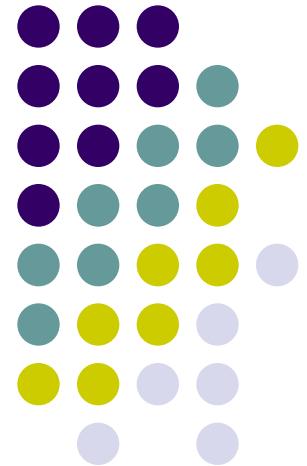
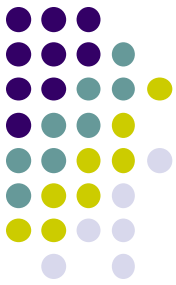


Ireland: Making Rights a Reality for Persons in Poverty ?

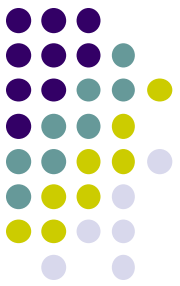
Laurence Bond
Director

Irish Human Rights & Equality Commission
22 March 2018





	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Income		€	€	€	€
Nominal Income - Equivalised disposable income per individual					
At risk of poverty threshold (60% of median income)	10,966	10,957	11,318	12,000	12,358
Poverty & deprivation rates	%	%	%	%	%
At risk of poverty rate	17.3	16.5	17.2	16.9	16.5
Deprivation rate	26.9	30.5	29.0	25.5	21.0
Deprivation rate for those at risk of poverty	48.9	55.1	51.2	51.5	50.7
Consistent poverty rate	8.5	9.1	8.8	8.7	8.3
Income equality indicators					
Gini coefficient (%)	31.8	32.0	32.0	30.8	30.6
Income quintile share ratio	5.1	5.0	5.1	4.7	4.7



Share of Equivalised Income by Decile

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Decile	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
1	3.5	3.6	3.2	3.0	2.9	3.1	3.0	3.3	3.4
2	5.1	5.2	5.0	5.0	4.8	4.9	4.8	5.0	5.0
3	5.9	6.1	5.9	6.0	5.9	5.9	5.9	5.9	5.9
4	6.8	7.0	6.8	6.9	6.8	6.7	6.8	6.8	6.9
5	7.9	8.1	7.8	7.9	7.9	7.7	7.8	8.0	8.0
6	9.1	9.3	9.1	9.2	9.1	9.0	9.0	9.2	9.2
7	10.4	10.6	10.3	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.6
8	12.2	12.3	12.0	12.4	12.5	12.4	12.4	12.5	12.2
9	14.7	14.8	15.2	15.2	15.4	15.4	15.3	15.2	14.7
10	24.4	23.2	24.7	24.0	24.3	24.7	24.7	23.9	24.1



**Income and Poverty Rates
by statistical indicator and Year
Both sexes (%)**

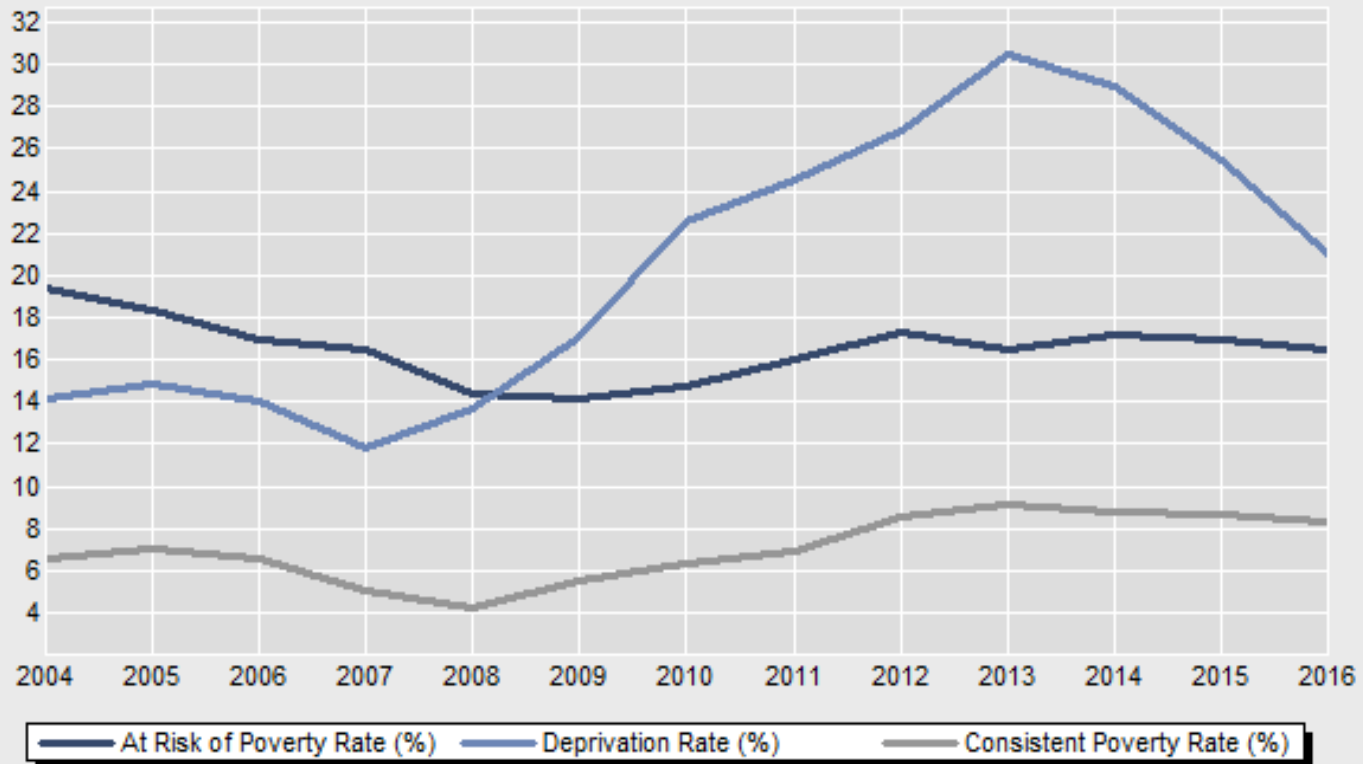
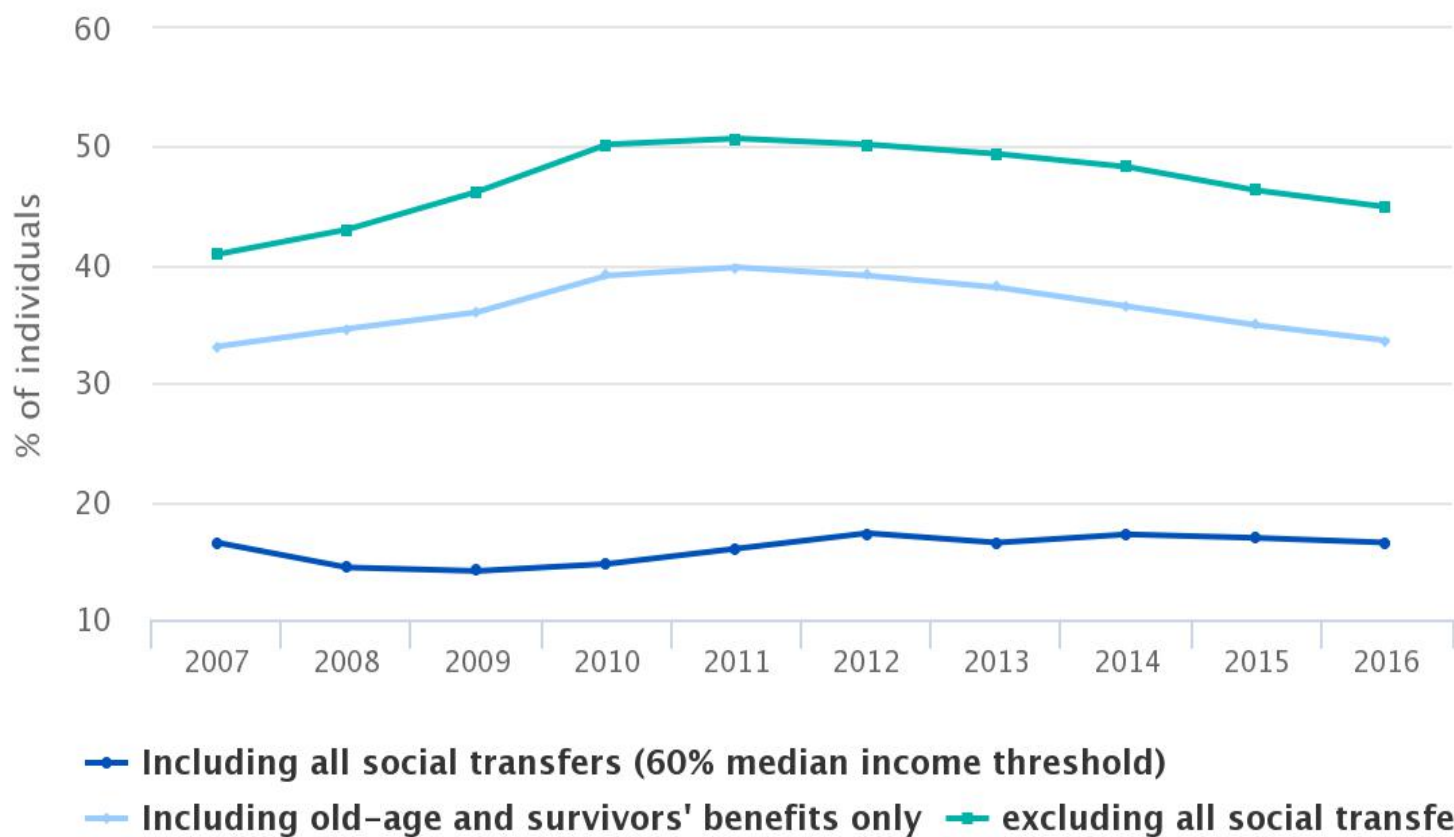




Figure 6 The at risk of poverty rate including and excluding social transfers by ar



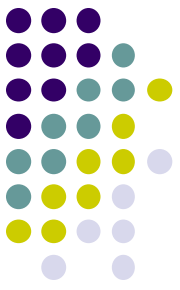
Source: CSO Ireland

Need to look beyond these aggregate income data...



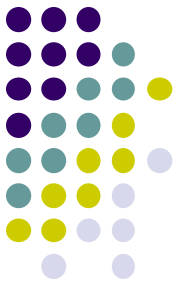
- To see who are the ‘persons living in poverty
- To identify the processes and barriers that make them poor

Applying an equality lens we see that



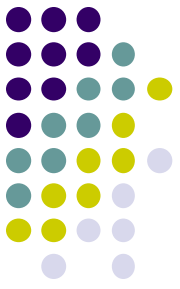
- Many of the protected groups are particularly disadvantaged across a range of social and economic domains
- For example a recent Irish study measured *persistent material deprivation* across 11 EU countries: Ireland, the UK, Sweden, Finland, the Netherlands, Austria, Belgium, France, Italy, Spain and Greece
- In all 11 countries, lone parents and adults with a disability were more likely to be deprived than other adults.
- On average 23 per cent of lone parents and 14 per cent of adults with a disability were persistently deprived compared with 5 per cent of other working-age adults.

And much more so in Ireland..



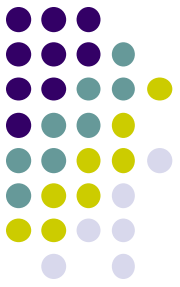
- The figures are much higher in Ireland where 33 per cent of lone parents and 21 per cent of adults with a disability were persistently deprived.
- In Ireland, the persistent deprivation rate is 26 percentage points higher among lone parents and 14 percentage points higher for adults with a disability than for other adults.

And its not just lone parents and people with disabilities...



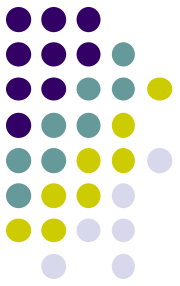
- This study did not [have data to] separately look at other protected groups
- Had it done so there is every reason to believe that it would have found a similar pattern for at least some other protected groups.
- And this is just an illustrative example – which I picked because it is specific to poverty
- Where there is data on the experience of the protected groups in other specific socio economic domains – employment, education, health, housing and so on – you will frequently find similar patterns.

Is this widespread group disadvantage a result of discrimination?



- A lot of evidence points towards discrimination as a **significant factor**. For example a recent study carried out for the IHREC found that -
- Persons with Disabilities are more than twice as likely as those without a disability to experience discrimination in all areas – at work, in recruitment and in accessing public and private services.
- Never-married lone parents are more likely to experience discrimination in public and private services than single childless adults.

And also ...



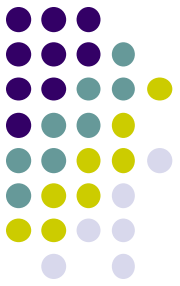
- Women are almost twice as likely as men to experience discrimination at work, with issues of pay and promotion frequently raised
- Black people are three times more likely (than white people) to experience discrimination in the workplace and in access to public services and over four times more likely to experience discrimination in access to private services.
- Irish Travellers are almost ten times more likely (than other white Irish people) to experience discrimination in seeking work, and over twenty-two times more likely to experience discrimination in access to private services.

From discrimination to disadvantage?...



- Other research has confirmed that experiencing discrimination as reported in our study is related to poorer outcomes – in the labour market and other domains.
- And remember this study is only addressing individuals experience of direct discrimination in particular domains
- But discrimination is also structural and institutional – written into laws, norms policies and practices
- Discrimination is also ‘indirect’ - **Facially neutral** – laws, norms , policies, procedures practices – that have disparate negative impact on a protected group or groups

The effects of discrimination are also cumulative over time and across domains

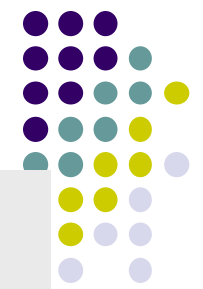


- For example – as we have seen Irish Travellers are very likely to face discrimination when looking for work
- *However another reason Travellers have poorer labour market outcomes is because they have poorer educational levels*
- But this is also at least in part the result of direct discrimination Travellers face in education
- *However another reason Travellers have poorer educational outcomes is lower parental engagement with schools*
- But this is at least in part the result of the discrimination Traveller parents faced earlier in the education system and continue to face in the wider society..

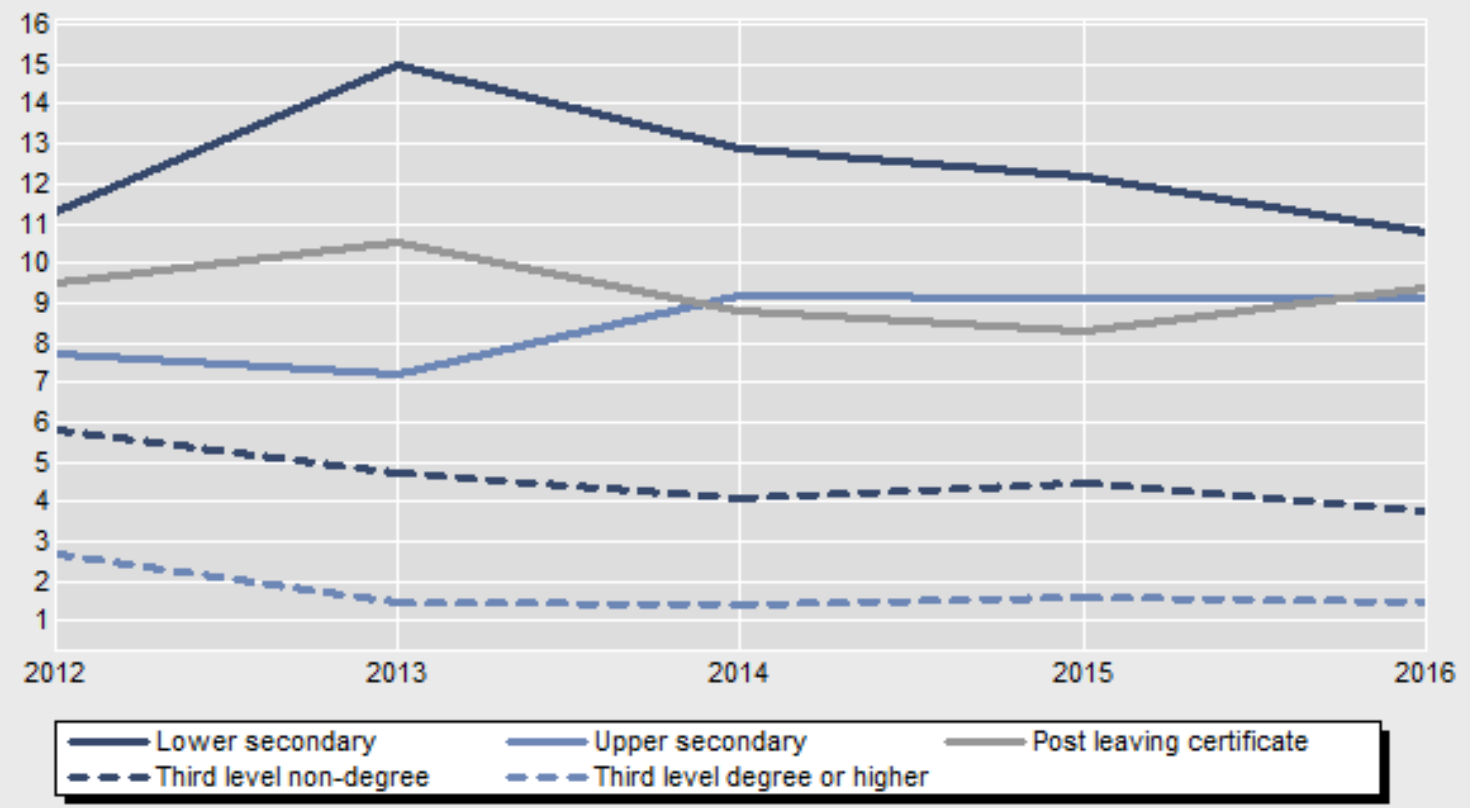
From disadvantage to discrimination?...



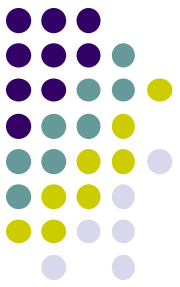
- Many groups protected by equality legislation are significantly over-represented among those living in poverty
- [This is somewhat – but less true of women who given that they make up half the population are obviously very diverse in social terms]
- In part this overrepresentation is a result of discrimination in all its forms
- However it is also because equality groups are often overrepresented among what are sometimes referred to as ‘lower social classes’ – I will use the term working class
- And working class people whether they are covered by equality legislation or not are also overrepresented in poverty
- Again this is for a number of different reasons – one of which is **discrimination** although this often goes unrecognised



Consistent Poverty Rate (%)
by Highest Level of Education Completed and Year
(%)

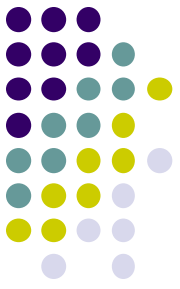


Again this is for a number of different reasons – one of which is discrimination although this often goes unrecognised



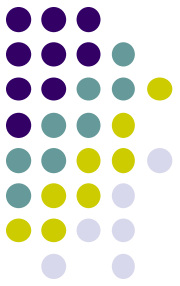
- There is also good evidence that **working class people** are very likely to face discrimination when looking for work
- *However another reason **working class people** have poorer labour market outcomes is because they have poorer educational levels*
- But this is also at least in part the result of direct discrimination **working class people** face in education
- *However another reason **working class people** have poorer educational outcomes is lower parental engagement with schools*
- But this is at least in part the result of the discrimination **working class parents** faced earlier in the education system and continue to face in the wider society..

Social Rights are Human Rights



- International human rights law recognizes a right to education, a right to healthcare, a right to social protection for those in need, and a right to an adequate standard of living.
- However in reality many in government and elsewhere have had difficulty with the idea that “economic and social rights are full-fledged human rights”
- despite their clear recognition in key treaties such as International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, and in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

The prohibition of discrimination is also a key part of the Human Rights framework



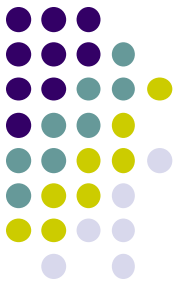
- In particular it affirms that there should be no discrimination in the enjoyment of the rights established by human rights law
- An it incorporates an expansive definition of the protected grounds
- ICESCR lists ‘social origin, property, birth or other status’ amongst the grounds in the non-discrimination protection provided for under Article 2.

According to the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights:



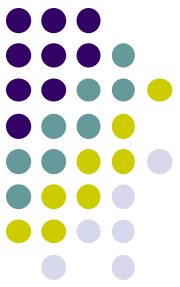
- The term ‘other status’ may include ‘place of residence’ or ‘economic and social situation’.
- ‘Individuals and groups of individuals must not be arbitrarily treated on account of belonging to a certain economic or social group or strata within society.
- A person’s social and economic situation when living in poverty or being homeless may result in pervasive discrimination, stigmatization and negative stereotyping which can lead to the refusal of, or unequal access to, the same quality of education and health care as others, as well as the denial of or unequal access to public places.’

Making rights a reality for persons in poverty?



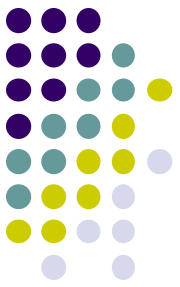
- Work for the elimination of discrimination in all its forms
- Work to establish a clear rights based floor of social protection and social provision
- Work to support poor people and groups in effectively claiming their rights

Work for the elimination of discrimination in all its forms through ...



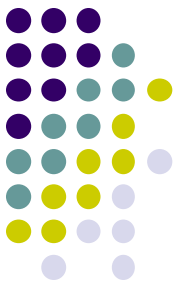
- Robust enforcement of equality law including the development of a critical mass of strategic case work under the equality acts and the strategic use of other enforcement powers
- Strengthening and extension of equality law and policy - introducing a disadvantaged social status ground – but also addressing over broad exemptions, ensuring remedies are effective and dissuasive and so on.
- Though the promotion of proactive engagement in good equality practice in organisations and in the public sphere

Work to establish a clear rights based floor of social protection and social provision



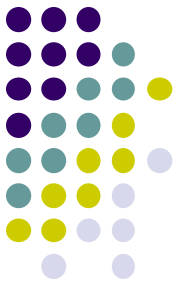
- Specify concretely what the key rights are and what specific changes they require in law and social and economic policy.
- Engage with political and civil society to promote the adoption and implementation of these key policies
- Promote the institutional embedding of equality and human rights proofing in social and economic policy making more generally

Work to support poor people and groups in effectively claiming their rights



- Poverty is not just a matter of material deprivation
- Poverty is at least in part created through widespread exclusionary practices – including but not limited to discrimination – which disempower, shame and undermine poor people
- Countering these exclusionary practices is essential to making rights real for people in poverty
- In practice this requires committing resources to supporting poor people and groups to claim their rights
- It also requires developing ways of working that concretely embody this solidarity

Finally...



- No equality body or human rights institution – in and of itself -can make rights a reality for persons living in poverty
- This will require wider social change and mobilisation that in effect must embed a culture and practice of equality and human rights across society
- Equality bodies and human rights institutions can make a contribution
- Their key strategic challenge is to identify what their most effective contribution can be

Thank you

