaints about the service we provide. Defence Forces personnel will ensure that customers initially have access to the Unit Commanders and Section Heads of the area where the complaint has arisen, to seek resolution of the difficulty, if possible.

3.9.2 If a complaint is made the matter should be brought to the attention of the Officer Commanding or his representative of the Unit or staff concerned. The complaint can be made orally or in writing. The Unit/staff concerned will try and resolve the matter without delay and will respond to you within twenty (20) working days from receipt of the complaint. If the complainant is unhappy with the response, the matter should be referred to a higher-level for consideration:

3.10 Public Relations Section

Defence Forces Headquarters

Infirmery Road

Dublin 7

Phone 01- 8042685

A more detailed Complaints and Appeals procedure (and contact information) is outlined in Appendix 2

CHAPTER 4 REVIEW

4.1 Commitments

We are committed to:

- Keeping this policy under review,
- Monitoring outcomes across the nine (9) grounds; and
- Reporting annually in our Annual Report on its implementation and on any positive action taken.

Appendix 1 Defence Forces Customers

Introduction

The Defence Forces has a very broad customer base. In general terms, customers fall into two categories, internal and external. External customers can be subdivided into the general public, Government agencies, and overseas customers.

This customer base derives from the functions and roles carried out by the Defence Forces. Customer services impinge upon all four (4) high level strategic goals outlined in the Strategy Statement 2005-2007, aid to the civil power (external customers), a positive secure and supportive working relationship (internal customers), peace support operations (overseas customers), and emergency and non-emergency support (Government agencies).

Internal Customers

Our internal customers consist of serving members of the Defence Forces members of the Army Nursing Service, Reserve, departmental colleagues and barrack support staff.

The Defence Forces recognise the essential role of its personnel in contributing to military capability and the effective delivery of defence outputs. The Defence Forces are committed to ensuring that staff are recognised as internal customers and give the appropriate supports, which includes the implementation of a Human Resources Strategy.

Another recognition by the Defence Forces of the importance of its internal customers is in the area of training and development, providing high levels of individual developmental opportunities through formal education and training through our own military training establishments, Universities, Institutes of Technology and FÁS schemes.

The Defence Forces also creates a positive work relationship and secure work environment by the provision of work-life balance initiatives, the continuing implementation of recommendations of the “Challenge in the Workplace” and continued encouragement of a healthy lifestyle for our internal customers through policy directives such as those on alcohol, stress, smoking, bereavement, drugs etc.

External Customers

Generally the Defence Forces have contact with the following external customers on a day-to-day basis through conventional based operations, aid to the civil power, procurement of logistics and equipment.

External Customers

- Members of the public
- Management and civilian employees of the Department of Defence
- Spouses and dependants of serving and former members, of the Defence Forces
- Candidates applying to serve in the Defence Forces
- Clubs and Organisations who use the facilities at Defence Forces Installations
- Persons living in proximity to Defence Forces property
- Suppliers of goods and services
- Members of the media
- Financial institutions

Government Customers

The Defence Forces has a number of core competencies that can be utilised when available to provide a range of services to Government Departments and agencies.

Government Customers

- The Government
- Government Task Forces, Interdepartmental Committees or Working Groups
- Local Authorities
- An Garda Síochána
- Irish Coast Guard
- Harbour Boards
- Other Emergency Services
- Department of Communications Marine and Natural Resources
- Department of Justice Equality and Law Reform
- Department of Health and Children
- Health services Executive
- Prison Service

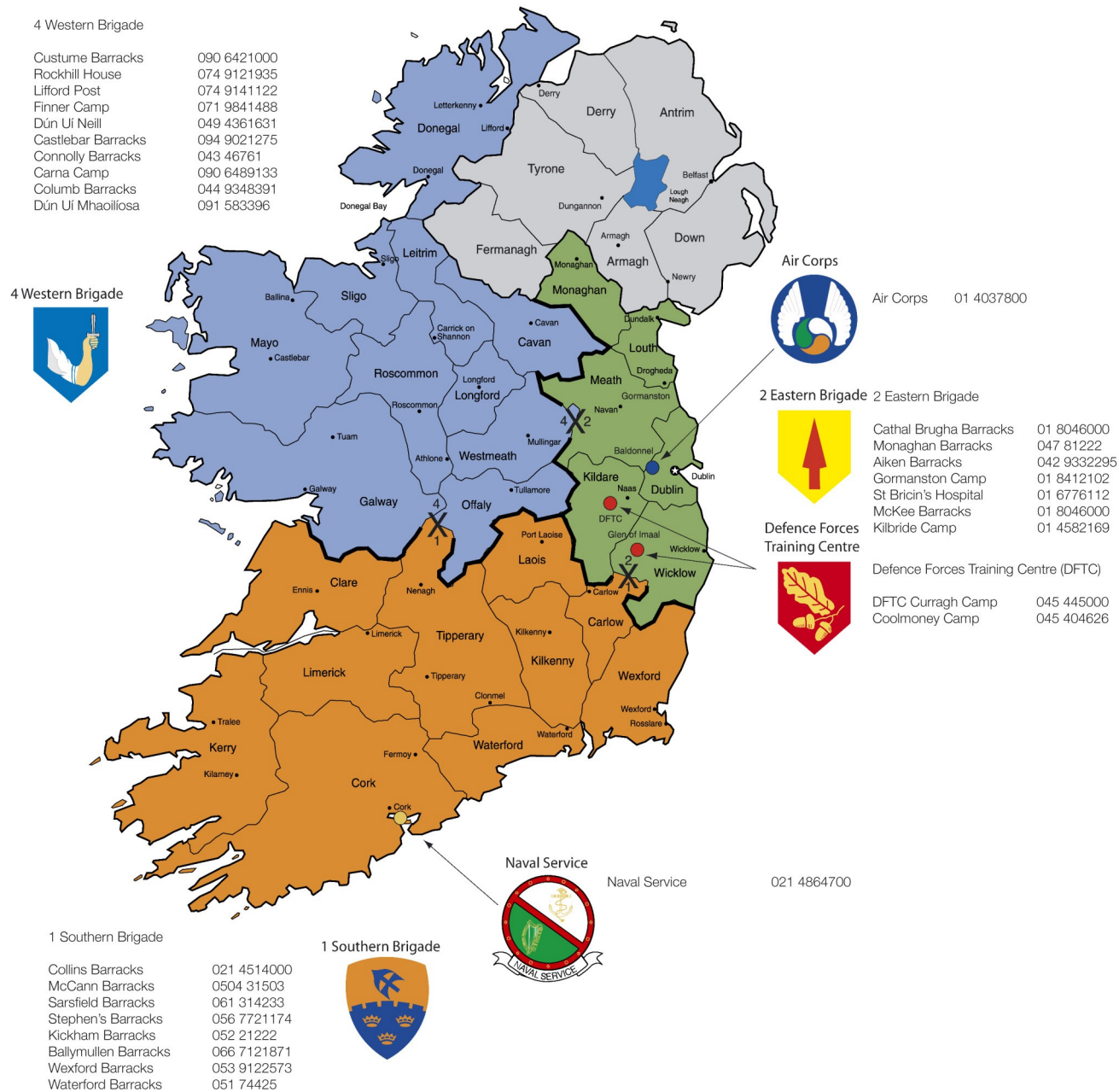
Overseas Customers

The Defence Forces has been involved in peace support operations for the past fifty years (50) and has a wide variety of overseas customers.

Overseas Customers

- United Nations
- European Union and its agencies
- Foreign armed forces
- North Atlantic Treaty Organisation/Partnership for Peace
- Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe
- Non-Governmental Organisations

Appendix 2 Defence Forces Contact Details



Contact Details

OIC Public Relations Section

Defence Forces Headquarters
Infirmary Road
Dublin 7

Tel: (01) 8042685

Press Office

Defence Forces Headquarters
Infirmary Road,
Parkgate,
Dublin 7

Tel: (01) 8042687

Defence Forces Equality Officer

Human Resource Management Section
DFHQ
Coláiste Caoimhín,
Mobhi Road,
Glasnevin,
Dublin 9

Tel: (01) 8042740

Defence Forces Freedom of Information Officer

Human Resource Management Section
DFHQ
Coláiste Caoimhín,
Mobhi Road,
Glasnevin,
Dublin 9

Tel: (01) 8042758

Appendix 3 Defence Forces Complaints/Appeals Procedure

The Defence Forces aims to provide an excellent quality service to its customers. Many customer complaints arise from a breakdown in communications and these complaints are quickly resolved when the facts, evidence or circumstances have been established.

The “Ombudsman’s Guide to Internal Complaints Systems” states that, as a working definition a complaint might exist where:

“ A decision or action is taken which relates to the provision of a service or the performance of a function, which it is claimed, is not in accordance with the rules, practice or policy of the organisation or the generally accepted principles of equity and good administrative practice, and which adversely affects the person concerned”

The following sets out the Defence Forces’ Code of Practice

The complaints procedure concerns complaints/appeals relating to delays, mistakes, and situations that have arisen where an external customer has not received the level of service required.

Procedure

A complaint should be brought to the attention of the Officer Commanding or his representative of the Unit concerned. The complaint can be made orally or in writing. The Unit concerned will try and resolve the matter without delay and will respond within twenty (20) working days from receipt of the complaint. If unhappy with the response to the complaint, the matter should be referred to a higher-level. If the matter is complex, it is best to put it in writing so that none of the details are overlooked. By providing the following information, the matter under complaint will be speeded up:

- Name, address and any reference numbers referred to in previous correspondence with the Defence Forces;
- The precise nature of the dissatisfaction;
- The name of the office, unit or section of the Defence Forces and the person(s) in question;
- Where possible, the dates and times of these events;
- A daytime telephone contact number and E Mail would be beneficial.

Exemptions

The Defence Forces code does not apply to the following:

- Matters subject to litigation.
- Matters involving Freedom of Information requests.
- Matters relating to national security.
- Matters which are the subject of Redress of Wrongs procedure
- Matters referred to the Ombudsman or the Information Commissioner

Defence Forces Standards for Handling Complaints and Appeals

- The Defence Forces will treat all complaints and appeals promptly, impartially, sensitively, and in confidence.
- In general, the Defence Forces will deal with complaints within (20) twenty working days of receipt.
- It may take longer to deal with complex complaints and appeals. In such cases the Defence Forces will make contact to explain why and give you a commitment to a new time scale for a reply.
- The Defence Forces will attempt to resolve matters at the first point of contact.

- If a mistake is made, the Defence Forces will apologise, explain what happened and attempt to rectify the situation.

If the Defence Forces cannot accommodate what is sought, they will explain why.
Any unresolved issues should be forwarded to the Equality Officer in HRM Section:

Defence Forces Equality Officer
Human Resource Management Section
DFHQ
Coláiste Caoimhín,
Mobhi Road,
Glasnevin,
Dublin 9
Tel: (01) 8042740

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