

From: Jill Minne
Director, People and Organisational Development

Date: 6 September 2024

To: 1. DoF Permanent Secretary
2. Minister

LAUNCH OF CIVIL SERVICE INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE GUIDE

Issue: The Civil Service Diversity Action Plan 2023/24 contained a commitment to develop an Inclusive Language Guide. Stakeholder engagement on the draft guide is complete and the final version of the guide is attached (Annex A). It is proposed the guide includes a foreword from you (Annex B) which has been cleared by DoF Press Office. It is intended the guide will launch as part of National Inclusion Week 2024 which takes place 23-29 September 2024. A separate submission on our plans for National Inclusion Week 2024 will follow.

Timing: Desk Immediate. The guide will launch during National Inclusion Week 2024. Time needs to be arranged in your diary before 23 September 2024 for you to record a video message which will feature in the communications to launch National Inclusion Week 2024, subject to your consent. A submission on our plans for National Inclusion Week 2024 will follow.

FOI Implications: In the event of a request for disclosure of information contained in this submission under the FOI Act, the request would be considered in the context of the relevant provisions of the legislation, including any relevant exemptions that may be applicable.

Presentational Issues: The Inclusive Language Guide is a positive step in the Civil Service's diversity and inclusion journey, providing guiding principles and suggestions to

- educate colleagues on how they can be more inclusive in the language they use.**
- Equality implications:** The Civil Service is an equal opportunities employer and is committed to creating an inclusive workplace. Inclusive language respects the diversity of people's identities, experiences and backgrounds and prevents individuals or groups feeling excluded.
- Legislative Implications:** Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 places statutory duties on all public authorities, in carrying out their functions, to promote equality of opportunity and good relations and to make equality central to the whole range of public policy decision-making.
- Recommendation:** You are asked to note the Inclusive Language Guide (Annex A) and agree the proposed foreword from you (Annex B).

Background

1. The Civil Service Diversity Action 2023/24 Plan contained a commitment to develop an Inclusive Language Guide.
2. The guide has been developed to help colleagues understand the important role language plays in creating an inclusive workplace. It aims to empower colleagues to consider how the language they use can impact others and the potential it has to make someone feel isolated, unwelcome or excluded.
3. In developing the guide, there has been engagement with the Diversity Champions Network (DCN), staff networks and external stakeholders including the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland (ECNI) and representatives from the disability sector. Feedback from stakeholders has been reflected in the final version (**Annex A**). It is proposed that the guide contains a foreword from (**Annex B**) you which has been cleared by DoF Press Office. Feedback from stakeholders has been positive, and the guide has been welcomed as an addition to the existing suite of inclusion resources available.
4. It is proposed that the Inclusive Language Guide is launched during National Inclusion Week 2024 which takes place 23-29 September 2024. A submission in respect of the communications plan for National Inclusion Week will follow.
5. The guide will be reviewed regularly and will be accessible to staff through: (i) the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion section of the staff e-learning portal; (ii) the Diversity and Inclusion intranet hub; and (iii) the Department of Finance website.
6. The guide will be shared with Civil Service Trade Unions and the Civil Service Commissioners.

7. Diversity Champions will promote the guide in their departments through management briefings and staff engagement sessions etc.

Recommendation:

8. You are asked to note the Inclusive Language Guide (**Annex A**) and agree the proposed foreword from you (**Annex B**).



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Foreword from Minister of Finance, Dr Caoimhe Archibald MLA

We all have a role to play in championing diversity and inclusion to make our workplace a safe, welcoming space where everyone feels respected, valued and able to contribute regardless of their personal circumstances, identity, community background; ethnicity; or sexual orientation.

Our actions, language and behaviours can affect those around us and are central in shaping the type of culture we work in. Inclusive language acknowledges and values diversity amongst our colleagues, customers and stakeholders. It aims to avoid incorrect assumptions or stereotypes, helping to foster a culture of respect, and belonging in our workplace.

This guide has been developed to provide guiding principles and suggestions on how you can be inclusive in the language you use. It does not set out to be definitive, as language is constantly evolving, but it is a good starting point to become more conscious of the language you use and better understand how your language can impact others and make them feel included or excluded.

This guide builds on the existing range of resources available on the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Toolkit available on LInKS to help us all deepen our diversity knowledge and create a truly inclusive workplace for all. I encourage you to all to review the toolkit to learn more - [NICAL LInKS: Equality, Diversity and Inclusion](#).

By taking the time to become more aware of the language we use and by consciously adopting inclusive language practices, together we can ensure that differences within our workplaces and society are positively recognised, valued and respected, making us a better Civil Service for all.

Dr Caoimhe Archibald MLA
MINISTER OF FINANCE