

A Practical Anti-Racism Guide for Workers in Ireland



Blackwater
Training &
Consulting



Pathways to
Participation



An Roinn Dlí agus Cirt,
Gnóthaí Baile agus Imirce
Department of Justice,
Home Affairs and Migration

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About This Guide

This guide has been developed as part of the Pathways to Participation: Empowering Migrants through Employment, Enterprise, and Anti-Racism Education, a 10-month pilot programme supporting migrants and minority ethnic communities in Ireland to access employment, self-employment, and civic life.

It was produced by Blackwater Training, Bailieborough, Co. Cavan, and funded through the Ireland Against Racism Fund 2025, administered by the Department of Justice, Home Affairs and Migration.

Who Is This Guide For?

This guide is for anyone who lives and works in Ireland or who is looking for work, and who wants to understand their rights in the workplace. It is designed especially for:

1. Anyone who wants to know what to do if something goes wrong at work;
2. People who are new to the Irish labour market and want to understand their rights;
3. Migrants and people from minority ethnic communities working in Ireland;
4. Workers who have experienced or witnessed racism, discrimination, or unfair treatment at work.





How To Use This Guide



This guide is divided into six sections. You do not need to read it from start to finish - you can go directly to the section that is most relevant to your situation.

Section 1: Understand what racism and discrimination mean and what Irish law says;

Section 2: Learn about your employment rights in Ireland;

Section 3: Find out what to do if you experience or witness discrimination;

Section 4: Get contact details for support organisations;

Section 5: Learn how to build a better, more inclusive workplace;

Section 6: Use practical templates, checklists, and vocabulary.

Important Note: This guide provides general information about your rights under Irish law; it is not legal advice. If you need advice about your specific situation, please contact one of the support organisations listed in Section 4 of this guide.



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SECTION 1.

UNDERSTANDING

RACISM AT WORK



1.1 What is Racism?

Racism is the belief that some people are inferior or superior to others because of their race, skin colour, nationality, or ethnic background. In Ireland, it is illegal under both the **Employment Equality Acts 1998–2015** and the **Equal Status Acts 2000–2015**.

Racism at work can be obvious and deliberate - a slur, a threat, or a refusal to hire. It can also be subtle and unintentional - an assumption, a joke, a pattern of being overlooked. Both forms are harmful and both are covered by Irish law - specifically under the **Employment Equality Acts 1998-2015**, which prohibit discrimination and harassment in all aspects of employment.

There are different types of racism that people in the workplace can face. Some of the most common types of racism are:

Source	What It Looks Like
Individual attitudes	Prejudice or bias held by a manager, colleague, or customer directed at you personally
Unconscious bias	Assumptions made without awareness - for example, assuming someone is less skilled because of their accent or name
Workplace culture	An environment where racist behaviour is tolerated, laughed off, or never challenged
Structural inequality	Hiring practices, promotion criteria, or policies that consistently disadvantage people from certain backgrounds



Does It Have to Be Intentional?

No. Under Irish law, you do not need to prove that someone intended to discriminate against you. This is implied by the objective test applied under the **Employment Equality Acts 1998-2015** - tribunals and courts assess whether discrimination occurred based on the effect of the treatment, not the motive behind it. This principle has been consistently applied by the Workplace Relations Commission and upheld by the Labour Court in numerous equality cases. What matters is the effect of the behaviour - whether it placed you at a disadvantage or created a hostile environment because of your race or nationality.

Even if someone says "I didn't mean it that way" or "It was only a joke" - the impact on you is what the law considers.

Does My Visa Status Affect My Rights?

No. Your immigration or visa status does not affect your right to be protected from racism at work. Whether you are:

- An EU citizen working in Ireland;
- A non-EU national on a work permit or employment visa;
- An asylum seeker with the right to work;
- A refugee or person with subsidiary protection.

You have the same legal protections under Irish employment equality law as any other worker in Ireland.





1.2 Types of Racism and Discrimination

The Employment Equality Acts 1998-2015 identify six distinct forms of discrimination.

Understanding the difference between them is important - it helps you describe your experience accurately, and it affects what steps you can take.

1. Direct Discrimination

Definition: Treating someone less favourably than another person in a comparable situation, because of a protected characteristic such as race or nationality.

Example: A candidate with a non-Irish name is not shortlisted for interview despite having the same qualifications as an Irish candidate who is.

Article: Section 6(1) and Section 6(2).

2. Indirect Discrimination

Definition: A rule, practice, or policy that appears neutral but puts people of a certain race or nationality at a particular disadvantage, without any justification.

Example: Requiring all employees to have completed their Leaving Certificate in Ireland - this disadvantages workers who were educated abroad.

Article: Section 22.

3. Harassment

Definition: Unwanted conduct related to race or nationality that violates a person's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating, or offensive environment.

Example: A colleague repeatedly makes comments about a co-worker's accent, country of origin, or culture, even after being asked to stop.

Article: Section 14A(1).



4. Sexual Harassment

Definition: Unwanted verbal, non-verbal, or physical conduct of a sexual nature. Where this is also connected to race or nationality, it constitutes both sexual harassment and racial discrimination.

Example: A manager makes inappropriate comments of a sexual nature to a migrant worker, drawing on racial stereotypes.

Article: Section 14A(2).

5. Victimisation

Definition: Treating someone unfairly because they have made - or indicated they intend to make - a complaint of discrimination, or because they have supported another person who has done so.

Example: After an employee raises a concern about racism, their shifts are reduced and they are excluded from team communications.

Article: Section 74(2).

6. Instruction to Discriminate

Definition: When a person in authority instructs another person to discriminate against a worker or job applicant.

Example: A recruitment manager tells a member of staff not to progress applications from people with foreign-sounding names.

Article: Section 8(4).





One Important Principle

Irish law recognises that people can experience discrimination on more than one ground at the same time. For example, a woman from a minority ethnic background may experience discrimination both because of her race and because of her gender. This is sometimes called intersectional discrimination. You have the right to make a complaint on more than one ground.

1.3 The 9 Protected Grounds Under Irish Law

The Employment Equality Acts 1998-2015 prohibit discrimination across all aspects of employment on nine specific grounds. These are called the protected grounds. No employer in Ireland may treat you less favourably in any aspect of your work because of any of the following:





Protected Ground	What This Covers
Race	Your race, skin colour, or membership of the Traveller Community
Nationality / Ethnic Origin	The country you are from or your ethnic or national background
Gender	Whether you are male, female, or transgender
Age	Your age - it is unlawful to discriminate against you because of your age
Disability	Physical, intellectual, or psychological disability, including long-term health conditions
Sexual Orientation	Whether you identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual, or heterosexual
Religion	Your religious beliefs or practices, or the absence of religious belief
Civil Status	Whether you are single, married, separated, divorced, widowed, or in a civil partnership
Family Status	Whether you are a parent or carer of a person with a disability





Where Does the Law Apply?

Protection under the **Employment Equality Acts 1998-2015** covers every stage and aspect of your employment, from the moment you apply for a job to the day your employment ends - and everything in between:

Area of Employment	What Is Covered
Recruitment & Selection	Job advertisements, application processes, interviews, and hiring decisions
Pay & Conditions	Your hourly rate, salary, working hours, holiday entitlement, sick pay, and other contractual terms
Training & Development	Access to training, upskilling, mentoring, or apprenticeship opportunities
Promotion	Decisions about who is considered for or offered advancement within an organisation
Work Experience & Treatment	How you are treated on a day-to-day basis - the tasks assigned, the support you receive, the way people speak to you
Dismissal & Redundancy	Decisions about who is let go, disciplined, or made redundant
Harassment	Any hostile, intimidating, degrading, or offensive behaviour directed at you at work



Key Takeaway from Section 1



Racism and discrimination take many forms - some obvious, some subtle. All of them are harmful and are covered by Irish law. Whether it is something said to your face, a policy that places you at a disadvantage, or a workplace culture that makes you feel unwelcome - you have rights. The following sections of this guide explain exactly what those rights are, and what you can do if they are not respected.



Legal references:

Employment Equality Acts 1998-2015

<https://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/1998/act/21/enacted/en/html>

Equal Status Acts 2000-2015:

<https://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2000/act/8/enacted/en/index.html>

For further information see:

- www.workplacerelations.ie
- www.ihrec.ie
- www.citizensinformation.ie



SECTION 2. YOUR RIGHTS UNDER IRISH LAW



2.1 Key Legislation That Protects You

Irish law provides strong protections for all workers, regardless of their nationality, visa status, or background. The following are the most important pieces of legislation you need to know about.

Employment Equality Acts 1998-2015

What It Does: Prohibits discrimination in employment on 9 protected grounds including race and nationality.

Who It Protects: All workers and job applicants in Ireland.

Equal Status Acts 2000-2015

What It Does: Prohibits discrimination when accessing goods, services, housing, and education.

Who It Protects: Everyone in Ireland.

Workplace Relations Act 2015

What It Does: Established the Workplace Relations Commission (WRC) as the body to handle employment complaints.

Who It Protects: All workers.

Organisation of Working Time Act 1997

What It Does: Sets out your rights to maximum working hours, rest breaks, annual leave, and public holidays.

Who It Protects: All workers, including part-time and agency workers.

Payment of Wages Act 1991

What It Does: Requires employers to pay wages properly and provide a written payslip.

Who It Protects: All workers.





Unfair Dismissals Acts 1977-2015

What It Does: Protects workers from being dismissed without fair reason or fair process.

Who It Protects: Workers with at least 12 months of continuous service (with some exceptions).

Protected Disclosures Act 2014 (as amended 2022)

What It Does: Protects workers who report wrongdoing, including discrimination, from retaliation.

Who It Protects: All workers.

Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005

What It Does: Requires employers to provide a safe and healthy work environment, which includes protection from harassment.

Who It Protects: All workers.

National Minimum Wage Act 2000 (as amended)

What It Does: Sets the minimum hourly rate of pay. As of 1 January 2026 this is €14.15 per hour for workers aged 20 and over.

Who It Protects: Almost all workers.

Exceptions include:

- Workers employed by a close relative (spouse, civil partner, or parent)
- Workers in a statutory apprenticeship
- Workers aged under 20 (different rates apply - see citizensinformation.ie).

Important: All of these laws apply to you regardless of your nationality or visa status. Whether you are an EU citizen, a non-EU worker on a work permit, international protection applicants with the right to work, or a refugee - your rights under Irish employment law are the same as those of any Irish citizen.



2.2 Your Employment Rights at a Glance

From your first day of work in Ireland, you have a range of legal rights. Many workers - particularly those who are new to the Irish labour market - are not aware of all of these rights. This section sets them out clearly.

Written Contract

What the Law Says: Your employer must provide you with a written statement of your core terms of employment within **5 days** of starting work. A full written contract must follow within **one month**.

Relevant Legislation: Terms of Employment (Information) Acts 1994-2014.

Minimum Wage

What the Law Says: You must be paid at least **€14.15 per hour** (from 1 January 2026). Some categories such as those under 20 or in structured training may have different rates.

Relevant Legislation: National Minimum Wage Act 2000 (as amended).

Maximum Working Hours

What the Law Says: You cannot be required to work more than an average of **48 hours per week**, calculated over a reference period.

Relevant Legislation: Organisation of Working Time Act 1997.

Rest Breaks

What the Law Says: You are entitled to a **15-minute break** after 4.5 hours of work and a **30-minute break** after 6 hours of work.

Relevant Legislation: Organisation of Working Time Act 1997.

Daily Rest

What the Law Says: You are entitled to **11 consecutive hours** of rest in every 24-hour period.

Relevant Legislation: Organisation of Working Time Act 1997.





Weekly Rest

What the Law Says: You are entitled to **24 consecutive hours** of rest per week, in addition to daily rest.

Relevant Legislation: Organisation of Working Time Act 1997.

Annual Leave

What the Law Says: You are entitled to a minimum of **4 weeks** paid annual leave per year, or 8% of hours worked if you work fewer than 1365 hours in a leave year.

Relevant Legislation: Organisation of Working Time Act 1997.

Public Holidays

What the Law Says: You are entitled to **10 public holidays** per year, with pay. This includes New Year's Day (1 January), St Brigid's Day (first Monday in February), St Patrick's Day (17 March), Easter Monday (date varies), May Bank Holiday (first Monday in May), June Bank Holiday (first Monday in June), August Bank Holiday (first Monday in August), October Bank Holiday (last Monday in October), Christmas Day (25 December), St Stephen's Day (26 December).

Relevant Legislation: Organisation of Working Time Act 1997 (as amended 2022).

Payslip

What the Law Says: Your employer must provide you with a written payslip with every payment, showing your gross pay and all deductions.

Relevant Legislation: Payment of Wages Act 1991.

Sick Leave

What the Law Says: From 2024, you are entitled to **5 days** of paid sick leave per year at 70% of your normal daily pay, up to a maximum of €110 per day. A medical certificate is required from Day 1 if you are claiming Statutory Sick Pay. Many employers allow self-certification for 1-2 days under their own sick pay scheme - check your contract.

Relevant Legislation: Sick Leave Act 2022.



Maternity Leave

What the Law Says: You are entitled to **26 weeks** of maternity leave, plus an optional 16 additional unpaid weeks. You must notify your employer at least 4 weeks before your leave begins, in writing, with a medical certificate confirming your pregnancy. Maternity Benefit is paid at €299 per week by the Department of Social Protection (subject to PRSI contributions). Entitlement also applies in the event of a stillbirth at or after 23 weeks of pregnancy.

Relevant Legislation: Maternity Protection Act 1994 (as amended).

Paternity Leave

What the Law Says: You are entitled to **2 weeks** of paid paternity leave following the birth or adoption of a child.

Relevant Legislation: Paternity Leave and Benefit Act 2016.

Parent's Leave

What the Law Says: Each parent is entitled to **9 weeks** of parent's leave in the first 2 years of a child's life. If you have enough PRSI contributions, you will receive Parent's Benefit of €299 per week, paid by the Department of Social Protection. Your employer is not required to pay you during this time, though some do top it up.

Relevant Legislation: Parent's Leave and Benefit Act 2019 (as amended).

Protection from Unfair Dismissal

What the Law Says: After **12 months** of continuous employment, you cannot be dismissed without a fair reason and a fair process.

Relevant Legislation: Unfair Dismissals Acts 1977-2015.





Note on Deductions:

Your employer is legally required to make deductions for **PAYE (income tax)**, **PRSI (social insurance)**, and **USC (Universal Social Charge)**. These deductions must appear on your payslip. Any other deduction - for example, for accommodation, transport, or a uniform - must be authorised in writing by you in advance and must not reduce your pay below the minimum wage. If your job requires you to wear a uniform or use your own tools or equipment, you may be entitled to claim a **Flat Rate Expense (FRE)** - a tax relief from Revenue that reduces your taxable income. You do not need receipts. Common qualifying amounts include €733 per year for nurses, €518 for teachers, €220 for carpenters, €177 for plumbers, and €121 for shop assistants. You can claim this relief for the previous 4 tax years through Revenue's myAccount portal - go to 'Review Your Tax' and select 'Flat Rate Expenses' under Your Job. Check the full list of qualifying occupations at www.revenue.ie.

2.3 Your Right to Dignity at Work

Beyond your basic employment rights, you have the right to be treated with dignity and respect in your workplace. This is not just a moral expectation - it is a legal requirement.

Under the **Employment Equality Acts 1998-2015** and the **Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005**, your employer has a duty to ensure that your workplace is free from harassment, bullying, and intimidation.



What This Means in Practice?

You have the right to...	Your employer must...
Work in an environment free from racial harassment or abuse	Have a written Anti-Harassment and Dignity at Work Policy
Be spoken to with respect, regardless of your background	Take all complaints of harassment seriously and investigate them promptly
Raise a concern without fear of punishment	Ensure that raising a complaint does not result in any disadvantage to you
Have your complaint handled confidentially	Maintain confidentiality throughout any investigation
Work without being subjected to bullying	Have a written Anti-Bullying Policy and procedure
Access the same facilities, equipment, and opportunities as your colleagues	Not create a two-tier workplace where some workers are treated as less valuable than others





The Difference Between Bullying and Harassment

These two terms are often confused. Both are unacceptable, but they are legally distinct:

	Bullying	Harassment
Definition	Repeated, inappropriate behaviour that undermines a person's dignity or creates a hostile, humiliating, or offensive work environment	Unwanted conduct related to a protected ground (such as race or nationality) that violates a person's dignity or creates a hostile environment
Does it need to be repeated?	Yes - a single incident is generally not sufficient	No - a single serious incident can constitute harassment
Is it linked to a protected ground?	Not necessarily - it can happen to anyone for any reason	Yes - it must be connected to race, nationality, gender, religion, or another protected ground
What law applies?	Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005; Code of Practice on Bullying (WRC)	Employment Equality Acts 1998-2015



2.4 What Employers Must Do

Under Irish law, employers have specific legal obligations to prevent and address discrimination and harassment in the workplace. Failure to meet these obligations can result in significant legal liability for the employer.

Equality Policy

What It Requires: Employers must have a written Equality Policy that prohibits discrimination and harassment on all 9 protected grounds.

Dignity at Work / Anti-Harassment Policy

What It Requires: Employers must have a written policy setting out what constitutes harassment and bullying, and what procedures are in place to deal with it.

Anti-Bullying Policy

What It Requires: Required under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 and the WRC Code of Practice on Bullying.

Training

What It Requires: Employers are expected to provide training to managers and staff on equality, dignity at work, and anti-discrimination obligations.

Complaint Procedure

What It Requires: Employers must have a clear, accessible, and confidential procedure for raising complaints of discrimination or harassment.

Investigation

What It Requires: When a complaint is received, the employer must investigate it promptly, fairly, and impartially.





Reasonable Accommodation

What It Requires: Employers must make reasonable adjustments to accommodate workers with disabilities, unless doing so would cause disproportionate difficulty.

For Example: If an employee uses a wheelchair, the employer may be required to provide a ground-floor workspace or accessible toilet facilities. If an employee has a visual impairment, the employer may be required to provide screen-reading software. What is 'reasonable' depends on the size and resources of the employer.

Equal Pay

What It Requires: Employers must pay men and women equally for like work, and must not pay workers less because of their race or nationality.

Protection from Victimisation

What It Requires: Employers must ensure that workers who raise complaints are not penalised, demoted, have their hours cut, or experience any other negative treatment as a result.

Employer Liability

Under the Employment Equality Acts, an employer can be held **vicariously liable** (meaning: legally responsible for the actions of another person) for discrimination or harassment carried out by their employees - even if the employer did not know it was happening. In plain terms: if your manager or colleague discriminates against you at work, you can make a legal claim against the company itself, not just against the individual person. However, an employer may avoid liability if they can demonstrate that they took **reasonably practicable steps** to prevent the discrimination or harassment from occurring. This is why having robust policies and training in place matters - for workers and employers alike.



2.5 Your Rights If You Raise a Complaint



Many workers worry that raising a complaint about racism or discrimination will make their situation worse - that they will be dismissed, have their hours cut, or be treated badly by colleagues. Irish law specifically addresses this fear.

Protection from Victimisation

The **Employment Equality Acts 1998-2015** make it illegal for an employer to penalise a worker for:

- Making a complaint of discrimination or harassment
- Stating an intention to make such a complaint
- Giving evidence or information in connection with another person's complaint
- Opposing - by lawful means - an act of discrimination
- Requesting information about how they have been treated compared to others.

This protection applies **even if your original complaint is not upheld**. The act of making a complaint in good faith is protected, regardless of the outcome.





What Victimisation Can Look Like

Examples of Victimisation

1. Being dismissed or having your contract terminated shortly after raising a complaint.
2. Having your working hours reduced or your shift pattern changed unfavourably.
3. Being denied a promotion or training opportunity that you would otherwise have received.
4. Being moved to a different role or location without your consent.
5. Being subjected to increased scrutiny, criticism, or disciplinary action.
6. Being excluded from team communications, meetings, or social events.
7. Colleagues being encouraged to avoid or ostracise you.



Your Right to Information

Under Section 76 of the Employment Equality Acts, you have the right to request information from your employer about how you have been treated compared to a colleague. You can ask:

- Why a particular decision was made about you
- How a colleague in a comparable situation was treated
- What criteria were used in a selection or promotion process.

Your employer must respond within **42 calendar days**. If they fail to respond or give an evasive answer, the WRC may draw an inference of discrimination from this.

Your Right to Union Representation

If you are a member of a **trade union**, you have the right to be represented by your union at any internal disciplinary or grievance hearing. If you are not a union member, you have the right to be accompanied by a **colleague of your choice** at any formal meeting related to a complaint.

The largest trade union in Ireland is **SIPTU** (www.siptu.ie). Membership is open to all workers regardless of nationality. Membership fees vary by income level.





Key Takeaway from Section 2

Racism and discrimination take many forms - some obvious, some subtle. All of them are harmful. All of them are covered by Irish law. Whether it is something said to your face, a policy that places you at a disadvantage, or a workplace culture that makes you feel unwelcome - you have rights. The following sections of this guide explain exactly what those rights are, and what you can do if they are not respected.

Legal references:

Employment Equality Acts 1998-2015

<https://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/1998/act/21/enacted/en/html>

Organisation of Working Time Act 1997

<https://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/1997/act/20/enacted/en/html>

Payment of Wages Act 1991

<https://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/1991/act/25/enacted/en/print.html>

Sick Leave Act 2022

<https://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2022/act/24/enacted/en/html>

Unfair Dismissals Acts 1977-2015

<https://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/1977/act/10/enacted/en/html>

Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005

<https://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2005/act/10/enacted/en/print>

Terms of Employment (Information) Acts 1994-2014

<https://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/1994/act/5/enacted/en/html>

For further information see:

- www.workplacerelations.ie
- www.ihrec.ie
- www.citizensinformation.ie

SECTION 3.
WHAT TO DO IF
RACISM HAPPENS
TO YOU



3.1 Step-by-Step: What To Do

If you experience or witness racism or discrimination at work, it can feel overwhelming. You may feel angry, ashamed, confused, or afraid. These feelings are completely understandable. But it is important to know that you have options - and that taking action, at whatever pace feels right for you, is always better than doing nothing.

The steps below are not a strict sequence. Some steps can happen at the same time, and not every situation will require every step. What matters most is that you **document what happened** as early as possible, and that you **do not feel you have to face this alone**.





The Five Steps



STEP 1 - Document Everything

As soon as possible after an incident occurs, write down everything you can remember:

- The exact date, time, and location
- What was said or done, using the exact words if possible
- Who was involved - the name or description of the person who acted
- Who else was present - potential witnesses
- How the incident made you feel
- Whether there is any physical evidence - emails, messages, written notes.

Keep this record somewhere safe and private - not on a work device. Section 6.1 of this guide includes an **Incident Record Template** you can use.





The Five Steps



STEP 2 - Seek Support

You do not have to deal with this alone. Consider speaking to:

- A trusted colleague or friend who was a witness or who you feel safe confiding in
- A trade union representative, if you are a union member
- A support organisation such as Citizens Information, IHREC, or the Migrant Rights Centre (see Section 4).

Speaking to someone does not commit you to any formal action. It simply means you have support and advice as you decide what to do next.





The Five Steps



STEP 3 - Try to Resolve It Informally (if safe to do so)

In some situations - particularly where the incident was less serious or where you believe it may have been unintentional - you may wish to address the matter informally first. This could mean:

- Speaking directly to the person involved and making clear that their behaviour was unacceptable to you
- Speaking to a line manager or HR representative about the situation without making a formal complaint
- Asking a trusted colleague or trade union representative to speak on your behalf.

You are never required to attempt informal resolution. If the behaviour was serious, repeated, or if you do not feel safe raising it informally, you are fully entitled to go directly to a formal complaint.





The Five Steps



STEP 4 - Make a Formal Internal Complaint

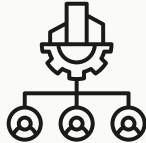
If informal resolution are not appropriate or have not worked, you have the right to make a formal complaint through your employer's internal grievance procedure. Your employer is legally required to have such a procedure in place.

A formal complaint should be made in writing. See Section 3.3 of this guide for guidance on how to do this, and Section 6.2 for a sample complaint letter you can adapt.



The Five Steps

5



STEP 5 - Make a Complaint to an External Body

If your employer does not deal with your complaint properly - or if you do not feel it is appropriate to raise it internally - you have the right to bring your complaint to an external body. The primary body in Ireland for employment equality complaints is the Workplace Relations Commission (WRC). See Section 3.4 for full details.





At a Glance: Your Options

Option	When to Use It	Who to Contact
Informal resolution	Early-stage or less serious incidents; where you feel safe raising it directly	The person involved, your manager, or HR
Internal grievance procedure	When informal resolution has not worked or is not appropriate	Your HR department or line manager
Trade union support	At any stage - unions can advise, accompany you to meetings, and negotiate on your behalf	SIPTU (siptu.ie) or your relevant union
WRC complaint	When internal procedures have failed, or if you prefer to go directly external	wrc.ie or 0818 80 80 90
IHREC	For strategic cases or where you need legal support to pursue a case	ihrec.ie or 01 858 9601
FLAC	For free legal advice before or during any complaint process	flac.ie or 1800 350 250



Important time limit: You must submit a complaint to the WRC within 6 months of the most recent act of discrimination. This deadline can be extended to 12 months in exceptional circumstances. Do not delay - the sooner you act, the stronger your position.

3.2 How to Keep a Record

Keeping a clear, detailed, and concurrent record of incidents is one of the most important things you can do to protect yourself. Your record will be important if you make a formal complaint - either internally or to the WRC.

What to Record	Why It Matters
Date and time of each incident	Establishes a timeline and helps demonstrate whether there is a pattern
Location - where exactly it happened	Helps identify whether certain environments or settings are involved
Exact words used - as close to verbatim as possible	Precise language is more credible and harder to dispute than vague descriptions
Actions taken - what the person did	Distinguishes between verbal and physical incidents, which may have different implications
Names of those involved - the person who acted	Necessary for any formal investigation





What to Record	Why It Matters
Names of witnesses - who else was present	Witnesses can corroborate your account; their recollections are most reliable when recorded early
Your response - what you said or did at the time	Demonstrates that the behaviour was unwelcome and that you did not consent to it
Impact - how the incident affected you	Relevant to any assessment of the severity of the behaviour and any remedy awarded
Evidence - emails, messages, notes, photos	Documentary evidence is highly valuable; save copies outside of work systems

Practical Tips for Record-Keeping

- Write your record as soon as possible after an incident - ideally the same day.
- Keep your record in a personal document - not on a work computer, email, or shared drive.
- If you receive discriminatory messages or emails at work, forward a copy to your personal email before raising a complaint - once a complaint is made, access to your work accounts may be restricted.
- If a colleague witnessed an incident, ask them to write their own account separately, as soon as possible, so that their recollection is preserved.
- Keep all records in chronological order, with each incident clearly dated.
- Use the Incident Record Template in Section 6.1 of this guide.



Is Your Record Confidential?

Your personal record is **your document** - you are not required to share it with your employer unless you choose to, or unless it is requested as part of a formal investigation or legal process. If your complaint proceeds to the WRC or a court, your record may become relevant evidence.

3.3 Making a Complaint at Work

If you decide to make a formal internal complaint, you should do so through your employer's **Grievance Procedure**. All employers in Ireland are required to have a grievance procedure in place. If you are not sure whether your employer has one, ask your HR department or check your contract or staff handbook.

What Is a Grievance Procedure?

A grievance procedure is a formal internal process that allows employees to raise concerns or complaints about their treatment at work. It is designed to resolve workplace disputes fairly and promptly. Under the **WRC Code of Practice on Grievance and Disciplinary Procedures**, your employer is expected to deal with grievances in a way that is:

- **Transparent** - you should know what stage your complaint is at and what is happening
- **Fair** - both sides should have the opportunity to present their account
- **Impartial** - the person investigating the complaint should have no personal interest in the outcome
- **Timely** - complaints should be investigated and resolved within a reasonable timeframe.





How to Make a Formal Complaint: Step by Step

Step	Action	Detail
1	Put your complaint in writing	Address it to your line manager or HR department. If your complaint is about your line manager, address it to their manager or to HR directly
2	State the facts clearly	Include dates, times, what was said or done, who was involved, and who witnessed it
3	Identify the ground	State that you believe you have been discriminated against or harassed on the grounds of your race, nationality, or ethnic origin, and reference the Employment Equality Acts 1998-2015
4	State what outcome you are seeking	For example: an apology, a change in behaviour, disciplinary action against the person responsible, or a change in policy
5	Keep a copy	Always retain a copy of your complaint and any response you receive
6	Follow up in writing	If you have verbal conversations about your complaint, follow up with an email summarising what was discussed



See **Section 6.2** (page 72) of this guide for a **Letter** that you can adapt to your own situation.

Your Rights During the Internal Process

- You have the right to be accompanied by a colleague or trade union representative at any formal meeting.
- You have the right to be informed of the outcome of any investigation into your complaint.
- You have the right to appeal any decision you are not satisfied with.
- You have the right to bring an external complaint to the WRC if you are not satisfied with how your internal complaint has been handled - you do not need to exhaust internal procedures before doing so, though it is generally advisable.

What if There Is No Grievance Procedure?

If your employer does not have a grievance procedure, or refuses to engage with your complaint, this itself may be relevant to any external complaint you make. You should document your attempts to raise the matter internally and the response - or lack of response - you received.

3.4 Making a Formal Complaint to the WRC

The **Workplace Relations Commission (WRC)** is the State body responsible for handling complaints about breaches of employment rights and equality law in Ireland. It is independent, impartial, and **free to use**. You do not need a solicitor to make a complaint, although you may choose to have legal representation.





What the WRC Can Deal With

The WRC handles complaints under a wide range of employment legislation, including:

- **Discrimination and harassment** under the Employment Equality Acts 1998-2015
- **Victimisation** - being penalised for making a complaint
- **Breaches of employment rights** - including pay, working hours, rest breaks, and annual leave
- **Unfair dismissal** under the Unfair Dismissals Acts 1977-2015
- **Constructive dismissal** - where you felt you had no choice but to resign due to your employer's conduct.





How to Make a WRC Complaint: Step by Step

Step 1: Go to the WRC website

- Visit www.workplacerelations.ie and click on "e-Complaint Form".

Step 2: Complete the online complaint form

- The form asks for your details, your employer's details, and the nature of your complaint. It should be completed in English, but language support may be available. Contact the WRC Information and Customer Service on **0818 80 80 90**.

Step 3: Identify the legislation

- You will be asked to identify which law or laws your complaint relates to. For discrimination complaints, this will be the Employment Equality Acts 1998-2015.

Step 4: Submit within the time limit

- You must submit your complaint within **6 months** of the most recent act of discrimination or breach of your rights. This can be extended to **12 months** in exceptional circumstances.

Step 5: Receive acknowledgement

- The WRC will acknowledge your complaint and assign a case number.

Step 6: Mediation or adjudication

- The WRC may offer **mediation** - a voluntary, confidential and free process where both parties try to reach agreement. If mediation is not appropriate or is unsuccessful, your case will proceed to **adjudication** - a formal hearing before an Adjudication Officer. Adjudication is also free of charge. There are no fees at any stage of the WRC process, and you do not need a solicitor to represent you, although you may choose to have one.





Step 7: The hearing

- Both you and your employer will have the opportunity to present evidence and make submissions. You may be represented by a trade union, a solicitor, or another person.

Step 8: The decision

- The Adjudication Officer will issue a written decision, which is published on the WRC website (with names anonymised).

What Remedies Can the WRC Award?

If your complaint is upheld, the WRC Adjudication Officer can order one or more of the following:

Remedy	What It Means
Compensation	Up to 2 years' remuneration for discrimination or harassment complaints under the Employment Equality Acts
Equal pay	An order requiring your employer to pay you the same as a comparator
Re-instatement	Being returned to your job as if you had never been dismissed
Re-engagement	Being offered a comparable position with your employer
Compliance order	An order requiring your employer to take specific steps to comply with equality law



Appealing a WRC Decision

If you or your employer disagree with the outcome of a WRC adjudication, either party may appeal to the **Labour Court** within **42 days** of the decision being issued. The Labour Court is a specialist court that deals with employment disputes. Its decisions are legally binding and may be further appealed to the **High Court** on a point of law only.

Confidentiality

WRC proceedings are generally **conducted in private**. Decisions are published, but the names of the parties are typically anonymised in equality cases. If confidentiality is important to you, you should discuss this with a legal adviser or your trade union representative before proceeding.

3.5 If You Are Dismissed or Treated Unfairly

Being dismissed from your job - or feeling that you had no choice but to leave - is one of the most serious consequences you may face, and one of the most frightening. This section explains your rights if this happens.

Unfair Dismissal

Under the **Unfair Dismissals Acts 1977-2015**, if you have been in continuous employment for **at least 12 months**, your employer cannot dismiss you without:

- A fair reason for the dismissal
- A fair procedure - including proper notice, the right to be heard, and the right to appeal.





Fair reasons for dismissal include genuine redundancy, serious misconduct, or incapability. **Unfair reasons** include:

Automatically Unfair Reasons for Dismissal
Your race, nationality, or ethnic background
Your gender, age, sexual orientation, disability, religion, civil status, or family status
Your membership of - or activities on behalf of - a trade union
Pregnancy or matters related to maternity
Making a protected disclosure (whistleblowing)
Exercising a statutory right, such as requesting parental leave

If you believe you were dismissed for any of these reasons, you can make a complaint to the **WRC** within **6 months** of your dismissal (extendable to 12 months in exceptional circumstances).

Constructive Dismissal

Constructive dismissal occurs when you resign from your job because your employer's behaviour has made your position **so intolerable** that you felt you had no reasonable alternative but to leave. In law, this is treated as a dismissal - even though you technically resigned.



Examples of behaviour that may constitute constructive dismissal include:

- A fundamental change to your terms and conditions without your consent
- A complete failure to address a serious complaint of harassment or discrimination
- Behaviour by your employer or colleagues that amounts to bullying or harassment so severe that remaining at work became untenable
- Being demoted, isolated, or marginalised without any fair reason.

Constructive dismissal claims are complex and the burden of proof is on the employee to demonstrate that the employer's behaviour justified resignation. **Legal advice is strongly recommended** before resigning on these grounds. Contact **FLAC** (www.flac.ie) or **SIPTU** (www.siptu.ie) for free advice.

Notice Entitlements

If you are dismissed, your employer must give you the minimum statutory notice required by law, unless you are being dismissed for **gross misconduct**:

Length of Continuous Service	Minimum Notice Entitlement
13 weeks to 2 years	1 week
2 years to 5 years	2 weeks
5 years to 10 years	4 weeks
10 years to 15 years	6 weeks
More than 15 years	8 weeks





Your contract may provide for a longer notice period than the statutory minimum. You are entitled to whichever is greater.

Redundancy

If your employer makes you redundant, you may be entitled to a **statutory redundancy payment** if you have been in continuous employment for at least **2 years**. The payment is calculated as follows:

- 2 weeks' pay per year of service, plus
- 1 additional week's pay.

A week's pay is capped at **€600 per week** for statutory redundancy purposes. Your contract may provide for a more generous redundancy payment than the statutory minimum.

If you believe your redundancy was used as a pretext to dismiss you because of your race, nationality, or another protected ground, this may constitute both unfair dismissal and discrimination. You should seek advice from FLAC, your trade union, or a solicitor.



Key Takeaway from Section 3



If you experience racism or discrimination at work, you have a clear path forward. Document what happened. Seek support. Use your employer's procedures, if those procedures fail you, the Workplace Relations Commission is there to hear your case - free of charge, and independently of your employer.

Legal references:

Employment Equality Acts 1998-2015

<https://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/1998/act/21/enacted/en/html>

Unfair Dismissals Acts 1977-2015

<https://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/1977/act/10/enacted/en/html>

Workplace Relations Act 2015

<https://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2015/act/16/enacted/en/html>

Minimum Notice and Terms of Employment Acts 1973-2005

<https://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/1973/act/4/enacted/en/print.html>

Redundancy Payments Acts 1967-2014

<https://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/1967/act/21/enacted/en/html>

WRC Code of Practice on Grievance and Disciplinary Procedures

https://www.workplacerelations.ie/en/what_you_should_know/codes_practice/cop3/

For further information see:

- www.workplacerelations.ie
- www.flac.ie
- www.citizensinformation.ie
- www.siptu.ie



SECTION 4. WHERE TO GET HELP



4.1 Support Organisations Directory

Workplace Relations Commission (WRC)

What They Do: Handle complaints under employment equality and employment rights law; provide mediation and adjudication services.

Cost: Free.

Contact: www.workplacerelations.ie / 0818 80 80 90.

Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (IHREC)

What They Do: Provide legal assistance in strategic discrimination cases; publish guidance on equality rights.

Cost: Free.

Contact: www.ihrec.ie / 01 858 9601.

Citizens Information

What They Do: Free advice on employment rights, immigration, social welfare, and all public services.

Cost: Free.

Contact: www.citizensinformation.ie / 0818 07 4000.

Free Legal Advice Centres (FLAC)

What They Do: Free basic legal advice by phone and at local clinics on employment, equality, and other legal matters.

Cost: Free.

Contact: www.flac.ie / 1800 350 250.

Legal Aid Board

What They Do: State-funded legal representation for people who qualify on financial grounds.

Cost: Means-tested.

Contact: www.legalaidboard.ie / 01 646 9600.





SIPTU

What They Do: Ireland's largest trade union - representation, advice, and support at disciplinary and grievance hearings.

Cost: Membership fee.

Contact: www.siptu.ie / 01 858 6300.

Migrant Rights Centre Ireland (MRCI)

What They Do: Information and advocacy for migrants in precarious or low-paid employment.

Cost: Free.

Contact: www.mrci.ie / 01 889 7570.

Nasc - Migrant and Refugee Rights Centre

What They Do: Immigration and employment advice for migrants, asylum seekers, and refugees.

Cost: Free.

Contact: www.nascireland.org / 021 427 3594.

Crosscare Migrant Project

What They Do: Practical support on employment rights, immigration, and access to services.

Cost: Free.

Contact: www.crosscare.ie / 01 873 2844.

Note on Legal Aid: Civil legal aid from the Legal Aid Board is means-tested. Employment equality cases are generally eligible. Contact the Legal Aid Board to check whether you qualify. There is usually a waiting list - seek advice from FLAC in the meantime.



4.2 Support Across Ireland



The following organisations provide free, confidential support to workers and jobseekers anywhere in Ireland. You do not need to live in a specific area to access them.

Organisation	What They Provide	Contact
Citizens Information	Free information and advice on employment rights, immigration, social welfare, and all public services.	citizensinformation.ie / 0818 07 4000
Intreo	State employment service - job search support, training referrals, and employment rights information.	welfare.ie / find your local office online
ETB (Education & Training Board)	Free education and training - English language, digital skills, vocational training, and QQI courses.	etbi.ie to find your local ETB
Blackwater Training & Consulting	The organisation that delivered this programme - contact for information about future training and supports.	info@blackwaterttraining.ie

If You Are an International Protection Applicant

If you are an international protection applicant living anywhere in Ireland, you are entitled to access all services listed above. You also have the right to work if you have been waiting for a decision on your international protection application for 6 months or more and have not caused delay.





Key Takeaway from Section 4



Help is available - and most of it is free. Whether you need information, legal advice, union representation, or local support, there is an organisation that can help you. You do not need to have a perfect case before reaching out. Seeking advice is always the right first step.



SECTION 5. BUILDING A BETTER WORKPLACE



5.1 You Are Not Alone: Working in Solidarity with Others

Experiencing racism or discrimination at work can be an isolating experience. It can make you question yourself, doubt your own perception of events, and feel as though speaking up will only make things worse. These feelings are completely understandable - and completely wrong about the situation you are in.

You are not alone; thousands of workers in Ireland have faced exactly what you are facing. Many of them have taken action - and many of them have succeeded.

Standing Together: The Power of Solidarity

Racism is most powerful when it isolates. It is least powerful when people stand together.

If you are a member of a **trade union**, you already have access to one of the most effective forms of collective protection available to workers. Your union can represent you in disciplinary and grievance hearings, negotiate on your behalf, and amplify your complaint in ways that an individual worker cannot. If you are not yet a union member, consider joining - membership is open to all workers in Ireland regardless of nationality, and fees are based on your income level.



There are different trade unions in Ireland depending on the sector that you work in. The table below lists the most relevant unions for workers in this programme:

Trade Union	Who They Represent	Website	Phone
SIPTU	Ireland's largest union - retail, hospitality, healthcare, transport, manufacturing, and many other sectors	siptu.ie	01 858 6300
Fórsa	Public sector workers - civil service, health, local government, education support	forsa.ie	01 817 1500
INMO	Nurses and midwives	inmo.ie	01 664 0600
UNITE	Construction, manufacturing, hospitality, and general workers	unitetheunion.org	01 889 4400
TUI	Second-level teachers and Further Education staff	tui.ie	01 492 2588
INTO	Primary school teachers	into.ie	01 804 7700
Mandate	Retail and bar workers	mandate.ie	01 836 5877
Connect	Electrical, engineering, and technical workers	connectunion.ie	01 873 4577
CWU	Communications and postal workers	cwu.ie	01 836 6388





If you are not sure which union covers your job, visit the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU) at www.ictu.ie - they can help you find the right union for your sector.

If you are not in a union, you may still find solidarity through:

- **Colleagues** who have witnessed discrimination and are willing to support your account
- **Community organisations** such as MRCI or Nasc, which have experience supporting workers in situations like yours
- **The Pathways to Participation network** - other participants and graduates of this programme who understand the challenges of navigating the Irish labour market as a migrant or minority ethnic worker.

5.2 If You Witness Racism: What You Can Do

Racism at work is not only the concern of the person it is directed at. If you witness a colleague being subjected to racist behaviour, you have the power to make a difference - even if you are not sure what to do or say in the moment.





Situation	What You Can Do
You witness a racist comment or joke	You do not have to confront the person aggressively. A calm, clear response such as <i>"I don't think that's appropriate"</i> or <i>"That's not okay"</i> can be powerful - and signals to the person targeted that they are not alone.
A colleague is being harassed or treated unfairly	Check in with them privately. Ask if they are okay. Ask if they would like your support. Offer to act as a witness or to write down what you saw.
You are asked to act in a discriminatory way	Refuse clearly and document the instruction. An instruction to discriminate is itself a breach of the Employment Equality Acts - see Section 1.2 of this guide.
You are uncertain whether what you witnessed was discrimination	Write it down anyway - date, time, what was said or done. If it later becomes relevant, your concurrent record will be valuable.
You are worried about the consequences of speaking up	Speaking up does not have to mean making a formal complaint. Supporting a colleague informally, or simply recording what you saw, is already meaningful. The Protected Disclosures Act 2014 also protects workers who report wrongdoing in good faith.





Remember: Bystander action - however small - reduces the harm caused by racist behaviour and challenges the culture that allows it to continue. You do not need to be a hero. You just need to not look away.



Your Voice Beyond the Workplace

The experience of navigating racism at work gives you knowledge that has value far beyond your own situation. Ireland is actively working to become a more equal and anti-racist society - and that work requires the voices of people who have lived experience of discrimination.

Ireland's National Action Plan Against Racism 2023-2027 (NAPAR)

NAPAR is Ireland's official government strategy to combat racism and promote equality across all areas of life - including employment, housing, education, and public services. It was developed by the Department of Justice and is funded by the Irish Government.

National Action Plan Against Racism





NAPAR is built around five key goals:



Goal	What It Means in Practice
Protection	Strengthening legal protections against racism and hate crime
Awareness & Education	Building public understanding of racism and its impact
Participation	Ensuring minority ethnic communities have a voice in decisions that affect them
Belonging	Creating environments where everyone feels included and valued
Shared Action	Coordinating anti-racism work across government, employers, and civil society

How This Guide Connects to NAPAR

The Pathways to Participation: Empowering Migrants through Employment, Enterprise, and Anti-Racism Education programme and this guide are direct outputs of NAPAR. Specifically:

- **Action 5.4** of NAPAR calls for the production of employer and worker guides to combat racism and promote racial equality in the workplace. This guide is a direct response to that action.
- **Action 5.5** of NAPAR requires the embedding of cultural competency, unconscious bias, and anti-racism education within training programmes. The Pathways to Participation training streams deliver on this commitment.

Your participation in this programme is not just a personal journey - it is part of Ireland's national response to racism.





Why Your Voice Matters to NAPAR



NAPAR explicitly recognises that policy cannot be shaped without the input of people who have experienced racism directly. The plan commits to the meaningful participation of minority ethnic communities in its design, implementation, and review.

If you want to contribute your voice to that work, you can do so in a number of ways:

- **Public consultations** - the Department of Justice periodically opens consultations on equality and anti-racism policy. These are open to everyone. Check www.gov.ie/justice for upcoming consultations.
- **Community organisations** - IHREC, MRCI, and the Immigrant Council of Ireland actively gather lived experience testimony to support legal cases, policy submissions, and public campaigns.
- **Your employer** - if your workplace does not have an equality policy or a Dignity at Work policy, you can request one. NAPAR places obligations on employers as well as government.
- **This programme** - Blackwater Training welcomes feedback from participants on their experiences. Your input directly shapes how this programme develops.

Your experience and perspective matters. Ireland's workplaces will only become more equitable if the people who understand inequality from the inside are part of shaping the response to it.



Key Takeaway from Section 5



You do not have to face racism alone - and you do not have to be silent about it. Whether you are seeking support for yourself, standing up for a colleague, or adding your voice to a broader conversation about equality in Irish workplaces, every action counts. The final section of this guide gives you the practical tools to take your next step.

Further reading:

- National Action Plan Against Racism 2023-2027 (www.gov.ie/en/department-of-children-disability-and-equality/publications/national-action-plan-against-racism)
- IHREC Equality at Work resources (www.ihrec.ie)
- SIPTU Workers' Rights (www.siptu.ie)



SECTION 6. PRACTICAL TOOLS AND TEMPLATES



This section contains four practical tools you can use directly. They are designed to be removed from this guide, photocopied, or adapted for your own situation.



6.1 Incident Record Template

Gathering all relevant evidence and documents to support your case - such as emails, contracts, meeting minutes, and records of what was said - is one of the most important steps you can take. Use this template to record each incident as soon as possible after it occurs. Keep your completed records in a safe, private location - not on a work device.





INCIDENT RECORD - CONFIDENTIAL

YOUR DETAILS

Your name	
Your job title	
Your employer / workplace	
Date you completed this record	

INCIDENT DETAILS

Date of incident	
Time of incident	
Location (exact place - e.g. staffroom, shop floor, car park)	



WHAT HAPPENED



PEOPLE INVOLVED

Name / description of person who acted	
Their job title or role	
Their relationship to you (manager, colleague, customer)	

WITNESSES

Name	Job Title / Role	Were they present?
		☐ Yes ☐ No
		☐ Yes ☐ No
		☐ Yes ☐ No





YOUR RESPONSE AT THE TIME



IMPACT ON YOU

EVIDENCE

Type of evidence	Where it is stored



HAVE YOU REPORTED THIS?



Reported to manager / HR?	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not yet
Date reported (if applicable)	
Response received?	☐ Yes ☐ No
Summary of response	

Signature: _____

Date: ____ / ____ / ____

Use a separate sheet for each incident. Keep all sheets together in date order.





6.2 Sample Complaint Letter - Internal Grievance



Use this template when making a **formal written complaint to your employer**. Adapt the sections in brackets to your own situation. Keep a copy of everything you send.



[Your Full Name]
[Your Address]
[Your Email Address]
[Date]

**[Name of HR Manager / Line
Manager / Managing Director]**
[Company Name]
[Company Address]

**Re: Formal Grievance - Complaint of Racial Discrimination and/or
Harassment**

Dear [Name],

I am writing to make a formal complaint under [Company Name]'s
Grievance Procedure in relation to treatment I have experienced at work
which I believe constitutes discrimination and/or harassment on the
grounds of my **race / nationality / ethnic origin** within the meaning of the
Employment Equality Acts 1998-2015.

1. Background

I have been employed by [Company Name] as a [Job Title] since [Start
Date]. I am based at [Location / Department].

2. Details of the Complaint

The following incidents have occurred, which I believe constitute
discrimination and/or harassment on the grounds of my race / nationality /
ethnic origin:

Incident 1:

On [Date], at approximately [Time], in [Location], [Name or description of
person] said / did the following:





[Describe exactly what happened in clear, factual terms. Use the exact words spoken if possible. Include who was present.]



Incident 2 (if applicable):

On [Date], at approximately [Time], in [Location], [Name or description of person] said / did the following:

[Repeat as needed for each incident.]

3. Impact

These incidents have had the following impact on me:

[Describe how the incidents have affected you - for example: distress, difficulty concentrating, reluctance to come to work, impact on your health or confidence.]

4. What I Am Seeking

I am requesting that [Company Name] takes the following action in response to this complaint:

- A formal investigation into the incidents described above
- [Disciplinary action against the person(s) responsible / An apology / A review of workplace policies / Other - specify]
- Confirmation that I will not be subjected to any further such treatment
- Confirmation that I will not be penalised in any way for making this complaint

5. Legal Context

I wish to note that under Section 74(2) of the Employment Equality Acts 1998-2015, any penalisation of an employee for making a complaint of discrimination constitutes **victimisation** and is itself unlawful. I expect this complaint to be handled in accordance with the law and with [Company Name]'s own policies.



I am available to meet to discuss this matter at a time convenient to both parties. I would ask that any such meeting be confirmed in writing in advance, and that I be given the opportunity to be accompanied by a colleague or trade union representative.



I look forward to receiving your written acknowledgement of this complaint within **5 working days**, and a response within **20 working days**.

Yours sincerely,

[Your Full Name]
[Your Job Title]
[Date]

[Your Signature]

Enclosures: *[List any supporting documents you are attaching - e.g. Incident Record, copies of relevant emails or messages]*





6.3 My Rights Checklist

Use this checklist to confirm that you know your key rights as a worker in Ireland. You can also use it to identify any areas where you may need further information or support.

EMPLOYMENT CONTRACT & PAY

Status	Right
☐	I have received a written statement of my core terms of employment within 5 days of starting work.
☐	I am being paid at least the national minimum wage of €14.15 per hour (from 1 January 2026).
☐	I receive a written payslip with every payment showing my gross pay and all deductions.
☐	Any deductions from my pay (other than statutory deductions) have been authorised by me in writing.

WORKING HOURS & REST

Status	Right
☐	I am not required to work more than an average of 48 hours per week.
☐	I receive a 15-minute break after 4.5 hours and a 30-minute break after 6 hours of work.
☐	I receive at least 11 consecutive hours of rest in every 24-hour period.
☐	I receive at least 24 consecutive hours of rest per week.



LEAVE ENTITLEMENTS

Status	Right
☐	I receive a minimum of 4 weeks (or 8% of hours worked) paid annual leave per year.
☐	I am entitled to 10 public holidays per year with pay.
☐	I am entitled to 5 days paid sick leave per year (from 2024) at 70% of my normal pay.

DIGNITY & EQUALITY AT WORK

Status	Right
☐	I cannot be discriminated against because of my race, nationality, or ethnic origin.
☐	I have the right to work in an environment free from racial harassment.
☐	My employer has a written Equality Policy and a Dignity at Work / Anti-Harassment Policy.
☐	I know how to access my employer's grievance procedure.
☐	I cannot be victimised - penalised or treated unfairly - for making a complaint of discrimination.
☐	I have the right to be accompanied by a colleague or union representative at any formal meeting.





IF SOMETHING GOES WRONG

Status	Right
☐	I know that complaints to the WRC must be made within 6 months of the most recent incident.
☐	I know that WRC complaints are free to make and do not require a solicitor.
☐	I know the contact details for at least one support organisation (Citizens Information, FLAC, SIPTU, IHREC, MRCI).
☐	After 12 months of continuous employment, I cannot be dismissed without a fair reason and a fair process.

If you ticked "No" or "Not sure" for any item, refer to the relevant section of this guide or contact Citizens Information (0818 07 4000) for free advice.



6.4 Key Vocabulary

The following terms appear throughout this guide and in Irish employment law more generally. Understanding them will help you communicate more clearly about your rights and your situation.

Term	Plain English Definition
Adjudication	A formal hearing at the WRC where an independent officer hears both sides and makes a legally binding decision
Burden of proof	In discrimination cases under Irish law, once you establish facts from which discrimination may be inferred, the burden shifts to your employer to prove that no discrimination occurred
Civil liability	Legal responsibility that can result in an order to pay compensation, as distinct from criminal responsibility
Constructive dismissal	Where you resign because your employer's behaviour was so serious that you had no reasonable choice but to leave. Irish law treats this as a dismissal
Contract of employment	A legally binding agreement between you and your employer setting out your terms and conditions of work
Direct discrimination	Treating someone less favourably than another person in a comparable situation because of a protected characteristic such as race or nationality
Discrimination	Treating someone less favourably, or placing them at a disadvantage, because of a protected characteristic





Term	Plain English Definition
Equal Status Acts	Legislation that prohibits discrimination not only in employment but in wider settings including goods, services, housing, and education.
Employment Equality Acts	The primary legislation in Ireland prohibiting discrimination in employment. The nine protected grounds include race and nationality.
Gross misconduct	Serious behaviour that justifies immediate dismissal without notice. Examples include theft, violence, or serious dishonesty.
Grievance procedure	Your employer's internal process for raising a formal complaint about your treatment at work.
Harassment	Unwanted conduct related to a protected ground - such as race or nationality - that violates your dignity or creates a hostile environment at work.
Indirect discrimination	A policy or practice that appears neutral but places people of a certain race or nationality at a particular disadvantage without justification.
Intersectional discrimination	Discrimination based on more than one protected ground simultaneously - for example, race and gender.
Labour Court	The appeal body for WRC decisions in employment equality cases. Appeals must be made within 42 days of the WRC decision.
PRSI	Pay Related Social Insurance - a compulsory deduction from your wages that funds social welfare benefits including illness benefit, maternity benefit, and the State pension.



Term	Plain English Definition
Protected disclosure	A report made by a worker about wrongdoing in the workplace. Workers who make protected disclosures in good faith are legally protected from penalisation.
Protected grounds	The nine characteristics listed in the Employment Equality Acts on which discrimination is prohibited: race, nationality, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation, religion, civil status, and family status.
USC	Universal Social Charge - an additional tax deducted from income above €13,000 per year.
Victimisation	Treating a worker unfairly because they have made, or indicated an intention to make, a complaint of discrimination. Victimisation is itself a breach of the Employment Equality Acts.
Vicariously liable	An employer can be held legally responsible for discriminatory acts committed by their employees, even if the employer was unaware, unless they took reasonably practicable steps to prevent it.
WRC	Workplace Relations Commission - the State body that handles employment rights and equality complaints in Ireland. Free to use, independent, and impartial.

For further definitions and plain English explanations of Irish employment law, visit:

- www.citizensinformation.ie
- www.wrc.ie
- www.ihrec.ie



Final Message

This guide was developed by **Blackwater Training & Consulting**, a training and consulting organisation based in Bailieborough, Co. Cavan.

Blackwater Training delivers non-accredited training programmes across a wide range of areas, with a particular focus on community education, employment readiness, and social inclusion.



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Pathways to Participation: Empowering Migrants through Employment, Enterprise, and Anti-Racism Education is a 10-month pilot programme funded by the Department of Justice, Home Affairs and Migration through the Ireland Against Racism Fund 2025.

It supports migrants and minority ethnic communities in Ireland to access employment, self-employment, and civic life through structured training, mentoring, and practical resources including this guide.

For more information about Blackwater Training's work, visit www.blackwatertraining.ie.



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Key Contacts at a Glance



Organisation	Phone	Website
Workplace Relations Commission	0818 80 80 90	wrc.ie
Citizens Information	0818 07 4000	citizensinformation.ie
IHREC	01 858 9601	ihrec.ie
FLAC	1800 350 250	flac.ie
SIPTU	01 858 6300	siptu.ie
MRCI	01 889 7570	mrci.ie
Legal Aid Board	01 646 9600	legallaidboard.ie
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**An Roinn Dlí agus Cirt,
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This guide is for general information purposes only and does not constitute legal advice. Every effort has been made to ensure accuracy at the time of publication. For advice about your specific situation, contact one of the support organisations listed in this guide.

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