

# **EQUALITY COMMISSION FOR NORTHERN IRELAND**

## **Summary Report on the Implementation of the Section 75 Equality and Good Relations Duties by Public Authorities**

**1 January 2000 - 31 March 2002**



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## **Preface**

### **A New Approach to Equality of Opportunity and Good Relations**

People in Northern Ireland have been given a new voice in public policy decision making. New legal obligations require public bodies “to have due regard” to the need to promote equality of opportunity and “to have regard” to the desirability of promoting good relations.

The duty is designed to ensure that equality considerations are made central to policy development by Government.

This new approach has the potential to make a real difference to the lives of people in Northern Ireland, since those affected by policy decisions must be consulted and their interests taken into account. This provides an opportunity for the community to participate in public policy-making, right from the start of the process.

### **New legal duties**

This approach grew out of an earlier non-statutory initiative, and is intended to be more effective, more transparent and more accountable. In the Agreement reached between Governments and political parties in April 1998, the section dealing with Rights, Safeguards and Equality of Opportunity included a commitment to a statutory obligation on public authorities. This was then implemented through the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

Under Section 75 of this Act (Appendix A), public authorities are required to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity –

- Between persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status or sexual orientation;
- Between men and women generally;
- Between persons with a disability and persons without; and
- Between persons with dependants and persons without.

A public authority is also required to have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group.

This approach is reflected in the Northern Ireland Executive’s Programme for Government which sets out its vision of Northern Ireland as “a peaceful, fair, and inclusive community”, requiring both the promotion of equality, and working to improve community relations.

## **Equality Schemes**

Each public authority must have an equality scheme in place, as both a statement of its commitment to the statutory duties, and a plan for performance on the duties. Public authorities must assess the equality impact of their policies and publish the outcome of this.

## **Consultation**

Consultation with those affected by public policy decisions is at the heart of the new law. Equality schemes spell out an authority's arrangements for consultation on the duties and on the likely impact of policies.

## **Impact on Policy**

If a public authority's assessment of the impact of a policy shows a possible "adverse impact" on any group, it must consider how this impact might be reduced, and how an alternative policy might lessen any adverse impact the policy may have. The public authority must also show that it considered how any alternative policies might better achieve the promotion of equality of opportunity.

## **How do the statutory duties affect people in Northern Ireland?**

This is a very significant development and provides an important opportunity for all those affected to influence public policy decision making. It makes the process more transparent and accountable. People now have the opportunity to make an input to the formulation of policies that impact on their interests. Consultation by public bodies has to be meaningful and be conducted before a decision is made, while it is still possible to influence the outcome. This leads to a new set of relationships between Government and people in our society. The aim is to have more informed and better decision-making.

The legislation came into effect on 1 January 2000, with the first equality schemes being approved by the Commission in February 2001. Each equality scheme contained a commitment by the public body to submit an annual report of its progress to the Commission, setting out the steps it has taken to promote equality of opportunity and good relations. The Commission has used this information to assist it in keeping the effectiveness of Section 75 under review, and to publicly report progress.

This report is based upon the annual progress reports submitted to the Commission to date, and summarises progress made by public authorities between 1 January 2000 and 31 March 2002. A more detailed report is available on the Commission's website at [www.equalityni.org](http://www.equalityni.org)

## **Foreword**

The Equality Commission for Northern Ireland is proud to champion the elimination of unlawful discrimination and the promotion of equality of opportunity for everyone in Northern Ireland. Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 places significant duties on public authorities, the purpose of which is to enable mainstreaming of equality of opportunity and good relations into their work. We would like to thank the various public authorities for their co-operation in reporting their progress on the implementation of the statutory duties. For everyone involved in the production of progress reports, this was a new undertaking and the Commission acknowledges the wealth of information presented in these reports and the continuing efforts made by public authorities to implement the statutory duties.

This summary report describes the progress reported by individual public authorities. More detailed progress is included in the full progress report which is available on the Commission's web-site. We have in these reports identified the work of individual public authorities on some occasions, in order to highlight good practice or lack of progress or to note where important statements have been made.

The Commission will use the information from the reports to help to examine its effectiveness in terms of supporting the implementation of the statutory duties, and to help to inform its future strategies and activities in its statutory duty work.

The lessons learned from the process of producing the reports will be used to further improve the 'progress reporting template' provided by the Commission to public authorities. The template for the period 1 April 2002 – 31 March 2003 will seek additional information on the progress being made on equality impact assessment and screening of new policies. It will also enable public authorities to identify outputs and outcomes from their work on the statutory duties, and the extent of their partnership work with groups from the Section 75 categories.

I look forward to working with public authorities to ensure the effective implementation of the statutory duties.

**Joan Harbison**  
**Chief Commissioner**  
**Equality Commission for Northern Ireland**

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 During the period covered by this report public authorities have made progress on awareness raising, development of procedures and stated commitment to effecting change. The individual progress reports submitted by public authorities demonstrate much innovation and creativity, particularly where there have been joined up approaches to undertaking Section 75 work. The individual reports further highlight the problems faced by public authorities - particularly in relation to: ensuring ongoing commitment to implementation of the duties; delivery of the duties by different sizes and shapes of authorities; the issue of resourcing; how to ensure effective consultation; and the differing levels of commitment to the duties. Public authorities are not a homogenous group: there are those which are demonstrating a great deal of progress on implementation of the duties, and there are others whose progress has been much slower.
- 1.2 The progress being made by public authorities is, as far as this report is concerned, based only upon the information contained in the progress reports submitted by public authorities. This summary report and the full progress report represent a composite picture of the position at the end of March 2002. The Commission notes that public authorities may have undertaken other activities during the reporting period, to help to implement the duties, but if these have not been included in progress reports we are not able to comment on them. The Commission has not validated the accuracy of information included in the summary and full progress reports for the period.
- 1.3 The report appears some 12 months after the end of the reporting period covered. The Commission during December 2002 was still receiving progress reports from public authorities. It will be the Commission's intention to ensure that progress reports for the period 1 April 2002 – 31 March 2003 are submitted in advance of a final deadline date of 31 July 2003, so that the next overall progress report may be issued before the end of 2003.
- 1.4 The period January 2000 – March 2001 was a crucial time for the Commission in terms of developing guidance and support systems to ensure the effective implementation of the statutory duties. Public authorities worked mainly on: developing understanding of Section 75 duties; raising awareness among their employees and service users; developing a compliant equality scheme; and starting work on screening of their policies.
- 1.5 Between April 2001 and March 2002, more public authorities were designated and equality schemes approved. This period also offered the opportunity to address a number of concepts and processes crucial to the roll-out of equality scheme work. The public authorities and the Commission focussed on Equality Impact Assessments (EQIAs); Section 75 complaints; developing communication; and an examination of progress being made. The lessons learned during the introduction and roll-out of equality schemes in both periods informed the Commission's work on the statutory duties from 2000 onwards.

## **2. Background and Progress Report Structure**

- 2.1** This report covers the period from 1 January 2000 to 31 March 2002. All 153 public authorities subject to Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act (1998) submitted progress reports to the Commission.
- 2.2** All public authorities were written to on three occasions, about producing a progress report for the period ending 31 March 2002. Public authorities with approved equality schemes must report on progress to the Commission annually.
- 2.3** In June 2001 and February 2002 the Commission produced detailed guidance for public authorities on progress reporting. The Commission received advice and input on the format and content of guidance from a range of public authorities and affected groups. The progress reports received show that public authorities on the whole applied this guidance.
- 2.4** Most of the public authorities' first progress reports were submitted to the Commission by the end of August 2001. They were analysed, and the Commission's Statutory Duty Committee considered an internal report on progress in December 2001. Subsequently the Commission took soundings on the format of the progress report template for the 2001-2002 period and a modified version was sent to public authorities in February 2002. The majority of progress reports for the period ending 31 March 2002 were received by the end of September 2002, although a significant number of reports were received after this.
- 2.5** This summary report is divided into six sections. Section 3 is the summary of progress being made on implementation of the statutory duties. Sections 4 and 5 outline the key themes in the report plus recommended next steps. Section 6 lists conclusions concerning the effectiveness of the work by public authorities in implementing the Section 75 duties.
- 2.6** The Commission's full progress report is divided into 14 sections and includes more detailed information than included in this summary report, particularly on progress within each part of the public sector.

### **3. Summary of Progress**

**3.1** Public authorities subject to Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 (the Act) submitted progress reports to the Equality Commission for the periods 1 January 2000 – 31 March 2001 and 1 April 2001 – 31 March 2002 (details of all designated public authorities are attached as Appendix B). To help public authorities address all of the key issues relating to both periods, the Commission produced reporting templates (see Appendices C and D). These templates were piloted before revision and distribution to all designated public authorities. The aim of the templates was to ensure consistency and completeness of progress reporting, as well as helping the authorities to ensure that all key areas were addressed. The Commission's review and analysis of the progress reports indicates that public authorities are making progress on the implementation of the Section 75 duties. This full report outlines the steps taken by the Equality Commission, NI Government Departments, public authorities from the education, further and higher education, health and local government sectors as well as other Northern Ireland, cross border and UK-wide public authorities, to promote the equality of opportunity and good relations duties.

#### **Equality Commission for Northern Ireland**

##### ***Progress January 2000 – March 2001***

- The Commission developed internal arrangements to ensure progress on the implementation of the statutory duties, in terms of creating decision-making mechanisms and the provision of advice and support.
- The Commission's Statutory Duty Committee was formed early in 2000 to monitor the implementation of the duties. Most significantly it developed the Commission's procedures for approving equality schemes and granting exemptions. The Committee also agreed methodologies for provision of advice, support and training, and the establishment of communication channels. The Guide to the Statutory Duties was produced and widely circulated.
- Many of the early draft equality schemes were deficient, to varying degrees, in screening methodology, consultation and monitoring arrangements, and provided only limited evidence of top level commitment.
- The Commission approved the Department of Health Social Services and Public Safety's (DHSSPS) request to initiate a two-stage screening process within the Department and this model was subsequently included in the Commission's equality scheme best practice template.
- The Commission enhanced the capacity of the community and voluntary sector to assist the introduction of the statutory duties to public authorities through its Advisory Support Programme.

- The Commission's staff participated in a wide range of awareness-raising events with public authorities and voluntary/community and trade union organisations, as well as attending advisory meetings with Ministers, Government Departments, the Northern Ireland Office, public sector network organisations and voluntary/community and trade union umbrella organisations.
- Detailed Commission guidance on the seven step 'Procedure for Conduct of Impact Assessment' was developed and the 'Practical Guidance on Equality Impact Assessment' was published and circulated during March and April 2001.
- By the end of March 2001 the Commission had approved 17 schemes, including the 11 Northern Ireland Government Departments. Most public authorities had also received a comprehensive assessment of their draft equality scheme from the Commission in the form of a 'desk audit' report.

### ***Progress April 2001 – March 2002***

- The Commission liaised with the Northern Ireland Office (NIO) Human Rights and Industrial Relations Division to ensure that two designation Orders were passed through Parliament. As a consequence a total of 171 authorities had been designated for Section 75 purposes by the end of March 2002. The NIO provided ongoing opinion on handling of deficient schemes and enforcement of the duties.
- Most public authority 'screening' reports were received by the end of July 2001 and in-house research was undertaken into these reports to assess compliance with the Guide to the Statutory Duties.
- The Commission held six EQIA training workshops for the voluntary and community sector, trade unions, Section 75 groups and public authorities.
- A training event was provided for designated UK public authorities whose functions extend to Northern Ireland, and further events were planned, particularly to provide training on screening and the EQIA process.
- The management of Section 75 complaints was addressed during the period, and an information leaflet and an in-house procedure were developed for dealing with requests for advice and information regarding complaints.
- On the good relations duty, in-house research papers were produced to help inform the Commission about ensuring the future effective implementation of this duty and the development of an implementation strategy.
- Work began on a review of the Commission's 'Guide to the Statutory Duties' and 'Practical Guidance on Equality Impact Assessment'.

- The Commission agreed its criteria for responding to EQIAs received, undertook an audit of all EQIAs undertaken by public authorities, provided EQIA training for in-house teams, and created an EQIA database.
- An in-house project team was set up to explore how the monitoring needs of public authorities could be met.
- Meetings were continued during the year with key stakeholders.
- The Commission agreed to produce a progress report for the period 1 January 2000 – 31 March 2002 (this report).
- By the end of March 2002 the Commission had approved 95% (113 of 119) of draft equality schemes of Northern Ireland authorities, and 63% (10 of 16) of the schemes of public authorities designated in July 2000.

## **NI Central Government Departments**

### ***Progress during period January 2000 – March 2001***

- For the 11 NI Central Government Departments the main focus of activities during the period from 1 January 2000 to 31 March 2001 was consultation on policy screening and equality scheme development. The Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM), as the sponsoring Department of the Commission, played a vital role in ensuring that there was effective support for implementation of the statutory duty requirements, through advice to Ministers and support for departments. For example, OFMDFM produced a draft model equality scheme to help central government departments, and met with umbrella groups from the voluntary and community sectors to discuss draft equality schemes and equality issues. Departments' draft equality schemes were approved by departmental boards and Ministers before submission to the Commission.
- The DHSSPS provided input to the screening activities of other authorities in the 'health family' (e.g. Health and Social Services Boards, Trusts and Agencies) and aligned its Section 75 work within one overall EQIA timetable for the public authorities within the 'health family'.
- In 2000-2001 all but two departments reported steps being taken to build equality and good relations objectives, performance indicators and targets into corporate and annual operating plans.
- All Central Government Departments, with the exception of the Department for Employment and Learning (DEL), had finalised timetables detailing policies to be subjected to EQIA.

- An inter-departmental sub-group was established to assess training issues across the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS). During 2000-2001 training and awareness programmes were developed, mainly for senior and middle management personnel, across the NICS.
- A new Statistical & Research Planning and Co-ordination Group was formed and departments took significant first steps to supplement available research and statistics by participating in the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency's (NISRA) led audit of existing data sources.
- A variety of actions were undertaken to review current arrangements for the provision of information in accessible formats.

### ***Progress made April 2001- March 2002***

- The Executive committed itself to the 'full implementation of our statutory obligations on equality of opportunity' in the Programme for Government and departments planned to progress 77 EQIAs in 2001-2002. A total of 120 EQIAs were planned for 2002-2003, including 28 rolled over from 2001-2002.
- All departments reported steps being taken to build equality and good relations objectives, performance indicators and targets into corporate and annual operating plans. Progress reports to Ministers also included detail of progress against these plans.
- A review of community relations policy in Northern Ireland was undertaken by OFMDFM.
- A range of reasons were given by NI Central Government Departments for not subjecting some policies to an EQIA, or not proceeding with planned EQIAs. These included pressures on Ministers' time, which led to some slippage in departmental programmes of policy development and, in turn, slippage in EQIA programmes.
- Training was provided for specialist staff involved in consultation or EQIAs. Some involvement of affected groups in the design and delivery of training was reported.
- The development of monitoring systems remained a key aspect to be taken forward by all Government Departments. The OFMDFM Statistical and Research Planning and Co-ordinating Group evolved into the Equality and Social Needs Research and Information Group, with the Equality Commission and the Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action (NICVA) joining as members.
- Some reports noted a delay in the progressing of OFMDFM guidance on consultation methods.

- Most departments reported some initiatives to ensure customer surveys or databases were adapted to provide more information relating to the nine equality categories.
- During 2001-2002, 15 complaints about the implementation of schemes were reported, relating to a range of policy issues; for example, recruitment and shadow board appointments, compulsory retirement age and consultation commitments.

## **Education Sector**

- Within the education sector all Equality Schemes were approved between March and June 2001.
- In January 2000 the Department of Education (DE) established a DE/Non Departmental Public Bodies (NDPB) Equality Liaison Committee for authorities within the education sector. This Committee meets quarterly to share information and discuss the education sector's progress on the implementation of the equality duties.
- Most education authorities have included objectives and targets relating to the duties in their strategic and operational plans.
- Most education authorities are taking forward initiatives aimed at promoting good relations.
- The Staff Commission and the Education and Library Boards published a joint screening report in December 2001. The Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS) has published its screening report and the Northern Ireland Council for Curriculum, Examinations & Assessment (CCEA) consulted on its screening exercise. The Youth Council stated that it intended to impact assess all of its policies and has consulted on this decision.
- The education authorities have agreed to co-operate in conducting EQIAs of wider policy areas, as necessary.
- The Staff Commission, the Education and Library Boards, CCMS and the Youth Council collaborated to provide a programme of Section 75 training for staff, Commissioners/Board members and Joint Negotiating Council members.
- The Staff Commission, Education and Library Boards and the Youth Council have put arrangements in place to facilitate requests for information in alternative formats.
- With regard to data collection, the Department, the Staff Commission and the Education and Library Boards have adopted a collaborative approach and established a working group to review the collection of monitoring data to

facilitate the review/EQIA of employment policies. CCMS stated that its IT systems were being revised to collect a range of statistical data and CCEA has begun to identify areas where there is insufficient data/information to inform decision-making.

- All of the education authorities have developed a complaints procedure to deal with Section 75 complaints. Only two authorities, the Belfast Education and Library Board (BELB) and the Western Education and Library Board (WELB), have received complaints and these were dealt with under the complaints procedure. They were about closure of facilities and accessibility of Board services from people with a disability.

## **Further and Higher Education sectors**

### ***Further Education***

- Within the further education sector all of the public authorities involved had their equality schemes approved by November 2002.
- Each College has a designated Equality Co-ordinator and an Equality Inter-Departmental Working Group. An Equality Co-ordinators' Forum has also been established, comprising the Equality Co-ordinators from the 16 Colleges.
- The Colleges stated that they intended to include equality measures in their corporate strategies and operating plans.
- The Colleges have taken steps to progress the good relations duty. They have drawn up a three-year programme aimed at mainstreaming the principles and practices of equity, diversity and interdependence.
- The Colleges have worked together on their screening process and their final screening report was issued in March 2002.
- The Governors and Management of the Colleges have received Section 75 training and the College Equality Co-ordinators have received training on equality issues from a number of affected groups. Consultants have been commissioned to develop an equality training strategy for all college staff and a new Equality Training Officer post is being created.
- With regard to communicating commitment to the equality duties, the Colleges indicated that they were represented on a number of external groups relating to equality, for example the Community Relations Training and Learning Consortium.
- The Association of Northern Ireland Colleges (ANIC), on behalf of the Colleges, has had discussions with the Department of Finance and Personnel (DFP) in

relation to data collection and analysis and has produced a guidance document on the retrieval and interpretation of qualitative and quantitative information.

- Preliminary discussions have also taken place with some of the affected groups regarding the collection, collation and monitoring of data.
- The Colleges are holding meetings to discuss the provision of information in accessible formats.
- ANIC has drawn up a complaints procedure and has produced guidance on dealing with complaints under Section 75.

### ***Higher Education***

- The five authorities which make up the Higher Education sector in Northern Ireland – Queen’s University, Belfast (QUB), University of Ulster (UU), Stranmillis University College, St. Mary’s University College, and the Open University (OU) were designated in April 2001. The Equality Commission in July 2002 approved equality Schemes for QUB, UU, Stranmillis and St. Mary’s. The Open University had not submitted a final signed scheme by the time of producing this report.
- The Department of Employment and Learning helped to fund the production of the universities’ equality schemes.
- The five universities formed a consortium to assist with: the implementation of the statutory duties and production of equality schemes; provision of Section 75 training for senior managers, managers and supervisors; developing a consultation strategy; and conducting a joint screening exercise.
- With regard to the development of objectives, targets and performance indicators relating to the duties, three of the universities reported that Section 75 specific objectives have been incorporated into their human resources strategies.
- Both Queen’s University and the University of Ulster reported that the consortium has been tasked with conducting an internal audit of good relations within each authority.
- The consortium has had ongoing discussions with DEL and NISRA in relation to the collection and analysis of relevant information.
- All of the universities have committed to the provision of information in accessible formats.

### **Health Sector**

- The Health & Social Services sector comprises the Department of Health Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS), the four Health & Social Services Boards,

the four Health & Social Services Councils and the 17 Trusts. In addition it includes the Fire Authority, Food Safety Promotion Board, Mental Health Commission, National Board for Nursing, Midwifery and Health Visiting (now the Northern Ireland Practice and Education Council for Nursing and Midwifery), Ambulance Service, the Blood Transfusion Service, Central Services Agency, Post Graduate Medical & Dental Research, Guardian Ad Litem Service, Health Promotion Agency and the Regional Medical Physics Agency.

- In February 2001 the Commission approved the first of the 37 Health & Social Services authorities' schemes, with the last scheme being approved in August 2001.
- Progress reports relating to 2000-2001 and 2001-2002 included practical results of collaborative working arrangements, e.g. in the Western Board area one overall report was submitted. Many health sector organisations have accessed Section 75 equality groups and recruited specialists to progress their equality scheme commitments.
- For the period 2000-2001 a number of reports indicated that steps have been taken to build the Section 75 statutory duties into staff plans and job descriptions, and this was more widespread in the subsequent reporting period. Progress has also been made on developing equality targets and performance indicators and integrating these into corporate and annual operating plans.
- Reported progress on the good relations duty was somewhat mixed, with many authorities reporting little activity before the outcome of a review of community relations being undertaken by OFMDFM. Some health authorities have reported more substantive progress on the good relations duty.
- Health sector authorities have progressed a collective regional screening exercise and EQIA timetable. In addition a number of health authorities outlined the progression of a programme of Good Practice Reviews, to complement the EQIA process.
- The Department has also played a lead role in information provision, data collection and analysis across the health sector. An Equality Information Steering Group was established in February 2001 comprising representatives from the Department, Boards, Trusts and Agencies, to undertake a detailed audit of equality information across the HPSS systems, and it is developing information provision plans to access better data, of both a quantitative and qualitative nature.
- A number of health authorities did not demonstrate how "local" EQIAs of their authority specific policies would be undertaken.
- Most training undertaken during 2000-2001 centered on programmes developed at the Beeches Centre, Belfast. More substantive progress was reported in 2001-

2002, both at an awareness level and specialist training for managers involved in policy development.

- Health authorities reported receipt of some complaints during 2001-2002, for example, IVF infertility treatment. All of these were being progressed or resolved.
- In the main timetables are being adhered to though several authorities had questioned if the scale of planned activities could be sustained.

## **Local Government**

- The Local Government sector comprises the 26 Local Councils, the Local Government Staff Commission (LGSC) and the Northern Ireland Local Government Officers Superannuation Committee (NILGOSC).
- Most authorities in this sector had used the model equality scheme developed by the LGSC, in the development of their own equality schemes. The first local government sector equality schemes, including those of Belfast and Moyle Councils, were approved by the Commission at the beginning of April 2001. The last local council scheme was approved in January 2002.
- In their first progress reports a few local councils had developed corporate aims and objectives relating to equality and good relations. In 2001-2002 there was evidence of much more development of mainstreaming by the majority of Councils, in terms of incorporating objectives and targets in corporate and operational plans.
- Just over half the authorities in this sector regularly report progress internally to senior management level on a quarterly basis, some review progress monthly.
- A number of local government authorities had made progress in developing or establishing relationships and partnerships with other public authorities. Twenty-one authorities (including the LGSC) reported membership of the LGSC's Statutory Duty Network, and over a quarter of this sector also belonged to one of the public authority area networks.
- Progress had been made on implementing the good relations duty by a number of Councils in 2001-2002. Some authorities conducted, or were conducting, good relations audits, as a result of which good relations strategies were being developed. There were stated examples of good practice that could be used by the other local authorities.
- In 2000-2001 a sizeable minority of local authorities had not developed an EQIA timetable. None of the 28 authorities in the Local Government Sector had begun EQIAs before submitting their first annual review of progress. There was little evidence of authorities in this sector co-operating in terms of the screening of policies and the synchronisation of policies for EQIA. In 2001-2002, 14 (half) of

the authorities in the sector had begun EQIAs, although none had been completed at the time of reporting.

- In both reporting periods, the activities of local authorities in planning and providing training relating to the duties were notable, in terms of the strategic approach being taken. Many authorities had provided general awareness training for senior employees and, in the case of councils, to their members.
- Little progress was reported on reviewing current arrangements for the provision of information in accessible formats.
- In the majority of the authorities in this sector a wide variety of mechanisms are being developed to collect information.
- There were six complaints in total to authorities in this sector. These covered a range of issues and were handled through equality scheme complaints procedures. Two related to policies that were being subjected to EQIA.
- Most implementation timetables had fallen behind. In a small number of cases, limited action has been taken to implement Section 75 due to a reported lack of resources within authorities, but others have slipped because the EQIA process has taken longer than was first anticipated.
- Some local government authorities did not report much progress in 2001-2002, although these account for less than a quarter of the sector. A number of authorities stated that greater co-operation on screening and EQIAs would have enhanced the process, as would more guidance on areas such as screening and monitoring.

### **Other NI & Cross Border Public Authorities**

- This category covers the largest number and range of designated authorities in this report, a total of 42. Included are important regional non-departmental public authorities such as the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE).
- The first of the Other NI & Cross Border Public Authorities' equality schemes was approved by the Commission in June 2001 and by the end of March 2002 a total of 33 had been approved.
- NIHE highlighted during 2000-2001 the approval of the equality scheme, development and start of the training programme and the establishment of a consultative forum on equality.
- In its report the NIO stated, in relation to consultation, 'There is also the question of whether the process provides value for money in terms of cost and the limited scale of responses'. The NIO suggested that it would be sensible to: 'allow public authorities to target only the most relevant groups when launching a consultation

exercise; complement this by wide publicity inviting applications for the consultation document; and by posting the consultation document on the public authority's website to invite comment'.

- The majority of these organisations reported that by the period 2001-2002, equality issues had become standard agenda items for both board and senior management meetings.
- There was a lack of information on activities to promote good relations within this sector. Some organisations cited the lack of guidance from the Commission as an impediment to progressing good relations.
- Progress in the provision of training has been inconsistent. Although, with a few exceptions, most authorities reported further development and delivery of staff training, very few organisations have availed themselves of input from Section 75 representative groups. Most organisations did report a structured developmental approach to the delivery of staff training.
- With respect to sensory impairments and language accessibility, most organisations have continued to work on the provision of accessible formats.
- Monitoring information and associated systems remains problematic. Concerns and identified impediments included the lack of guidance and the lack of agreed classification systems.
- No authority reported complaints for either the 2000-2001 or 2001-2002 period. Some authorities stated that a system to handle complaints had yet to be implemented.
- Both years' reports contained limited additional information.
- Ulster Supported Employment Ltd (USEL) has included a Corporate Objective relating to Section 75 in its Corporate Strategy. Enterprise Ulster, the Labour Relations Agency (LRA), and Construction Industry Training Board (CITB) and the NI Certification Officer have not done so.
- All USEL, Enterprise Ulster and CITB staff and Board members have received equality awareness training.
- Enterprise Ulster has liaised with the Statistics and Evaluation Branch at DEL to develop its computer data capture and analysis systems.
- USEL have held meetings with groups representing people with learning disabilities and young people to assess their information needs. The LRA has carried out a review of issues relating to access to information and has taken steps to improve access. CITB states that it will also do this.

## UK Authorities

- The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland made two Section 75 designation Orders during the period of this report, in July 2000 and April 2001. These Orders included 23 UK wide public authorities, referred to as the “UK authorities”.
- The experience of the UK authorities in developing equality schemes varies. Authorities with functions relating to Northern Ireland but with no actual offices in Northern Ireland indicated that this created difficulties in developing an equality scheme and screening policies. UK authorities’ progress reports illustrated a number of creative consultation practices as well as major difficulties in this area. In overall terms UK authorities achieved a lower rate of response from affected groups and consultees.
- Steps have been taken to build equality and good relations objectives, performance indicators and targets into corporate and annual operating plans by many of the UK authorities. Significantly there are indications that some UK authorities have incorporated the Northern Ireland duties into national corporate strategic frameworks.
- Training associated with equality, including the Section 75 duties and the preparation of an equality scheme, is evident within the UK authorities’ reports.
- Many UK authorities referred to developments on establishing systems to supplement available statistical and qualitative research being planned in this area within two years of schemes being approved. Strategic arrangements are being pursued by some UK authorities, sharing information in light of the concordat between UK Government and the devolved Northern Ireland administration.
- Limited information was provided regarding action taken to review current arrangements for the provision of information in accessible formats, though work to progress Freedom of Information Act requirements was highlighted as a means of taking this forward.

## 4. Key Themes

- 4.1 Progress reporting:** Most progress reports gave a good level of detail on the extent of implementation of the statutory duties during the period. In overall terms the Commission notes that there is a need for willingness amongst public authorities to candidly report negative as well as positive aspects of equality scheme implementation and to say if they have achieved the tasks set out in their timetables.

### Example

A few individual health authorities reported on EQIAs that they were planning to undertake locally, in addition to their involvement in the 'health family's' regional EQIA timetable. It would also have been useful if individual health authorities had provided more detail on their input and level of involvement in the regional EQIA processes.

- 4.2 Use of Commission guidance:** The Equality Commission's Guide to the Statutory Duties has been widely used by public authorities in terms of producing schemes, screening, consultation, undertaking of EQIAs and other key work areas.

### Example

The education sector used the Commission's published guidance as the basis for developing internal advice on impact assessment. Following the EQIA on Electronic Libraries the Staff Commission for Education and Library Boards developed an EQIA workbook to complement the Practical Guidance.

- 4.3 Mainstreaming:** Public authorities are integrating Section 75 into corporate and business planning processes, and key activities of line management. This gives practical evidence of mainstreaming.

### Example

In all Government Departments the implementation of equality schemes is a standard agenda item for senior management meetings. Management groupings cited included departmental management and planning groups (chaired by Permanent Secretaries), equality steering groups and, in the case of OFMDFM, scrutiny by Committee of the Centre.

- 4.4 Resources:** Some covering letters accompanying progress reports acknowledged that Departments were not in a position to deliver many of the requirements of equality schemes. At least one Department acknowledged that it was not in a position to move forward as quickly as required. Another viewed Section 75 as 'an under resourced but inescapable priority'. Most public authorities had directed staff, or recruited new staff, to help to deliver the statutory duties. Many also committed significant resource to production/publishing of schemes, screening reports and EQIAs. Within many public authorities organisational responsibility for Section 75 has been allocated to corporate or human resources fields.

### **Example**

One of the education authorities indicated that it was concerned about the resource demands that the Section 75 duties were placing on smaller public sector authorities. It stated that significant human and financial resources have had to be invested in work relating to Section 75 at the expense of other functions. The Northern Ireland Office also questioned whether the current method of conducting consultations provides value for money in terms of cost and the limited scale of responses.

- 4.5 Consultation:** This key area was referred to by many public authorities as one which was resource intensive. There was evidence of good practice in consultation, particularly in relation to working with affected groups and in using joined-up approaches. There was also evidence that to some public authorities, consultation involved mainly the mass mailing of consultation documents to all groups on the consultee list. Consultation fatigue was commented on in a number of reports. The Commission notes that its guidance on managing consultation, requires consultation to be both meaningful and inclusive. Public authorities are expected to use a range of strategies and mechanisms to do this. The Commission notes that consultation exercises involving mass mailing of consultation documents has contributed to the consultation overload, being experienced by consultee groups.

### **Example**

One public body stated that, 'We would like to reiterate that the entire consultation process is exceptionally time consuming and often without reward and we would appreciate more guidance on collective working in this respect.'

- 4.6 Equality Impact Assessments:** A number of organisations' EQIA timetables were provided with progress reports. Decisions to 'screen in' or 'out' policies have been taken during screening exercises but development of new monitoring information systems and responding to Section 75 complaints may challenge some screening decisions. The process of undertaking EQIA has proved challenging for public authorities and there is evidence in reports of planned EQIA timetables being difficult to manage. Government Departments attributed some slippage to delays in the legislative timetable. The issue of 'screening in' new policies for EQIA has added to the overall EQIA timetables of public authorities and some timetables are now behind schedule.
- 4.7 Information management and monitoring:** Some steps were taken by central government to establish systems to supplement available statistical and qualitative research. The development of monitoring systems poses a great challenge not least because of its link to the EQIA process and future assessment of adverse impact. It is notable that in other areas of reporting performance, for example Charter Mark or Best Value, little consideration has been given to the possibility of performance measurement and reporting with respect to Section 75 duties. It is also worth noting that a number of authorities were awaiting data from the 2001 Census of Population.

### **Example**

Many authorities mentioned the sensitivity of obtaining some information e.g. on sexual orientation and political opinion, combined with a perceived reluctance on the part of the general public to provide personal details.

**4.8 Communication:** Many public authorities communicated with the Commission by phone, in writing, or in person, on a regular basis. Thus Commission staff are made aware of areas of progress or difficulty in relation to implementation of the duties. The ongoing review and future revision of the Commission's guidance documents should help to clarify requirements placed on public authorities. In addition the Commission is examining how it can best communicate with public authorities in the future. This will include: an overall progress report; feedback on individual progress reports received from public authorities; development and communication of guidance (e.g. monitoring and good relations); ongoing information on progress (e.g. quarterly news-sheet); face to face communication through planned meetings with groups of equality officers; and a Section 75 conference during 2003. Communication between public authorities and the affected groups is a developing area, with examples of joined up approaches to communication, to undertaking EQIAs and to direct engagement with those affected by the statutory duties. Most authorities reported the dissemination of the equality scheme and/or a summary to employees, distribution to consultees, and making it available in offices and on corporate web-sites. A very small number of reports noted that Chief Executives and other leaders explicitly expressed commitment to the Section 75 duties in public speeches and presentations when launching important corporate initiatives such as Corporate Plans and Annual Reports.

**4.9 Good Relations:** Whilst there is evidence that most focus has been on the equality duty there is also evidence of progress on the good relations duty. A number of authorities reported that work on the good relations duty was awaiting the outcome from the OFMDFM led review of Community Relations policy. Some smaller authorities cited the lack of clarity and guidance on good relations as a major impediment to the strategic implementation of this duty. Unsurprisingly, positive engagement with good relations issues prior to the introduction of the statutory duties was a factor in making progress. This is especially the case in local government and education.

### **Example**

Belfast City Council will set up a Good Relations Unit and plans to appoint two Good Relations Officers. In addition to work specifically on good relations, 14 other Councils report taking the good relations duty forward through their community relations strategies and plans. A three-year programme aimed at mainstreaming the principles and practices of equity, diversity and interdependence has been drawn up by ANIC and the further education colleges. It is also evident that among designated UK authorities, a number are progressing good relations within the context of wider equality and diversity initiatives, especially those mandated under recent race legislation. In

particular, the activities of the Inland Revenue and Community Fund are exemplary.

The Commission has undertaken a separate audit of progress on good relations and identification of pathfinder initiatives and organisations will inform the development of the Commission's strategy to ensure future effective implementation of the duty.

**4.10 Training:** With few exceptions, most reports re-stated the commitment to the seven training objectives specified in their approved equality schemes. Most organisations reported a structured and developmental approach to staff training, many with a particular emphasis on board members and senior staff. Few organisations have included training input from Section 75 representative groups. Taken in their totality the reports indicate a wealth of training providers across the public sector, including : the Equality Commission, various networks, individual public authorities, private sector consultants and the voluntary, community and trade union sector. Many public authorities have put a great deal of thought into the content of proposed training and considered the specialist training which will be required by staff dealing with issues such as EQIAs, screening, monitoring and complaints. On evaluation of training, with few exceptions, little information was provided in progress reports. Likewise, there was little evidence of consideration given to the business case for Section 75 training. Consistent with the categorisation of groups under Section 75, this training will increase staff awareness of individual customer needs and give staff the skills base to meet those needs. An overall audit and evaluation of the training provided would be a worthwhile exercise, to identify best practice and share models.

#### **Example**

NIO reported that in 2001-2002 Disability Action had input into the design and delivery of its training programmes. The Northern Ireland Court Service articulated the business case for Section 75 related training and a programme of customer service training for all 'front-line' staff was planned.

**4.11 Good practice:** Many examples of good practice are to be found across the public sector, particularly in relation to: sharing of resources; well planned and joined up approaches to implementation; development of consultation processes and relationships; developing ways to engage with those most marginalised in society; the development of alternative formats for written communication; development of information management/IT systems; effective complaint handling; and regular/ongoing monitoring of the implementation of the duties.

**4.12 Poor practice:** Based on information in the progress reports the Commission has noted that some public authorities are not embracing their statutory responsibilities in a way that meets the spirit of Section 75. This is evidenced through a lack of resourcing and lack of progress on implementation. The

Commission will continue to engage such public authorities to ensure effective future implementation of the statutory duties.

- 4.13 Partnership approaches involving Section 75 groups:** While some public authorities have involved Section 75 groups as more than consultees, there is a lack of evidence of a true partnership approach with such groups. Increased partnership working in this sector could offer: the potential to more closely engage directly with those affected by the statutory duties; the opportunity to use skills, expertise and understanding; the potential to utilise already developed communication channels, e.g. for consultation purposes and improvements in training design and delivery.
- 4.14 Innovation and creativity:** There has been a healthy divergence in how various sectors have taken forward the statutory duties. Collaborative approaches through partnerships are being noted by the Commission and good practice identified, as other parts of the public sector could benefit from the lessons learned.

#### **Example**

The education sector establishment of a DE/NDPB Liaison Group provides a forum to assist with the resolution of Section 75 issues. Also the collaborative approach used by ANIC to facilitate Section 75 work by the further education colleges is commendable, as is the consortium approach used by the universities. A number of partnership initiatives have developed within the local government sector. For example, twenty councils are members of the LGSC's Statutory Duty Network. Councils also report working in a number of 'area' networks. In the NDPBs which government departments are responsible for there is evidence of joined up thinking and collaborative work, especially with respect to training and EQIAs. UK authorities cite a number of collaborative initiatives. These authorities also comment very favourably on joint events sponsored by the Commission.

## **5. Equality Commission Next Steps and Recommendations for Public Authorities**

### **Equality Commission Next Steps**

The next steps detailed below are based on a combination of current and future planned activity and on the findings from this summary report and the full progress report

#### ***Progress reporting***

Revise Progress Reporting template for use by public authorities for period April 2002 – March 2003 this template to obtain more information regarding outputs and outcomes from Section 75 work.

Sample test progress reporting template with a number of public authorities and forward electronically and on paper to public authorities at end of March 2003.

#### ***Use of Commission Guidance***

Commission to take account of information in the full progress report 2000 - 2002, in the current review of its guidance documentation.

#### ***Mainstreaming***

Commission to continue to monitor the extent of mainstreaming of Section 75 duties into EQIAs and policy proposals, and to communicate with public authorities in relation to the effectiveness of their mainstreaming, by means of feedback on EQIAs and annual progress reports.

#### ***Resources***

Commission to continue to focus on key strategic aspects of development and implementation of Section 75 duties, whilst ensuring the ongoing development of communication with public authorities and affected groups.

Commission to monitor resourcing of Section 75 by public authorities to confirm that necessary resourcing is allocated, and that benefits of economies of scale and joined up approaches are being fully exploited, e.g. joined up approaches to undertaking EQIA, and consultation exercises.

#### ***Consultation***

Commission to ensure that it is consulted on all EQIAs, as a statutory consultee and as the authority with legislative remit to oversee the effectiveness of the duties.

Commission to continue to respond to a range of EQIAs and policy consultation documents, commenting in particular on the effectiveness of implementation of Section 75 duties.

Commission to include best practice examples of consultation processes in its revised guidance documentation.

### ***Equality Impact Assessments***

Commission to include best practice EQIAs in revised guidance documentation.

Commission to continue to monitor EQIA work undertaken by public authorities to ensure adherence to timetables and that the Practical Guidance on EQIA is being effectively used.

### ***Monitoring and Information Management***

Commission to continue to obtain information about overall Section 75 progress and progress on EQIA timetables/EQIAs, as well as other information relating to implementation of Section 75 by public authorities.

Commission to make available information on best practice, EQIA timetables, etc. on its website. Commission also to forward a quarterly newsletter to public authorities and affected groups, detailing progress on Section 75 implementation.

Commission to continue to liaise with OFMDFM in relation to information needs of public authorities and how these can be developed to assist implementation of Section 75.

### ***Communication***

Commission to further develop its communication strategy for public authorities and affected groups, to ensure the provision of timely and accurate information.

### ***Good Relations***

Commission to continue to develop its strategy to ensure effective implementation of the good relations duty.

Commission to develop baseline guidance on implementation of the good relations duty and make this available to public authorities, affected groups and the general public.

### ***Training***

Commission to build on its earlier training provision on Section 75 awareness and undertaking EQIA and to ensure involvement of groups representing the Section 75 constituencies.

Commission to work closely with UK public authorities in relation to ensuring a coherent and cohesive approach to meeting their Section 75 training needs.

### ***Good practice***

Commission to identify examples of good practice and make these available to public authorities in a number of ways, including in revised guidance documentation.

### ***Poor practice***

The Commission to note those authorities which have: not adhered to EQIA timetables; failed to undertake EQIA work in a way which meets the Commission's guidance; or generally fallen behind in terms of implementation of the Section 75 duties.

Commission to take necessary action on lack of implementation, in accordance with its remit.

Commission to ensure that all authorities meet their requirements under Section 75, through identification of under-performance, examination of problem issues, continuing to help and advise authorities and reporting on lack of compliance.

### ***Innovation and creativity***

Commission to note innovative/creative approaches by the Commission, public authorities and affected groups and to share such information.

Commission, in its business planning, to address the developmental nature of Section 75 work and to ensure the use of innovation and flexibility within its legislative remit.

## **Public Authorities**

Many of the points listed below are requirements already placed on public authorities and progress may be being made already in relation to some of these areas during the period April 2002 – March 2003.

### ***Progress reporting***

Public authorities to submit completed progress reports electronically and on paper, to the Commission by the end of July 2003, in order that the next full progress report can be produced and made available in Autumn 2003.

### ***Use of Commission Guidance***

Public authorities to adhere to Commission guidance in undertaking their Section 75 work, particularly in relation to screening of new policies and adhering to EQIA timetables.

### ***Mainstreaming***

Public authorities to ensure that Section 75 duties are considered at all relevant stages of policy development and that the duties are effectively integrated into corporate and business planning processes.

### ***Resources***

Public authorities are required to allocate necessary resources to deliver their Equality Schemes and EQIA timetables, as per approved equality schemes and the Commission's Guide to the Statutory Duties

Public authorities should build on collaborative approaches already begun, in order to make best use of available resources and to share experiences and best practice examples.

Public authorities should continue to develop and build relationships with groups representative of the Section 75 constituencies. This work could utilise existing expertise and communication channels developed by such groups.

### ***Consultation***

Public authorities to build on best practice examples of consultation, particularly relating to joined-up approaches, use of a range of face to face consultation mechanisms and reducing dependence on mass mailing of documents to affected groups.

Public authorities to inform consultees on outcomes from screening of new/proposed policies.

### ***Equality Impact Assessments***

Public authorities to ensure that EQIAs are undertaken in accordance with EQIA timetables agreed.

Public authorities to involve the Commission in all EQIA consultation exercises, as required by the Guide to the Statutory Duties, and to forward copies of all EQIA reports to the Commission.

## ***Monitoring and Information Management***

Public authorities to develop effective information management and monitoring systems, aligned to the ongoing work of OFMDFM and the Commission in this area.

## ***Communication***

Public authorities to ensure a response to the Commission in relation to requests for information e.g. progress reports; surveys; consultation on revised guidance documentation.

Public authorities to mainstream communication on their Section 75 work into their corporate communication processes - both internal and external.

## ***Good Relations***

Public authorities to continue to develop good relations policies and strategies and ensure effective implementation of same.

Public authorities to build upon work of pathfinder organisations in this area in order to identify best practice mechanisms and to develop their own approaches to implementation of the duty. The Commission will provide examples of best practice to public authorities, as part of its good relations strategy.

## ***Training***

Sectoral groups and/or public authorities should ensure audit and evaluation of the training provided and continue to identify and meet training needs in relation to Section 75. Best practice models and materials could be shared across the public sector.

## ***Good practice***

Public authorities to note good practice examples from other public sector authorities and organisations representative of affected groups: through EQIA exercises, reports from the Commission and public authorities, guidance from the Commission, research exercises etc..

## ***Poor practice***

All designated public authorities must embrace their statutory responsibilities in a way that meets the requirements of Section 75, the Guide to the Statutory Duties and commitments in approved equality schemes.

## ***Innovation and creativity***

Public authorities to identify the innovative and often, joined up approaches by other public authorities/sectors, utilising similar approaches where possible. This would particularly assist in best use of resources and avoidance of consultation fatigue.

## 6. Conclusions

This summary report provides some detail on the extent of the implementation of the Section 75 statutory duties by public authorities, for the period 1 January 2000 – 31 March 2002 inclusive. The report on progress being made by public authorities is based **only** on the information included in the progress reports completed by the public authorities and forwarded to the Commission.

In the main, public authorities are progressing implementation of Section 75 duties at different speeds, for a variety of reasons. Generally implementation of EQIA timetables has fallen behind across parts of the public sector. Nevertheless significant progress is being made by a number of authorities and there is evidence of the benefits of collaborative approaches to implementation, particularly in terms of EQIA and consultation processes. The Commission will seek to learn from and build on the successful approaches being adopted and also ensure that other public authorities are made aware of good practice examples from within the public sector.

The statutory duties placed upon public authorities must be delivered in accordance with approved schemes and public authorities must, after five years of scheme implementation, report to the Commission on the overall implementation of their schemes. The Commission will identify those public authorities that have been able to demonstrate an effective impact of their implementation of the statutory duties.

The lessons from this report will feed into the design of the next progress reporting template, to be produced by the Commission and forwarded to each public authority, for the period 1 April 2002 – 31 March 2003. In terms of reporting on progress for future periods, the Commission will seek to develop mechanisms for public authorities to report on changes arising, in terms of outputs and outcomes from the implementation of Section 75.

The Commission will also ask groups and individuals affected by the Section 75 statutory duties for their views on progress to date.

The Commission will continue to respond to public authority EQIA consultation documents, utilising the EQIA response template which it has developed. This response template will also be made available to public authorities and the organisations listed in Appendix 4 in the Guide to the Statutory Duties.

The Commission will also use its policy on Section 75 investigations to examine how public authorities are addressing the issue of Section 75 complaints.

## **Appendix A : Section 75 Northern Ireland Act (1998)**

Statutory duty on public authorities.

- 75.** - (1) A public authority shall in carrying out its functions relating to Northern Ireland have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity-
- (a) between persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status or sexual orientation;
  - (b) between men and women generally;
  - (c) between persons with a disability and persons without; and
  - (d) between persons with dependants and persons without.
- (2) Without prejudice to its obligations under subsection (1), a public authority shall in carrying out its functions relating to Northern Ireland have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group.
- (3) In this section "public authority" means-
- (a) any department, corporation or body listed in Schedule 2 to the Parliamentary Commissioner Act 1967 (departments, corporations and bodies subject to investigation) and designated for the purposes of this section by order made by the Secretary of State;
  - (b) any body (other than the Equality Commission) listed in Schedule 2 to the Commissioner for Complaints (Northern Ireland) Order 1996 (bodies subject to investigation);
  - (c) any department or other authority listed in Schedule 2 to the Ombudsman (Northern Ireland) Order 1996 (departments and other authorities subject to investigation);
  - (d) any other person designated for the purposes of this section by order made by the Secretary of State.
- (4) Schedule 9 (which makes provision for the enforcement of the duties under this section) shall have effect.
- (5) In this section-
- "disability" has the same meaning as in the Disability Discrimination Act 1995;
  - and
  - "racial group" has the same meaning as in the Race Relations (Northern Ireland) Order 1997.

## Appendix B : List of Public Authorities designated for the purposes of Section 75

<b>Department of Agriculture &amp; Rural Development</b>	
Department of Agriculture & Rural Development	1 January 2000
Agricultural Research Institute for Northern Ireland	1 January 2000
Livestock & Meat Commission for Northern Ireland	1 January 2000
Loughs Agency	1 January 2000
Northern Ireland Fishery Harbour Authority	1 January 2000
Rural Development Council	1 January 2000
<b>Department of Culture, Arts &amp; Leisure</b>	
Department of Culture, Arts & Leisure	1 January 2000
Arts Council for Northern Ireland	1 January 2000
Board of Trustees of National Museums & Galleries	1 January 2000
Fisheries Conservancy Board	1 January 2000
Northern Ireland Film Commission	5 April 2001
Northern Ireland Museums Council	1 January 2000
North-South Language Body	1 January 2000
Sports Council for Northern Ireland	1 January 2000
Waterways Ireland	1 January 2000
<b>Department of Education</b>	
Department of Education	1 January 2000
Belfast Education & Library Board	1 January 2000
Council for Catholic Maintained Schools	1 January 2000
North Eastern Education & Library Board	1 January 2000
Northern Ireland Council for Curriculum, Examinations & Assessment	1 January 2000
South Eastern Education & Library Board	1 January 2000
Southern Education & Library Board	1 January 2000
Staff Commission for Education & Library Boards	1 January 2000
Western Education & Library Board	1 January 2000
Youth Council for Northern Ireland	1 January 2000
<b>Department for Employment and Learning</b>	
Department for Employment and Learning	1 January 2000
Construction Industry Training Board	1 January 2000
Enterprise Ulster	1 January 2000
Governing body of the Armagh College of Further Education	5 April 2001
Governing body of the Belfast Institute of Further and Higher Education	5 April 2001

Governing body of the Castlereagh College of Further and Higher Education	5 April 2001
Governing body of the Causeway Institute of Further and Higher Education	5 April 2001
Governing body of the East Antrim Institute of Further and Higher Education	5 April 2001
Governing body of the East Down Institute of Further and Higher Education	5 April 2001
Governing body of the East Tyrone Institute of Further and Higher Education	5 April 2001
Governing body of the Fermanagh College of Further and Higher Education	5 April 2001
Governing body of the Limavady College of Further and Higher Education	5 April 2001
Governing body of the Lisburn Institute of Further and Higher Education	5 April 2001
Governing body of the Newry & Kilkeel Institute of Further and Higher Education	5 April 2001
Governing body of the North Down and Ards Institute of Further and Higher Education	5 April 2001
Governing body of the North East Institute of Further and Higher Education	5 April 2001
Governing body of the North West Institute of Further and Higher Education	5 April 2001
Governing body of the Northern Ireland Hotel and Catering College	5 April 2001
Governing body of the Omagh College	5 April 2001
Governing body of the Queen's University of Belfast	5 April 2001
Governing body of the St Mary's University College, a College of the Queen's University of Belfast	5 April 2001
Governing body of the Stranmillis College, a College of the Queen's University of Belfast	5 April 2001
Governing body of the University of Ulster	5 April 2001
Governing body of the Upper Bann Institute of Further and Higher Education	5 April 2001
Labour Relations Agency	1 January 2000
Office of the Certification Officer for Northern Ireland	1 January 2000
Ulster Supported Employment Limited	1 January 2000
<b>Department of Enterprise, Trade &amp; Investment</b>	
Department of Enterprise, Trade & Investment	1 January 2000
General Consumer Council for Northern Ireland	1 January 2000
Health & Safety Executive for Northern Ireland	1 January 2000
InterTradeIreland Trade and Business Development Body (Trade and Business Development Body)	1 January 2000
Invest NI	8 April 2002
Northern Ireland Tourist Board	1 January 2000

Office of Director General of Electricity Supply for Northern Ireland	1 January 2000
Office of Director General of Gas for Northern Ireland	1 January 2000
<b>Department of the Environment</b>	
Department of the Environment	1 January 2000
Antrim Borough Council	1 January 2000
Ards Borough Council	1 January 2000
Armagh City & District Council	1 January 2000
Ballymena Borough Council	1 January 2000
Ballymoney Borough Council	1 January 2000
Banbridge District Council	1 January 2000
Belfast City Council	1 January 2000
Carrickfergus Borough Council	1 January 2000
Castlereagh Borough Council	1 January 2000
Coleraine Borough Council	1 January 2000
Cookstown District Council	1 January 2000
Craigavon Borough Council	1 January 2000
Derry City Council	1 January 2000
Down District Council	1 January 2000
Dungannon & South Tyrone Borough Council (Dungannon District Council)	1 January 2000
Fermanagh District Council	1 January 2000
Larne Borough Council	1 January 2000
Limavady Borough Council	1 January 2000
Lisburn Borough Council	1 January 2000
Local Government Officers Superannuation Committee	1 January 2000
Local Government Staff Commission for Northern Ireland	1 January 2000
Magherafelt District Council	1 January 2000
Moyle District Council	1 January 2000
Newry & Mourne District Council	1 January 2000
Newtownabbey Borough Council	1 January 2000
North Down Borough Council	1 January 2000
Omagh District Council	1 January 2000
Strabane District Council	1 January 2000
<b>Department of Finance &amp; Personnel</b>	
Department of Finance & Personnel	1 January 2000
Special EU Programmes Body	1 January 2000
<b>Department of Health, Social Services &amp; Public Safety</b>	

Department of Health, Social Services & Public Safety	1 January 2000
Altnagelvin Hospitals HSS Trust	1 January 2000
Armagh & Dungannon HSS Trust	1 January 2000
Belfast City Hospital HSS Trust	1 January 2000
Causeway HSS Trust	1 January 2000
Craigavon & Banbridge Community HSS Trust	1 January 2000
Craigavon Area Hospital Group HSS Trust	1 January 2000
Down Lisburn HSS Trust	1 January 2000
Eastern Health & Social Services Board	1 January 2000
Eastern Health & Social Services Council	1 January 2000
Fire Authority for Northern Ireland	1 January 2000
Food Safety Promotion Board	1 January 2000
Foyle HSS Trust	1 January 2000
Green Park HSS Trust	1 January 2000
Homefirst Community HSS Trust	1 January 2000
Mater Infirmorum Hospital HSS Trust	1 January 2000
Mental Health Commission for Northern Ireland	1 January 2000
Northern Ireland Practice And Education Council For Nursing And Midwifery <sup>1</sup>	7 October 2002
Newry & Mourne HSS Trust	1 January 2000
North & West Belfast HSS Trust	1 January 2000
Northern Health & Social Services Board	1 January 2000
Northern Health & Social Services Council	1 January 2000
Northern Ireland Ambulance Service HSS Trust	1 January 2000
Northern Ireland Blood Transfusion Service Agency	1 January 2000
Northern Ireland Central Services Agency for Health & Social Services	1 January 2000
Northern Ireland Council for Post Graduate Medical & Dental Research	1 January 2000
Northern Ireland Guardian Ad. Litem Service Agency	1 January 2000
Northern Ireland Health Promotion Agency	1 January 2000
Northern Ireland Regional Medical Physics Agency	1 January 2000
Northern Ireland Social Care Council <sup>2</sup>	18 December

<sup>1</sup> Northern Ireland Practice and Education Council for Nursing and Midwifery was established with effect from 7 October 2002 under the powers of Section 2 (1) of the Health and Social Services Act (NI) 2002 and replaces the National Board for Nursing, Midwifery and Health Visiting for Northern Ireland

<sup>2</sup> Northern Ireland Social Care Council - was established in October 2001 under the Health and Personal Social Services Act (NI) 2001. Chapter 3, Schedule 1, Paragraph 17 amends the Commissioner for Complaints (NI) Order 1996, Schedule 2 (bodies subject to investigation).

	2001
Royal Group of Hospitals & Dental Hospitals	1 January 2000
South & East Belfast HSS Trust	1 January 2000
Southern Health & Social Services Board	1 January 2000
Southern Health & social Services Council	1 January 2000
Sperrin Lakeland HSS Trust	1 January 2000
Ulster Community & Hospitals HSS Trust	1 January 2000
United Hospitals HSS Trust	1 January 2000
Western Health & Social Services Board	1 January 2000
Western Health & Social Services Council	1 January 2000
<b>Department for Regional Development</b>	
Department for Regional Development	1 January 2000
Belfast Harbour Commissioners	1 January 2000
Carlingford Lough Commissioners	1 January 2000
Coleraine Harbour Commissioners	1 January 2000
Londonderry Port & Harbour Commissioners	1 January 2000
Warrenpoint Harbour Authority	1 January 2000
<b>Department for Social Development</b>	
Department for Social Development	1 January 2000
Laganside Corporation	1 January 2000
Northern Ireland Housing Executive	1 January 2000
<b>Office of the First Minister &amp; Deputy First Minister</b>	
Office of the First Minister & Deputy First Minister	1 January 2000
Northern Ireland Community Relations Council	1 January 2000
<b>Northern Ireland Office</b>	
Northern Ireland Office	7 July 2000
Chief Electoral Officer for Northern Ireland	5 April 2001
Civil Service Commissioners for Northern Ireland	1 January 2000
Independent Assessor of Military Complaints Procedures	5 April 2001
Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission	7 July 2000
Northern Ireland Policing Board <sup>3</sup>	3 December 2001
Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland	3 December 2001

<sup>3</sup> Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000 (Schedule 6) amends the Northern Ireland Act 1998 as follows

In Section 75(3) after paragraph (c) insert - "(cc) the Northern Ireland Policing Board, the Chief Constable of the Police Service of Northern Ireland, and the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland"

Police Service of Northern Ireland	3 December 2001
Probation Board for Northern Ireland	7 July 2000
<b>Northern Ireland Assembly Commission</b>	
Northern Ireland Assembly Commission	15 January 2003
<b>Northern Ireland Audit Office</b>	
Northern Ireland Audit Office	15 January 2003
<b>Northern Ireland Court Service</b>	
Northern Ireland Court Service	7 July 2000
Legal Aid Department of the Law Society of Northern Ireland	5 April 2001
<b>Department for Culture, Media &amp; Sport (UK)</b>	
Department for Culture, Media & Sport (UK)	7 July 2000
British Library Board	7 July 2000
Community Fund (National Lottery Charities Board)	7 July 2000
National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts	5 April 2001
New Opportunities Fund	7 July 2000
Trustees of the National Heritage Memorial	7 July 2000
<b>Department of Education and Employment (UK)</b>	
Governing body of the Open University	5 April 2001
Qualifications and Curriculum Authority	5 April 2001
<b>Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs</b>	
Food from Britain	5 April 2001
Home Grown Cereals Authority	5 April 2001
United Kingdom Register of Organic Food Standards <sup>4</sup>	5 April 2001
Wine Standards Board of the Vintners' Company	5 April 2001
Wool Marketing Board	5 April 2001
<b>Department of Health (UK)</b>	
National Biological Standards Board	15 January 2003
UK Transplant	5 April 2001
United Kingdom Xenotransplantation Interim Regulatory Authority	5 April 2001
Unrelated Live Transplant Regulatory Authority	5 April 2001
<b>Department of Trade &amp; Industry (UK)</b>	

<sup>4</sup> UK Register of Organic Food Standards was 'wound up in accordance with the recommendation of the Quinquennial Review' of its work, and confirmed in the Action plan to develop organic food and farming in England (action point 1. The plan can be viewed at [www.defra.gov.uk/farm/organic](http://www.defra.gov.uk/farm/organic)). From April 1 UKROFS is to be replaced by a new advisory body without executive functions. The current executive functions of UKROFS, such as the approval of organic certifying bodies will be taken over by DEFRA.

Department of Trade & Industry	7 July 2000
Exports Credits Guarantee Department	7 July 2000
Postal Services Commission	15 January 2003
Consumer Council for Postal Services	15 January 2003
Office of the Director General of Telecommunications	7 July 2000
<b>Foreign &amp; Commonwealth Office (UK)</b>	
British Council	7 July 2000
<b>HM Customs &amp; Excise</b>	
HM Customs & Excise	7 July 2000
<b>Home Office (UK)</b>	
Information Commissioner's Office	7 July 2000
<b>Inland Revenue</b>	
Inland Revenue	7 July 2000

# **Appendix C : Progress Report Template - 1 January 2000 – 31 March 2001**

## **EQUALITY COMMISSION FOR NORTHERN IRELAND**

### **Guidance for Public Authorities**

#### **Progress Report structure on the implementation of the equality and good relations duties under S75 NI Act 1998**

The report will cover the period from 1 January 2000 to 31 March 2001 and should be submitted to the Commission by 31 July. It should include the five sections set out below encompassing important developments in the effective implementation of the Section 75 duties.

#### **Section 1: Preparation of the draft Equality Scheme**

- Outline measures taken to develop the authority's draft Equality Scheme including consultation.
- Detail steps taken to build equality and good relations objectives, performance indicators and targets into corporate and annual operating plans.
- Outline details of the authority's formal consideration of the draft Equality Scheme, and any revisions, before submission for final approval to the Commission.
- Highlight any other areas of the scheme implemented prior to approval of the scheme

#### **Section 2: Screening Report**

- Provide a Screening Report detailing -
  - those policies that will be subject to Equality Impact Assessment
  - those policies not included with justification for their non inclusion.
  - a timetable for Equality Impact Assessment.
- Outline any concerns about, or opportunities to enhance, the process of policy screening.

#### **Section 3: Training Programme**

- Outline details of staff and Management Board/Committee training provision associated with the Section 75 duties and the preparation of the Equality Scheme.
- Provide a summary of any training evaluations.

#### **Section 4: Information Provision and Data Collection**

- Describe any systems that have been established to supplement available statistical and qualitative research.
- Outline what action has been taken to review current arrangements for the provision of information in accessible formats.
- Describe arrangements to develop monitoring systems regarding access to information and services to ensure equality of opportunity.

#### **Section 5: Additional Information**

- List any Equality Impact Assessments commenced or completed.
- List any proposals for legislation for which an assessment for the implications for the Section 75 duties was undertaken.
- Report information on any other matters considered relevant to the authority's implementation of the Section 75 duties.

## **Appendix D : Progress Report Template – 1 April 2001 – 31 March 2002**

### **EQUALITY COMMISSION FOR NORTHERN IRELAND**

#### **Public Authorities Progress Reports 2001 - 2002**

Guidance for Public Authorities on the Structure of reports on the implementation of the equality and good relations duties under S75 of the NI Act 1998

The report will cover the period from 1 April 2001 to 31 March 2002 and should be submitted to the Commission by 31 July 2002. It should include the seven sections set out below encompassing important developments in the effective implementation of the Section 75 duties. A series of prompts are included to allow organisations to assess the extent to which progress has been made. The prompts can be used to help review and identify targets for reporting progress.

#### **Section 1: Preparation of Equality Scheme**

**(Applies to organisations whose scheme was not approved by the Commission prior to 1 April 2001)**

- Outline measures taken during the year to develop the authority's draft Equality Scheme including consultation and details of the authority's formal consideration of the draft Equality Scheme, before submission for final approval to the Commission.
- Highlight any other areas of the scheme implemented prior to approval of the scheme

#### Prompt:

Have affected groups, staff, service users and groups representing the nine Section 75 categories been consulted about the organisation's draft scheme.

#### **Section 2: Strategic Implementation of the S75 Equality Duties**

- Outline evidence of progress made in developing equality and good relations objectives, performance indicators and targets in corporate and annual operating plans. This may include performance information and targets for 2001-2002.
- Provide details of steps to progress the Good Relations duty such as undertaking a good relations audit, developing a strategy or providing training.
- Outline steps to work with other public authorities and other partners in progressing the duties.
- Indicate if S75 is a standard agenda item for Board and/or Senior Management Team on a quarterly basis.
- Outline any factors that enhance or impede the process of Strategic Implementation.

Prompt:

Have the Board and Senior Officers reviewed the authority's progress report?  
Has responsibility for equality been agreed and clearly designated within all sections of the authority?

**Section 3: Screening & Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) Timetable**

- If a Screening Report has not been submitted to the Commission the progress report must contain a report detailing -
  - those policies that will be subject to Equality Impact Assessment
  - those policies not included with justification for their non inclusion.
  - a timetable for Equality Impact Assessment.
- If a Screening Report and EQIA Timetable has been submitted provide an update detailing -
  - those policies that were subject to Equality Impact Assessment during 2001-2002 (An indicative matrix is included in Appendix 1)
  - those policies screened and not subject for assessment with justification for their non inclusion.
  - a specific timetable for Equality Impact Assessments in 2002.
- Outline any initiatives, such as good practice reviews, that have lead to changes in practice or policy.
- Outline any other factors that enhance or impede the process of policy screening.

Prompt:

Does the authority require each department/directorate to identify how its policies impact on equality of opportunity and can promote good relations?  
Have local, sectoral or regional networks with other authorities been developed and/or supported for example through participation?

**Section 4: Communication & Training Provision**

- Indicate if your organisation has developed a 5 year Training Plan (the Commission may wish to discuss details with individual bodies).
- Outline details of staff and Management Board/Committee training provision associated with the Section 75 duties and the preparation of the Equality Scheme.
- Provide details of internal and external communication of the authority's commitment to the statutory duties.
- Provide details of how affected groups have been involved in training.
- Provide a summary of any training evaluations.
- Outline any factors that enhance or impede the process of communication and training.

Prompt:

Are equality objectives built into the job descriptions and performance indicators of relevant staff, and are these reflected on in the appraisal process?  
Does the organisation report strategically on the training objectives contained within equality schemes?

Do the Board and/or Senior Officers promote the authority's equality objectives in public statements, interviews and external events such as conferences?

### **Section 5: Information Provision, Data Collection & Analysis**

- Describe systems that have been established to supplement available statistical and qualitative research including consideration given to using internal organisational data and external networks.
- Outline what action has been taken to review and develop arrangements for the provision of information in accessible formats and ensure use of alternative formats.
- Detail steps taken to enhance existing community networks and/or establishing new equality forums to support implementation of the equality scheme
- Detail steps taken to make affected groups aware of information and services provided.
- Describe arrangements to develop monitoring systems regarding access to information and services to ensure equality of opportunity.
- Outline any factors that enhance or impede the process of information provision, data collection and analysis.

#### Prompt:

Are the results of awareness or satisfaction surveys used to inform the development and review of policies?

Is relevant external data (for example Census, workforce profiles, customer surveys, focus groups) used to inform policy development?

Have new information systems been linked to arrangements for screening policies?

Does the authority monitor uptake of services as a standard procedure?

Have appropriate consultation mechanisms been developed and used to establish needs /satisfaction levels?

Are alternative formats provided where appropriate to enable people from across the nine Section 75 categories to have access to all services?

### **Section 6: Complaints**

- Identify the number of S75 complaints received and resolved during the year.
- Identify the number of S75 complaints referred to the Commission.

#### Prompt:

Does the authority monitor S75 complaints in a standard procedure?

Does the authority assess the extent to which complaints are handled and obtain feedback from complainants?

### **Section 7: Timetable**

- Provide an update of the timetable of measures as contained within your Equality Scheme for 2001-2002.

#### Prompt:

Has the timetable been endorsed and subsequently reviewed on a regular (quarterly) basis by the Board and Senior Officers?

Does the timetable require systematic activity within all sections of the authority?  
Has a clearly defined organisational structure with resources for implementation of the duties and assessment of policies been established?

**Section 8: Additional Information**

- If relevant list any proposals for legislation for which an assessment for the implications for the Section 75 duties was undertaken.
- Report information on any other matters considered relevant to the authority's implementation of the Section 75 duties.
- Outline any other factors that enhance or impede the process of implementing the S75 Statutory Duties.

EQIA Timetable Reporting Matrix

<b>Title of EQIA</b>	<b>Stage (as per Steps 1-7 of EQIA Process)</b>	<b>Partnerships with Public Authorities</b>	<b>Corporate Monitoring Arrangements</b>
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			

For example

<b>Title of EQIA</b>	<b>Stage (as per Steps 1-7 of EQIA Process)</b>	<b>Partnerships with Public Authorities</b>	<b>Corporate Monitoring Arrangements</b>
Policy on Provision of Public Parks	Stage 6 – Publication of Results	Any District Council, Some Health & Social Services Board	Systematic monitoring by Parks Section for review by 31 March 2003

If you would like copies of this report in other languages or formats, please contact us.

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