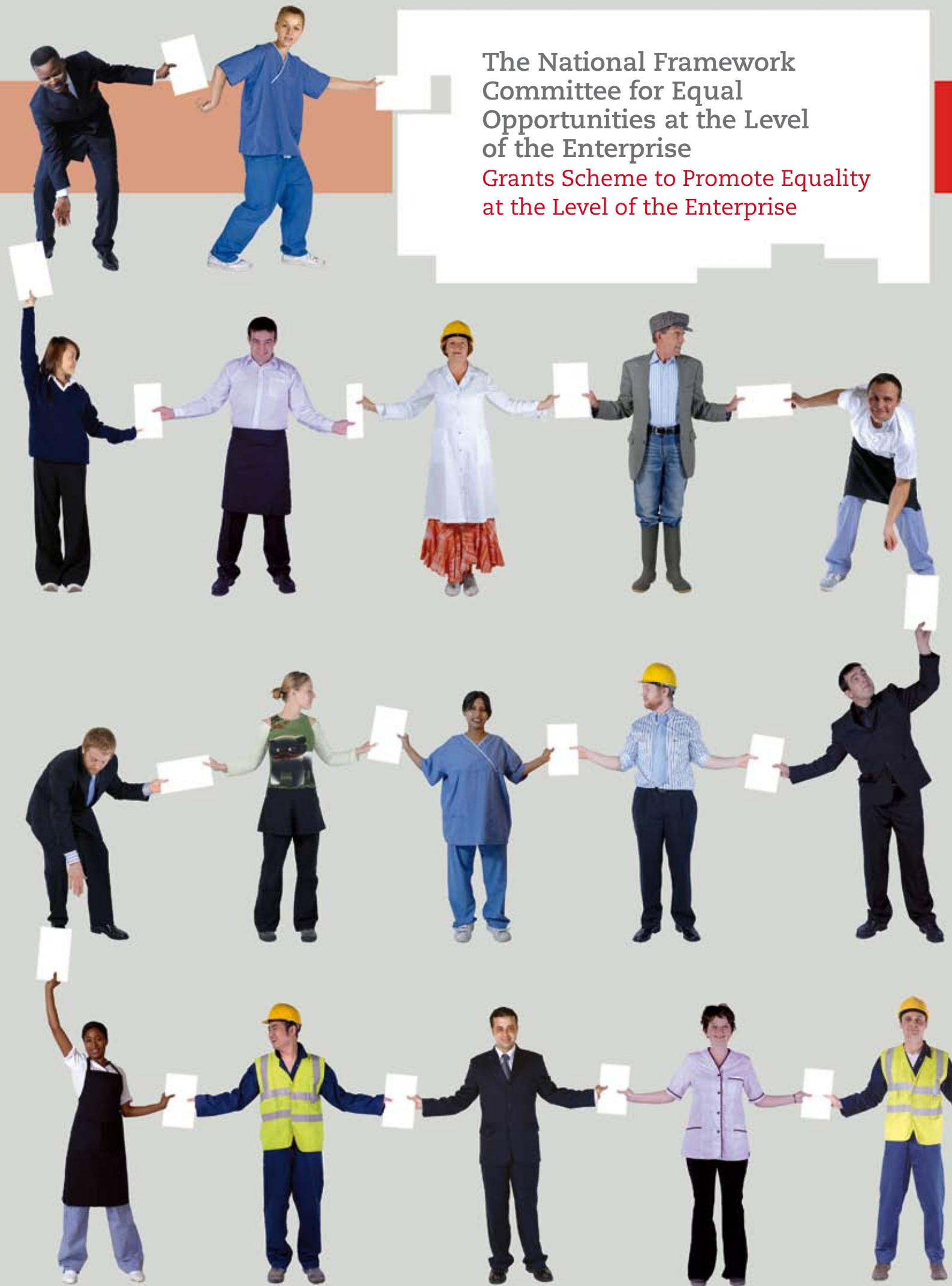


The National Framework Committee for Equal Opportunities at the Level of the Enterprise

Grants Scheme to Promote Equality
at the Level of the Enterprise



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Introduction

Businesses face increasing challenges in operating successfully in a competitive and dynamic Irish economy. Workforces and customer bases are more diverse than ever before. Responding effectively to diversity and equality is a key element in sustaining a dynamic and future focused 'edge' in the modern business.

All businesses need to develop policies and take action to implement the Employment Equality Acts 1998 to 2007 and the Equal Status Acts 2000 to 2004:

The Employment Equality Acts 1998 to 2007 promote equality of opportunity and prohibit discrimination in employment and vocational training across nine grounds (gender, marital status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community). An information booklet can be obtained from the Equality Authority.

The Equal Status Acts 2000 to 2004 promote equality of opportunity and prohibit discrimination in the provision of goods and services, accommodation and vocational training and cover the same nine grounds. An information booklet is available from the Equality Authority.

Why develop policy and action around equality and diversity?

- Research has found that investment by organisations in initiatives to promote workplace equality and foster diversity yields substantial benefits for both employers and employees;
- Making your premises and services more accessible will widen your recruitment and customer base and could open up new markets;
- It will assist in meeting obligations under the equality legislation.



Where can I go for support?

- The National Framework Committee for Equal Opportunities at the level of the Enterprise can support you in developing an equality infrastructure in your workplace;
- The National Framework Committee for Equal Opportunities at the level of the Enterprise is a social partnership committee with representatives of Government and the social partners. Its role, under the current Towards 2016 national agreement, is to develop and disseminate practical supports for planned and systematic approaches to equality;
- The committee operates an SME Scheme to assist Small to Medium Sized Enterprises (SMEs) to implement a planned and systematic approach to equality in their workplaces. This approach, which involves developing an appropriate system to respond to equality and diversity, enables an SME to move away from ad hoc, reactive or informal responses to equality and diversity;
- The Scheme funds up to 5 days consultancy support in an individual enterprise, undertaken by a consultant from a panel of human resource/equality consultants selected by the committee.

How does 'support' work?

- A consultant will help you to develop:
 - o An employment equality policy;
 - o An equal status policy; and, as necessary,
 - o An equality and diversity training strategy.
- This support will assist you in putting in place an effective equality infrastructure to promote equality for and to respond to the diversity of your employees and customers. An equality infrastructure involves equality policies, equality and diversity training for all staff, equality action plans that set out practical steps to enhance equality in the workplace and in service provision, and according responsibility to a senior staff member to drive forward action on equality;
- You will have access to guidance on the preparation of equality policies and on developing a strategy for equality and diversity training prepared by the National Framework Committee for Equal Opportunities at the Level of the Enterprise;
- You will also have access to equality-related contacts, resources and networks via your consultant and the Equality Authority.



What do I have to do?

- If you decide to avail of the SME Scheme, you will need to organise time and space so that the consultant can work with management and staff as part of a participative process to create and implement equality policies or develop equality and diversity training strategies that work for your business;
- You will also be asked to give feed-back to the Equality Authority on the work undertaken by the consultant on behalf of your enterprise.
- You will be asked to participate in a follow-up survey to look at the impact of this support on your company's approach to equality.

How to get support

Contact the Equality Authority as follows:

The Equality Authority
 2 Clonmel St
 Dublin 2
 Tel. 417 3336
 Email: info@equality.ie

You may also be contacted directly by a consultant from the panel of consultants authorised to work on behalf of the Scheme.

Additional resources

Additional information on equality in the workplace is available on the Equality Authority website: www.equality.ie



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