



Report on the  
Implementation of  
the Section 75  
Equality and Good  
Relations Duties  
by Public Authorities  
Based on Public  
Authority Annual  
Progress Reports

**Equality Commission**

FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

1 April 2005 - 31 March 2006

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## **Accuracy of information contained in this report**

This report primarily reflects the views of the Equality Commission on implementation of the Section 75 Statutory Duties during 2005-06. Section 2 of this report sets out information included in a sample of public authority annual progress reports. Annual reporting by public authorities is a process of self assessment and the Equality Commission does not currently formally validate the accuracy of information they provide. However, the Commission intends to do this in subsequent years.

## Foreword

The period under review can be characterised as a 'last push' by many parts of the public sector to better mainstream equality considerations within their organisations before the commencement of a series of statutory review process. Much discussion took place during the year regarding the Five Year Review of Equality Schemes by public authorities and the Equality Commission's Review of the Effectiveness of Section 75, scheduled to commence during 2006.

Throughout 2005 the Commission carried out its statutory remits regarding Section 75 in terms of offering advice and ensuring compliance. These activities were carried out against the backdrop of the Review of Public Administration (RPA) with the associated opportunities and worries that such a fundamental review exercise brings. In this context the Commission worked to ensure Section 75 considerations were implicit in the RPA and the minds of the various decision makers involved.

This report marks something of a sea change in the Commission's approach to reporting on progress by itself and others in the promotion of the Section 75 duties. Unlike previous years the Commission has moved away from review and analysis of all reports submitted. Instead a range of public authorities have been selected from across the public sector. In addition information from the selected reports is directly reported so as to better reflect on progress within specific authorities. In future years it is hoped to develop this process further.

During 2005-06 many public authorities strove to demonstrate improvement in the promotion of equality of opportunity and good relations in their policies and practices. This report highlights where further developments could be made and illustrates how top level commitment is even more important at this stage of scheme implementation as it was during the initial phase of development.

Once again I would again like to thank those individuals and organisations who sought to contribute to better policy-making through their participation in consultations during the period under review.



**Bob Collins**  
**Chief Commissioner**



## Executive Summary

In this annual report on Section 75 progress, for the first time, the Commission carried out an analysis of a sample of public authority reports. Information from forty three public authority reports has been directly reported to illustrate progress within specific authorities.

### Leadership

Effectiveness in reporting progress in meeting the Section 75 duties appears to be most apparent in public authorities where there is evidence of leadership at the highest levels. In addition this commitment is clearly and consistently communicated and there is reporting of wider staff involvement. Ulster Supported Employment Limited (USEL) highlighted the outcome of staff involvement with representative groups in terms of better engagement and staff being invited to participate in voluntary boards and community projects.

### Improving Core Business

In general terms the tying of EQIAs into existing plans for policy review was far from the norm in progress reports analysed. In various reports including those from Government Departments, Health bodies and various UK Wide Public Bodies screening was reported as the main mechanism to mainstreaming equality issues into policy development. Of the eight changes in policies or practices highlighted in the Government Department reports sampled, only one resulted from EQIA activities.

Alternatively reports reviewed from smaller public bodies, the Local Government and Housing sectors were more prevalent in reporting the use of EQIAs as a means of mainstreaming equality issues into policy development. This included clear evidence of bodies undertaking EQIAs initially as a means to identify further monitoring requirements in advance of considering policy developments.

Amongst the various improvements in core business noted were:

- An increase in the uptake of special exam arrangements due to increased awareness among College staff and students.
- Ulster Community Hospital Trust (UCHT) reported 257 interpreting episodes in 2005-06 for Black and Minority Ethnic patients, a 76 % increase in annual provision.
- Ards Borough Council reported introduction of a concessionary

rate for disabled people at the Council's Leisure facilities with free admission for carers.

- Northern Ireland Ambulance Service (NIAS) worked with the other emergency services to launch an SMS Texting service to enable members of the deaf community to access Accident and Emergency Ambulance by texting from a mobile phone.

## Coherence

Various examples of inter and cross sectoral working were reported during 2005-06. These included efforts by Strabane District Council and the Western Health and Social Services Board to jointly developed a Multi Agency Welcome Pack, providing information in different languages on local services. Details were also provided about the regional translation contract, put in place in March 2006. This ensures that all translations procured by Health and Personal Social Service organisations meet certain quality standards.

## Engagement

Several reports including those from the Northern Ireland Social Care Council and Ulster Supported Employment Limited set out definite notable benefits from engagement. These reflected greater transparency in the decision making process and the views of community and voluntary groups informing work. However, some difficulties continue to be reported by bodies regarding “consultation fatigue”. Special European Programme Body for example reported representative bodies/organisations claim a lack of resources to be the main problem and this is viewed as a major constraint around effective implementation.

## Good Relations

As in previous years, there was considerable variation in the approaches taken by public authorities to the implementation of the good relations duty. Annual progress reports indicate that some organisations are very proactive. For example the University of Ulster won Business in the Community's 'Good Relations' award in 2006 for its Civic Leadership Programme. Others, have yet to substantively address the duty. And there are also those which may not be reporting their good relations activities in a way that reflects the level of their work or commitment.

## 1. Introduction

### The Statutory Duties

- 1.1 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 implemented through the Northern Ireland Act 1998.
- 1.2 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 people of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status or sexual orientation; between men and women generally; between people with a disability and people without; and between people with dependants and people without.
- 1.3 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.
- 1.4 The duties are designed to ensure that government and public authorities make equality of opportunity and good relations considerations central to policy development.

### Equality Schemes

- 1.5 Each public authority must have an equality scheme in place, both as a statement of its commitment to the statutory duties, and as a plan for performance of the duties.

### Consultation

- 1.6 Consultation with those affected by public policy decisions is central to the effectiveness of the duties. Equality schemes spell out an authority's arrangements for consultation on the duties and on the likely impact of policies.



## Impact on Policy

- 1.7 Public authorities must also assess the equality impact of their policies and publish the outcome of such assessments. This assessment includes the identification of measures to better promote equality of opportunity as well as the identification of potential adverse impacts. 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 or reduce any adverse impact the policy may have. The public authority must also show how it considered alternative policies which might better promote equality of opportunity.
- 1.8 Each equality scheme contains a commitment by the public authority to submit an annual report of its progress to the Equality Commission. To help public authorities prepare their reports the Commission has provided a template for them to follow (see Appendix B). The Equality Commission uses the information gathered from these reports to assist it in keeping the effectiveness of Section 75 under review - as we are required under the Northern Ireland Act - and to publicly report on progress.

## Summary of Progress to Date

- 1.9 The Commission has published four previous reports of progress on the implementation of the duties, the first covering January 2000 - March 2002, the second covering 2002 - 2003, the third covering 2003 - 2004 and the fourth covering 2004 - 2005. These reports are available on the Commission's website at [www.equalityni.org](http://www.equalityni.org). Each public authority's progress report is a public document and is available from that authority.
- 1.10 The 2005-2006 report includes information provided by public authorities subject to Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act. They were in the first instance asked to report by 31 August 2006, and a reminder was sent to those who had not sent their reports by that time requesting information by 1 October 2006. By the end of October twenty five public authorities set out in Table 1 had not submitted progress reports for the previous year.

**Table 1: Submission of Progress Reports Behind Schedule**

<b>Public Authority</b>	<b>Date Received</b>
University of Ulster	1/1/2006
Gosford Housing Association	6/11/2006
SHAC Housing Association	6/11/2006
Broadway Housing Association	6/11/2006
Castlereagh Borough Council	6/11/2006
Antrim Borough Council	11/12/2006
Belfast Education & Library Board	11/12/2006
Southern Health & Social Services Council	12/12/2006
South Eastern Education & Library Board	15/12/2006
Consumer Council for Postal Services	5/02/2007
Craigavon Area Hospital Group Trust	15/02/2007
Southern Education & Library Board	23/02/2007
Southern Health & Social Services Board	23/03/2007
Magherafelt District Council	26/03/2007
Dept of Trade & Industry	Not received by end March 2007
NI Authority for Energy Regulation	Not received by end March 2007
NI Council for Curriculum Examinations & Assessment	Not received by end March 2007
North South Language Body	Not received by end March 2007
Open Door Housing Association	Not received by end March 2007
Presbyterian Housing Association	Not received by end March 2007
The Certification Office	Not received by end March 2007
Western Education & Library Board	Not received by end March 2007
Woodvale & Shankill Housing Association	Not received by end March 2007

1.11 Advice on making official complaints regarding scheme implementation was provided by the Commission on sixty seven occasions. This advice related to complaints and investigations in connection with Schedule 9 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, known as Paragraph 10 and 11 investigations. At the start of the period under review, investigations of equality scheme implementation by public authorities were in progress as follows:

- Sinn Fein and Department for Social Development (Paragraph 11) - investigation as to whether DSD had failed to screen an alleged policy adopted by it for allocating funding under the Peace II initiative, adversely affecting areas that would generally be perceived to be Catholic/Nationalist. The investigation concluded that the alleged failure had not been established.
- Childrens Law Centre and Northern Ireland Office (Paragraph 10) - alleged failure to properly apply the screening criteria to and properly consult upon its policy proposals and legislation in respect of anti-social behaviour affecting children and young persons. The investigation concluded that both failures had been established, and the Commission recommended that an Equality Impact assessment be carried out by the Northern Ireland Office of the Anti-Social Behaviour Order policy and legislation in relation to its potential impact on children and young people.
- Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young people and Northern Ireland Office (Paragraph 11) - investigation into the period of time allowed by the NIO on the legislative stage of the Anti-Social Behaviour Order proposals. The investigation concluded that the alleged failure had not been established.
- Finlay and Department for Regional Development (Paragraph 10) - alleged failure to take into account an EQIA and associated consultation when making its decision concerning its policy on concessionary fares affecting women aged between 60 and 64. The investigation concluded that the alleged failure had not been established.
- Allen and Fire Authority of Northern Ireland (Paragraph 10)- alleged failure to deal with a complaint in line with equality scheme commitments. The Paragraph 10 complaint was subsequently withdrawn.

- 1.12 During 2005-06 the Commission received eleven complaints of alleged failures to implement approved schemes under Paragraph 10, three of which were subsequently withdrawn. Following consideration the Commission authorised two investigations as follows:
- Butler and Lisburn City Council - alleged failure to take the findings of a previous EQIA into account when making a decision to alter a policy relating to the flying of the Union Flag at Civic Headquarters and at various Council locations. The investigation was ongoing at the end of the period under review.
  - Marshall and Omagh District Council - concerns the presence of a Memorial of a political nature on a Council-owned site and a subsequent decision of that Council to dispose of the section of the site in which the memorial is situated to the group believed to have been responsible for erecting the memorial. The resulting alleged failures to comply with approved Equality Scheme related to alleged failure to screen and equality impact assess the policy. The investigation was ongoing at the end of the period under review.
- 1.13 Copies of statutory duty investigation reports can be found on the Commission's website ([www.equalityni.org](http://www.equalityni.org)).
- 1.14 The Commission also completed an audit of progress on implementing the good relations duty and made arrangements to publish and disseminate findings. Research work was undertaken to develop guidance on Section 75 monitoring and forty two equality schemes were approved by the Commission. During the year the Commission responded to significant equality impact assessments (EQIAs) reflecting business plan priorities.
- 1.15 Annual reporting is an important mechanism to continue dialogue on mainstreaming. It allows the Commission, public authorities and representative organisations to identify good practice. The analysis set out in the following sections is both a commentary on progress during 2005-06 and an insight into future opportunities to take forward equality scheme commitments. Individuals will benefit most from equality scheme implementation if public authorities review their activities and continue to identify opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity and good relations. Further examples of implementation practice can be found on our website ([www.equalityni.org](http://www.equalityni.org)).

- 1.16 This year, for the first time, analysis of annual progress reports took place at the same time as public authorities' five year equality scheme reviews. Given the considerable information that had already been received and analysed, the Commission carried out an analysis of a sample of public authority reports received. This reflects the initial conclusions of the review of effectiveness of Section 75, which recommended a more strategic approach to monitoring compliance.

## 2. Summary of Progress Made By Public Authorities

- 2.1 Public authorities subject to Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 (the Act) submitted progress reports to the Equality Commission for the period 1 April 2005 - 31 March 2006. To help public authorities address all of the key issues relating to the period, the Commission produced a reporting template (see Appendix B). This section of the report outlines the steps taken by specific government departments, public authorities from the education, further and higher education, health, local government and housing sectors, authorities responsible for reserved and excepted matters as well as other Northern Ireland, cross border and UK wide public authorities, to promote the equality of opportunity and good relations duties.
- 2.2 In order to summarise progress a number of public authorities which were due to submit progress reports for this reporting period were selected from across the public sector. Information from forty three reports is directly reported to illustrate progress within specific authorities. The Commission has sought to highlight the impacts and outcomes of work, the Equality Commission's assessment of the main areas where progress has been made on scheme commitments, and areas where the Commission believes further improvement is needed.

### Government Departments

- 2.3 This section of the report includes two of the eleven government departments established under the Northern Ireland Act 1998: the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL) and the Department of Education (DEd)

#### Impacts and Outcomes

- DCAL launched a new angling website which included details of fisheries with disabled angler facilities, and the nature and level of accessibility.
- DCAL reported the Public Records Office for Northern Ireland (PRONI) sought to address a gender imbalance in its user profile by including women's groups in its outside lecture programme and engaging ethnic minorities through a Northern Ireland and China exhibition as part of a wider "Big Draw" programme.
- DCAL detailed efforts by PRONI to redevelop its website to enable customers generally, and for people with visual impairments in

- particular, to view large print on screen through an electronic mouse thus improving access to catalogues, finding aids and documents.
- DEd highlighted accessibility improvements made during the review of the Religious Education Core Syllabus. Questionnaires and consultation documents were provided for primary and post primary schools in understandable formats and on line. Over 500 responses were received and the exercise was seen as making a successful impact.
  - In its concluding remarks DEd indicated that persons of political opinion and marital status were not applicable to the consideration of positive benefits arising from the Department's work to implement the statutory duties.

### **Areas of progress**

- Both Departments reported continuing progress in building equality and good relations into corporate, business and/or operational planning.
- In its report DEd highlighted its strategic framework which is designed to provide clear direction and guidance over a 3-5 year period. The department's 2005-06 business plan included two strategic aims linked to Section 75 and eighteen supporting actions and targets. Of these seven were reported as achieved during the year, ten achieved with some delay and one likely to be achieved with some delay.
- DCAL highlighted its' strategic framework against which policies are regularly reviewed. This is seen as maximising opportunities for joined up working with partners including other government departments, non departmental public bodies and non governmental organisations.
- Both DCAL and DEd detailed the extent of training provision for staff, reporting the range of workshops and conferences which staff benefited from.
- DCAL outlined how it successfully extended consultations by posting an on line version on all library computers throughout Northern Ireland. It was reported this practice alone generated almost a thousand replies from individuals on occasions.
- DCAL also made significant progress through the Sign Language Partnership Group in producing best practice guidance on the provision of public services to deaf people, with the actual guidance due to be launched slightly outside the reporting period.

- During the year no Section 75 complaints into scheme implementation were reportedly received by these two government departments.

### **Areas for further improvement noted by the Commission**

- During the year only one change to policies or practices, resulting in positive changes was reported as a result of EQIA activities amongst these two departments.
- DCAL highlighted business area responsibilities for establishing monitoring systems and the department wide continuous survey of participation and satisfaction with services. However, data from this can only be analysed by six of the nine Section 75 categories.
- DEd reported the action “to publish a revised schedule of EQIA's by December 2004” amongst those actions achieved with some delay. While a revised EQIA programme was issued for consultation it was not finalized by the end of the reporting period.
- While DCAL highlighted technological developments to enhance accessibility in its report DEd merely described progress in terms of website maintenance and updating with information about the statutory duties and ongoing consultations.
- DEd reported limited information on data collection and analysis particularly regarding supplementing available research. During the year additional research was undertaken by DEd relating to carers, young people, Travellers, disability and race and such could be more effectively reported in terms of supplementing existing systems to monitor future impact.
- DCAL pointed out that following its EQIA of the Public Angling Estate and Water Recreation Facilities it gave a commitment to consult interested parties on an annual basis. The Department went on to highlight the lack of response from a particular representative group. This development of reporting in this way is not welcomed by the Commission.



## Education

2.4 The education sector comprises the five Education and Library Boards (ELBs), the Staff Commission for Education and Library Boards (SCELB), the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS), the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CEA) and the Youth Council for Northern Ireland. This section of the report focused on information reported by Belfast Education & Library Board (BELB) and the South Eastern Education & Library Board (SEELB).

### Impacts and Outcomes

- BELB and SEELB indicate in their reports that their work on implementing the statutory duties has produced positive benefits for all of the Section 75 categories. However, as in previous years the focus of reporting is on actions taken to implement the duties rather than outlining evidence of impacts and outcomes.
- During the early part of the year BELB and SEELB, along with the other three Education and Library Boards (ELBs), issued a report on the screening of their Resource Allocation Plans. Briefing sessions were held with trade unions and Joint Consultative Forum members and twenty one regional and local consultation meetings were held. Thirty three written submissions were received and a report on the screening exercise was issued in August 2005.
- An EQIA of Work-Life Balance Policies was completed and an action plan produced. One of the actions was the publication of a Guide to Work-Life Balance policies which was produced for issue to staff.
- The ELBs/Staff Commission held a Five Year Review workshop, to give affected representative groups the opportunity to participate in the review process. A report of the event was compiled and issued during the reporting year.

### Areas of Progress

- The inter-ELB/Staff Commission Statutory Duty Co-ordinating Group met on thirteen occasions during the year to progress equality issues.
- The Staff Commission/ELB Joint Consultative Forum, which includes representatives from the trade union, community and voluntary sector and public sector, held five meetings and issued

- eight update leaflets to Forum members.
- BELB and SEELB, as part of a sectoral arrangement, developed a draft Good Relations Policy. A workshop, attended by participants from a range of functional areas across the Boards, was held. It is intended that the draft policy will be consulted upon and an interim action plan, which will operate until the Education and Skills Authority is established, will be drawn up.
- Fifteen pupils from the SEELB area took part in the 'Exploring Diversity Programme', which explores issues affecting young people from a variety of ethnic backgrounds. In light of the success of the Programme SEELB plan a follow-up programme for schools in the Lisburn area.
- BELB and SEELB held a number of equality training events, including EQIA and race awareness training, for a variety of staff.

### **Areas for further improvement noted by the Commission**

- BELB and SEELB should provide more evidence of impacts and outcomes in terms of positive benefits for individuals from the nine equality categories as a result of implementing the commitments outlined in their Equality Schemes.
- BELB and SEELB should provide more information regarding progress made locally i.e. within their Board areas.
- During the year no Section 75 complaints regarding scheme implementation were received by BELB and SEELB.

## **Further and Higher Education**

2.5 The Further and Higher Education sector comprises the sixteen Institutes/Colleges of Further and Higher Education and the five Universities. This section of the report focuses on four of the above public authorities: Armagh College, Belfast Institute of Further Education (BIFHE), Fermanagh College and the University of Ulster.

### **Impacts and Outcomes**

- In their reports both the Colleges and the University of Ulster state that they believe their work on implementing the statutory duties has produced positive benefits for most of the Section 75 categories.
- During 2005-06 three cultural diversity projects were completed by the Colleges and an event was held in February 2006 to showcase

- the projects.
- Following the success of the cultural diversity project BIFHE decided to appoint a Cultural Diversity Project Worker, to roll out the outcomes from the project and to further mainstream diversity into the Institute's curriculum and student services.
  - An increase in the uptake of special exam arrangements was reported by the Colleges, due to increased awareness among staff and students.
  - The University of Ulster completed two EQIAs during the year. The EQIA of Recruitment and Selection resulted in a new recruitment policy being approved by Council. The EQIA of Aquatic Facilities at Jordanstown identified impacts in relation to age and disability and as a result of consultation the University committed to actions intended to have a beneficial effect on those categories.

### **Areas of Progress**

- The University of Ulster's Equality & Diversity Advisory Group met on a bi-monthly basis throughout the year to oversee the implementation of the University's Equality Scheme.
- Research to identify 'chill factors' in Colleges (i.e. factors which might make a College less attractive to students from a particular community background), was completed and the research report was presented to College Principals.
- BIFHE targeted programmes at a number of single identity groups providing women-only classes in English/literacy, maths/numeracy, Irish, arts & crafts, as well as specific classes for male Travellers, and classes for members of the Chinese and Indian communities.
- The University of Ulster won Business in the Community's 'Good Relations' award in 2006 for its Civic Leadership Programme which involved 100 staff, 150 students and local residents.
- During the period under review the University of Ulster established a Sexual Orientation Working Group to review guidance on sexual orientation in employment and draft an action plan for this area of equality.
- College staff received training in a number of equality areas including disability, age legislation and harassment.
- Over 350 University of Ulster staff and a number of students received equality awareness training in the year. As a result of this training the University believes that senior management are more aware of equality issues and that equality is taken into account at an earlier stage of policy development.

### **Areas for further improvement noted by the Commission**

- It is important that individual Colleges ensure that the statutory duties continue to be implemented and mainstreamed during the transition period of the 'Further Education Means Business' programme, which will result in the sixteen Colleges being merged into six.
- The Colleges should provide more evidence of impacts and outcomes in terms of positive benefits for individuals from the nine equality categories as a result of implementing the commitments outlined in their Equality Schemes.
- The Colleges and the University of Ulster should provide more information regarding progress made within their areas of responsibility, as well as areas of joint working.
- No Section 75 complaints were reportedly received by the Colleges or the University of Ulster.

## **Health**

2.6 The Health and Social Services sector comprises the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS), four Health and Social Services Boards covering the North, South, East, and Western areas, four Health and Social Services Councils, 19 Health and Social Services Trusts and 11 other Agencies and authorities. This section of the report focuses on progress reports provided by Altnagelvin Hospital Health & Social Services Trust (AHSST), Eastern Health and Social Services Council (EHSSC), Northern Ireland Social Care Council (NISCC), Southern Health & Social Services Board (SHSSB), Ulster Community and Hospital Trust (UCHT), Western Health & Social Services Board (WHSSB), Western Health & Social Services Council (WHSSC) and the Northern Ireland Ambulance Service Trust (NIAST).

### **Impacts and Outcomes**

- UCHT reported 257 interpreting episodes for Black and Minority Ethnic patients during 2005-06, a 76 % increase on provision in the previous year.
- UCHT was involved in the production of 'Equality Vision' DVD, video and booklet, in conjunction with the Junction Club, an independent group of adults with learning disabilities.
- SHSSB is a member of the Southern Area Action with Travellers (SAAT) group which successfully brought new funding to help

- Travellers improve health status, accommodation and educational status through a range of practical schemes.
- Northern Ireland Ambulance Service (NIAS) worked with the other emergency services to launch an SMS Texting service to enable members of the deaf community to access Accident and Emergency Ambulance by texting from a mobile phone.
  - As part of its' Community Education Project, NIAS worked with young people on a cross- community basis to outline and explain the impact of attacks on emergency services.
  - Northern Ireland Social Care Council improved registration services for persons of different racial groups; persons with and without a disability and persons with and without dependants and produced a Welcome pack specifically for staff from overseas.
  - Along with other public authorities, the Board is included in the regional translation Contract, put in place in March 2006. This ensures that all translations procured by HPSS organisations meet certain quality standards.

### **Areas of progress**

- Ulster Community and Hospital Trust incorporated equality and human rights into its NVQ training, in the form of a series of two-hour modules entitled 'Fostering Equality and Human Rights'.
- SHSSB in partnership with the three local health and social care groups in the Southern area jointly commissioned services for elderly people. The Board reports that the partnership has proved to be very effective in addressing local issues to improve care for older people, facilitating hospital discharge and maintaining people in their homes.
- SHSSB highlighted some initiatives undertaken in 2005-06 with the key aim of improving the well-being of vulnerable children and young people. This included planning services through the Sixth Sense group, which brings together young people with a range of complex disabilities. In addition supported housing schemes were set up in three Trust areas including development of a major project for all children in the Brownlow area of Lurgan.
- NIAS identified differences at the divisional level in the operation of policies. As a result the Trust has embarked on a Policy Review to ensure consistency in policy implementation to ensure best practice throughout the Trust.
- NIAS also reported details of its work in conjunction with Trademark, to develop a programme of Equality and Good

Relations Training. A total of 110 managers have attended the Good Relations training in the reporting period.

- Northern Ireland Social Care Council commenced an EQIA on its policy - 'Registration of Social Workers, Social Care Workers and Student Social Workers' and during a review of the scope of the EQIA two further areas of work were identified.
- Eastern Health and Social Services Council provided a comprehensive training programme for staff, including Equality Vision training, and all staff attended racial equality training provided by NICEM.

### **Areas for further improvement noted by the Commission**

- Altnagelvin Hospital Health and Social Services Trust, Western Health and Social Services Board, Western Health and Social Services Council, Ulster Community and Hospital Trust and Southern Health and Social Services Board variously reported on input to the DHSSPS regional EQIA programme. However, none gave any indication of local EQIAs of Trust policies being undertaken in the reporting period.
- While Northern Ireland Ambulance Service did not report undertaking any EQIAs during the period it embarked on a major Policy Review. The Commission anticipates that details on the outcomes of this review of policies will be included in future reports along with details of any EQIAs undertaken as a result of the review.
- Eastern Health and Social Services Council reported limited progress in development of data collection and analysis systems which are highly relevant in respect of its advocacy role for patients and users of health and personal social services.
- Altnagelvin Hospital Health and Social Services Trust, Western Health and Social Services Board and Western Health and Social Services Council reported a comprehensive screening of policies and a major review of internal systems and procedures for screening during the year. Of the 28 policies subjected to screening none were screened in for an EQIA. The Commission looks forward to further information on the proposed EQIA on Mental Health Services Review due to be commenced in 2006-07.

## Housing

2.7 The Housing sector comprises 39 registered Housing Associations. For the purpose of reporting progress the following associations have been reviewed: Ballynafeigh, Choice, Clonard, Donacloney Hearth, Triangle and Ulidia.

### Impacts and Outcomes

- Housing Associations schemes were approved during this reporting period. Therefore progress largely focused on scheme actions to implement the duties and impacts and outcomes are not yet prevalent. However, some were evident.
- The various Housing Associations registered with Language Line enabling access to telephone based translation services on demand. 'Welcome' poster's, which provide information on translation services, were displayed. Additionally facilities were put in place so that information can be provided in alternative formats.
- Choice and Donacloney Housing Association reported their Tenant's handbooks were reformatted in an appropriate font size and colour.

### Areas of progress

- Housing Associations progressed a collaborative approach to the implementation of the statutory duties with the Northern Ireland Federation of Housing Associations (NIFHA) playing a co-ordinating role in this process. This involved facilitation of meetings, information/advice provision, arranging training, managing consultation processes, developing guides or template documents, liaising with the Equality Commission and acting as a link between Housing Associations and representative groups.
- Implementation targets for meeting equality scheme obligations have been included in Business or Corporate Plans of the Housing Associations.
- The Housing Associations conducted a joint policy screening exercise which identified 16 main policy areas, of these 10 were screened in for Equality Impact Assessment.
- An EQIA Co-ordination group was established and work was commenced on two equality impact assessments covering access and communications, and complaints.
- Various Housing Association staff and some Board members

attended a number of training events and seminars organized by NIFHA in relation to the implementation of Section 75, policy development, screening, and undertaking EQIAs.

- Choice and Triangle Housing Associations reported that equality scheme awareness has been incorporated into staff inductions for all new employees. Triangle has also built in Equity, Diversity and Interdependence awareness into induction training for staff and board members.
- Triangle Housing Association facilitated the establishment of a special needs Tenant Advisory Group (TAG) to engage with their main stakeholder group. They have also created a new staff post - Tenant Participation coordinator to assist two way communication with tenants.
- In relation to data collection and analysis Housing Associations highlighted various socio- economic data collected about applicants and tenants for new lettings through 'NICORE' returns which includes information on seven of the nine equality categories.

### **Areas for further improvement noted by the Commission**

- As well as reporting on joint areas of work Housing Associations should provide specific detail on progress within their own Association. For example Housing Associations should report if they are undertaking a screening exercise or carrying out Equality Impact Assessments on policies which are specific to them.
- Housing Associations should work with other sectoral bodies to extend their data collection systems so that data is collected on all nine equality groups.
- Housing Associations should seek ways to progress the good relations duty effectively.
- Housing Associations should involve the affected Section 75 groups in the development and delivery of training.

## **Local Government**

2.8 The Local Government sector comprises 26 Local Councils, the Local Government Staff Commission (LGSC) and the Northern Ireland Local Government Officers Superannuation Committee (NILGOSC). This section of the report includes six of the above public authorities: Ards Borough Council, Armagh City & District Council, Belfast City Council, Dungannon & South Tyrone District Council, Magherfelt District



## Council and North Down Borough Council

### Impacts and Outcomes

- Ards Borough Council reported introduction of concessionary rate for disabled people at the Council's Leisure facilities with free admission for carers.
- North Down Borough Council decided the National Anthem would no longer be sung at the end of the Annual Meeting. This change was the result of an EQIA.
- Dungannon & South Tyrone District Council adopted mitigating actions following an EQIA of Community Grants to ensure greater access to grants for political groups. The Council also reported increases in the representation of women in its senior and middle management with actual proportions reported. The Council highlighted the identification of a Champion for Women in Local Government and an action plan developed.
- Armagh City and District Council made Browse Aloud software available on their website to increase access to information and services by those with visual impairments.
- Belfast City Council indicated implementing the Council's Disability Strategy lead to thirty two work experience placements. The Council was also awarded the Opportunity Now Gold Standard in respect of their Gender equality work.

### Areas Of Progress

- Ards Borough Council reported the introduction of Service Delivery Improvement Plans with Equality and Good Relations targets that link directly with corporate themes.
- North Down Borough Council highlighted that pre-screening of Notices of Motion assisted discussion and understanding of the potential issues identified.
- Dungannon District Council highlighted meetings with Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency with a local community race initiative ANIMATE regarding planning and population statistics. The Council also worked with Animate to amend monitoring of applicants from migrant populations and examine pilot community planning models.
- Armagh City and District Council indicated the Section 75 duties were incorporated in its New Employees Handbook.
- Belfast City Council reported progress in establishing Consultative

- and Youth Forums and revision of the Councils Induction Programme to include an equality and good relations module.
- Belfast City Council also progressed its equality reporting procedure so that each report presented to Council must enclose an equality statement in relation to the screening procedure. The Council also reported the introduction of an Irish Language voice mail service and establishment of an interdepartmental liaison working group on Travellers.

### **Areas for further improvement noted by the Commission**

- As Ards Borough Council acknowledged itself, feed back to consultees could be better particularly by showing positive outcomes achieved.
- Magherafelt Council should formalise a detailed training plan and attention should be given to number of EQIAs started in mid 2004 but not yet completed.
- Armagh City and District Council should publish a report on its Financial Assistance Policy and ensure awareness training for all casual staff is delivered.

## **Reserved and Excepted Matters**

- 2.9 The Northern Ireland Act included provision for a Northern Ireland Assembly to make laws and take decisions on all the functions of the Northern Ireland departments. The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland retained responsibility for Northern Ireland Office matters not devolved to the Northern Ireland Assembly. These reserved and excepted matters include policing, security policy, prisons and criminal justice, elections and peace and reconciliation. This section of the report includes progress reported by the Police Ombudsman and the Northern Ireland Court Service.

### **Impacts and Outcomes**

- Little evidence of specific outcomes was provided by either of the two bodies analysed with the focus being on outputs.
- The Office of the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland reported that its work on implementing the statutory duties had positive benefits for all the Section 75 categories with the exceptions of persons of different religious belief and persons of different marital status.

### **Areas of progress**

- During the year under review Court User notices containing important information were produced in Russian, Lithuanian, Polish and Portuguese for distribution by the Northern Ireland Court Service's front-line staff.
- A customer survey was undertaken by the Northern Ireland Court Service asking participants to declare their religion, gender and age to enable assessment of differential impact for the groups in question.
- The Office of the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland jointly funded and published the findings of two major reports regarding the experiences of the Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual and Black Minority Ethnic Communities with policing. The Office held meetings with representatives of the Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual community, delivered a presentation and held a question and answer session as part of Gay Pride Week during 2005-06.
- The Office of the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland engaged in an extensive outreach programme with schools, District Partnerships, voluntary and community groups and political parties.
- The Office of the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland initiated a training process with input from minority ethnic NGOs to address diversity issues through the provision of anti-racism, diversity and cultural awareness training.

### **Areas for further improvement noted by the Commission**

- Although a number of delivery targets included in the Northern Ireland Court Service Business Plan for 2005/06 were cited (such as the delivery of an Employment Equality Plan and a programme of community outreach), no information was provided as to the impacts or outcome of these initiatives.
- Though general information on initiatives was provided the Office of the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland should provide further detail of impacts and outcomes for the nine section 75 categories as a result of the implementation of the statutory duties.

## Other Northern Ireland and Cross Border Public Authorities

2.10 Thirty-three public authorities subject to Section 75 have been grouped as 'Other Northern Ireland and Cross Border' public authorities for reporting purposes. These include significant regional non-departmental public bodies such as the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) and a variety of other authorities with specific sectoral remits e.g. the Health and Safety Executive of Northern Ireland (HSENI). This section of the report includes eight of the above bodies: Waterways Ireland, Ulster Supported Employment Limited (USEL), Intertrade Ireland, NI Authority for Energy Regulation, Special European Programmes Body (SEUPB), Coleraine Harbour Commissioners and the NI Audit Office (NIAO).

### Impacts and Outcomes

- Intertrade Ireland reported a range of positive measures, as detailed in the Employment EQIA, were undertaken to encourage greater levels of participation from the Protestant community.
- USEL reported that the Section 75 duties were strategically set out in its 2005 - 2008 Corporate Plan with input from targeted consultative groups and individuals.
- USEL indicated the outcome of staff involvement with local community representative groups throughout Northern Ireland. This was developed to ensure groups understood the services provided by USEL, however, a number of staff from different operational levels have been invited to participate in voluntary Boards and community projects as a result of this fieldwork.
- Waterways Ireland developed its Sponsorship programme to include specialized advertisements and editorials in targeted publications such as Age Action's "Aging Matters", NCCRI's e-bulletin, the Irish Wheelchair Association's staff newsletter and sports network, the National Council for the Blind's NCBI News Magazine and Focus (spoken magazine) and the Gay Community News.
- Waterways Ireland also adopted an Access For All policy aimed at promoting access for people with disabilities to goods, services and information across the organization.
- In the latter part of 2005, Intertrade Ireland took a lead in sourcing and co-coordinating a comprehensive training programme, covering anti-discrimination law north and south, for personnel across all cross border bodies.

### **Areas of progress**

- Coleraine Harbour Commissioners reported liaison with the local Council in order to promote good relations.
- InterTrade Ireland highlighted the development of detailed knowledge of the process of Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) of its Equity Networks, Graduate programmes and Communications policies.
- Intertrade, USEL, NIAO highlighted training of staff and new starts in particular. With additional awareness training provided on specific areas including disability, Sexual Orientation and Age issues in particular.
- USEL undertook an internal review of communication and implementation of duties resulting in the realignment of organisational S75 responsibilities to ensure more effective proactive internal/external communication.
- Between 2003 and the end of 2005 SEUPB has collated monitoring information, covering eight of the nine section 75 categories, from over 30,000 individual returns from Peace II Projects in Northern Ireland.
- SEUPB established a Consultation Zone on its Website to enable access via the internet to on-line consultation and submissions with plans to further enhance this aspect in time for consultation on the new programmes in coming years.
- Waterways Ireland outlined details of updates to staff through its quarterly staff newsletter "Water Matters". During the reporting period features included updates on the Equality Work Programme, the Access For All project, and an article on "Racism - the challenge ahead".
- In terms of taking forward commitments to the promotion of good relations a range of initiatives were reported. Waterways Ireland highlighted the organisation wide Customers Services training which examined how each individual, through the acceptance and the valuing of our diversity and interdependences, can contribute positively to good relations.

### **Areas for further improvement noted by the Commission**

- NI Authority for Energy Regulation must submit an annual report on progress to the Commission.
- While there has been some reporting of activities by working or task groups their interaction and role vis a vis the responsibilities

- of senior management in driving scheme implementation could be further developed.
- SEUPB previously outlined slippage in the timetable for scheme implementation, particularly in relation to impact assessments. However, the body is committed to completing the full programme of impact assessments covering all existing functions within the five year timetable for implementation of the scheme.
  - USEL reported the outcome of tracking software purchased to monitor uptake of programmes by the nine equality categories. Difficulties were encountered in monitoring the effectiveness of outreach and programme uptake by all of the specific groups covered by S75.
  - While SEUPB highlighted its strategic implementation role in relation to its function as a managing authority for both the Peace II and Interreg IIIA Programmes the organisation could enhance its annual reporting to include evidence of addressing disadvantage given that both programmes have equality mainstreaming as one of the key principles.
  - Some problems continue to be reported by bodies from this sector regarding “consultation fatigue”. SEUPB for example reported representative bodies/organisations claim a lack of resources to be the main problem and this is viewed as a major constraint around effective implementation.
  - While the NIAO highlighted that it does not deliver services directly to the public, it noted it can contribute in terms of promoting equality of opportunity through heightening awareness of the statutory equality duties in the course of audit work. In addition to ensuring that staff are fully aware of the statutory duties further reporting of the result of greater awareness in the course of audit work is important.

## UK Wide Public Authorities

2.11 Eighteen UK wide public authorities, referred to as 'UK authorities', were subject to Section 75 during the period under review. These include major Whitehall government departments and various non-departmental public bodies with functions relating to Northern Ireland. This section of the report includes four of these authorities: Big Lottery, British Council, Information Commissioner, and HM Revenue & Customs

## Impacts and Outcomes

- Big Lottery amended its organizational wide risk injury policy to more fully consider the needs of staff with visual impairments and minimize the risk of injury while carrying out duties.
- Big Lottery launched the Young Peoples Fund (NI) in September 2005. The programme targets resources at young people at greatest risk of exclusion and/or offending. It was developed in consultation with young people and other key stakeholders, and through screening a number of changes were made before its launch.
- HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC) agreed with the Royal National Institute for the Blind (RNIB) to offer a single memorable telephone number for visually impaired and blind customers for assistance with their tax affairs.
- HMRC reported on benchmarking and equality network initiatives including the Employers Forum on Age, The Gender Trust, and the Civil Service Race Equality Network, which helped the organization focus on future policy developments and delivery of day to day business objectives. Resulting independent assessments of HMRC's diversity performance reported: Race for Opportunity Gold Standard (7th in the public sector), Disability Standard (3rd out of 80 public and private sector organisations), Opportunity Now - Gold Standard (92%).
- The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) produced specific publications on Data Protection issues for people with learning difficulties.
- The ICO developed guidance on how to carry out monitoring in a privacy friendly way as a result of concerns from some public authorities that data protection was a bar to meeting the Section 75 duties.

## Areas of progress

- HMRC developed a detailed and comprehensive Diversity Action Plan (DAP) to ensure consistent strategic direction taking account of responsibilities under Section 75 of the NI Act, the Cabinet Office 10 point plan, the Race Relations Act and forthcoming Equality legislation.
- HMRC conducted an evaluation of Equality Matters learning in two stages. Stage 1 involved a sample of 765 questionnaires completed immediately after the learning was delivered. Stage 2

took place between 4 and 6 weeks after the learning was delivered and involved telephone interviews with 135 of the participants including both staff who had attended, and managers who had facilitated the sessions.

- BIG Lottery piloted its new Equality Assurance Process in Northern Ireland and Britain. The process, which supports screening activities, is intended to ensure equality monitoring is built in at every stage to meet Section 75 and Race Relations Amendment Act 2000 statutory requirements.
- In terms of training initiatives BIG Lottery reported a programme of mental health training was provided to staff by Action Mental Health during 2005/6. HMRC reported details of participative diversity and equality training for all senior and middle managers.
- HMRC launched an Accessibility Awareness site to help IT developers/programmers by making them aware of how their actions could exclude users from the systems they build. Seven golden rules for IT design are presented and a demonstrator shows how easy it is to put obstacles in a user's path.
- The first HMRC National Staff Survey took place in May/June 2005 with questionnaires including perceptions of performance in relation to equal opportunities and seeking information in relation to each of the nine Section 75 groups. Results were considered by each of the thirty six business units with priorities and appropriate actions identified at business unit level.
- In terms of good relations several aspects of progress were highlighted. HMRC highlighted a series of intercultural events with representatives of the Indian and Chinese Community involving senior and middle managers. Big Lottery highlighted the strategic role of its programmes in dealing with community relations and the legacy of the Troubles while the Information Commissioner's Office noted the role of NI regional Office in dealing with particularly sensitive issues and ruling on such in an information context in an even handed manner indirectly contributes to meeting the good relations duty.

### **Areas for further improvement noted by the Commission**

- No EQIAs were reported as being progressed during the period under review by Big Lottery, HMRC or the ICO.
- Further reporting of impacts is needed by these bodies, particularly in terms of identifying and delivering positive benefits.
- The Information Commissioner acknowledged in his report a lack



of significant progress on the part of the office during 2005/6. A number of factors were cited including staff changes and the operational challenges experienced by the office as a result of full implementation of access rights under Freedom of Information legislation in January 2005. In the area of screening in particular a more meaningful consultation exercise is anticipated.

- More progress in adding generic and mandatory monitoring categories could be made, as well as communicating to data providers the benefits of providing such information.

## 3.0 Conclusions

- 3.1 The key developments and lessons from the public authority reports reviewed have been arranged in terms of Leadership, Improving Core Business, Coherence, Engagement and Good Relations. Examples of practical developments and good practice in scheme implementation can be found on the Commission's web site under Section 75 [www.equalityni.org](http://www.equalityni.org). Specific examples of promoting good relations by public authorities can also be found in the document Promoting Good Relations: A Guide for Public Authorities, which is also on the web site.

### General Points on Leadership

- Effectiveness in reporting progress in meeting the Section 75 duties appears to be most apparent in public authorities where there is evidence of leadership at the highest levels, and that this commitment is clearly and consistently communicated and evidenced in progress reports.
- A number of reports highlighted the role of leadership in driving scheme implementation forward. For example one local authority cited a particular emphasis of its mayor during 2005-06 who held a sizeable number of civic events and meetings with Section 75 representative groups. Other reports noted the role of Chief Executives in ensuring scheme commitments were resourced and organizational arrangements put in place to ensure such. There were a notable number of public bodies which created new posts directly reporting to the Chief Executive that had specific equality scheme focus.
- In addition there were a number of bodies which reported changes in responsibility for implementation of equality scheme. These included new cross departmental co-ordination teams, usually based within a centre of expertise or business improvement team.

### General Points on Improving Core Business

- In general terms the tying of EQIAs into existing plans for policy review was far from the norm in progress reports. In various reports analysed including those from Government Departments, Health bodies and various UK Wide Public Bodies progress was on screening was reported as main mechanism to mainstreaming equality issues into policy development. Alternatively various

Smaller public bodies and those from the local government and Housing sectors were more prevalent in the use of EQIAs as a means of mainstreaming equality issues into policy development. Indeed there is clear evidence some of the smaller Northern Ireland and Cross Border bodies are undertaking EQIAs initially as a means to identify further monitoring requirements.

- The number of public bodies that have provided half day workshops and awareness sessions, facilitated by representative groups and targeted at front-line staff remains low. While these activities are resource intensive and demanding in terms of ensuring continuity in service provision it also has the most potential to greatly improve access to services.
- There were many examples of mainstreaming and development of service delivery arrangements. Perhaps the best example was reported by Altnagelvin HSS Trust which provided antenatal classes for Chinese Women with its Midwives developing appropriate information materials with class attendees also having interpreter support. This Trust also reported employing a community midwife with designated responsibility for providing support to women in the Travelling community.

### General Points on Coherence

- The number of public bodies that are involved in sectoral consortium is very small. More examples, like the Western Equality and Human Rights Forum (WEHRF), would ensure greater consistency in implementation of the Section 75 statutory duties.
- Various examples of cross sectoral working were reported during 2005-06 including efforts by Strabane District Council and the Western Health and Social Services Board to jointly developed a Multi Agency Welcome Pack, providing information in different languages on local services.
- A further example of regional joined up working was evident during the year in the health sectors 'Accessible Formats Working Group'. This working group produced an information resource for migrant workers and their dependants on health and social services in Northern Ireland.
- The Information Commissioner's report noted in the past the Equality Commission had facilitated a number of networks, which had been useful as a meeting and contact point, and the expectation of future network meetings was raised.

## General Points on Engagement

- Several reports including those from the Northern Ireland Social Care Council and Ulster Supported Employment Limited set out definite and notable benefits from engagement. These reflected not only on internal corporate governance and greater transparency in the decision making process but the views of community and voluntary groups informing the organisations work.
- Several reports outlined public authority perceptions of the difficulties some Section 75 groups face in terms of resources to respond fully to public authority consultations. To this end some bodies are becoming increasingly flexible regarding closing dates for response.

## General Points on Good Relations

- As in previous years, there was considerable variation in the approaches taken by public authorities to the implementation of the good relations duty. Annual progress reports indicate that some organisations are very pro-active: there are those building on strategies, action plans and initiatives commenced in previous years, and others conducting audits, developing vision statements and incorporating objectives in corporate or business plans to start or formalise good relations work. Others, however, have yet to substantively address the duty. And there are also those which may not be reporting their good relations activities in a way that reflects the level of their work or commitment.
- Good relations work was stronger during the year in authorities in which equality of opportunity and good relations were embedded and mainstreamed into core business functions, rather than being regarded as a separate or parallel process. Effective implementation of the good relations duty was also more likely where there was sustained provision of resources, enabling staff to continuously deliver on actions.
- Some public authorities reported work regarding the promotion of good relations amongst people with disabilities, older people and people of different sexual orientations. While the Commission welcomes the undertaking of work beyond the existing categories and encourages public authorities to work to a good practice model of promoting good relations, the three Section 75(2) categories must be addressed.



## APPENDIX A - Section 75 Northern Ireland Act 1998

- 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 - Progress Report Template 1 April 2005 - 31 March 2006**

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

#### **Public Authority Progress Report 2005 - 2006**

#### **Template to assist Public Authorities to report on implementation of the equality and good relations duties under Section 75 of the NI Act 1998**

The information required from public authorities will be based on the period from 1 April 2005 to 31 March 2006. Please ensure that it is submitted to the Commission by 31 August 2006, electronically (by completing this template) and in writing, with a signed cover letter from the Chief Executive or, in his/her absence, the Deputy Chief Executive.

This year's progress report template is significantly different from earlier guidance, reflecting the work that many authorities will be undertaking on their five year review of equality schemes. It is important that the authority reports on what it views as being relevant in terms of progress made on the implementation of the statutory duties from April 2005 to March 2006.

Please enter information at the end of each Section in the template.

Name of public authority (Enter details below)

--

Equality Officer name and contact details (Enter details below)

--



## Section 1: Strategic Implementation of the Section 75 Duties

- Outline evidence of progress made in developing equality and good relations objectives, performance indicators and targets in corporate and annual operating plans during 2005-06. Your response should include any targets for 2006-07.
- Please provide details of the direct resourcing of Section 75 work during 2005-06. This should include staff appointed/directed (not names) and details of any budget allocation, to specifically deliver equality scheme commitments.

(Enter text below)

## Section 2: Screening & Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA)

- 2a) If a Screening Report has not yet been submitted to the Commission please advise us on the current position with regard to producing this report and forwarding to the Commission.

(Enter text below)

- 2b) If a Screening Report and EQIA Timetable has previously been submitted to the Commission please provide an update (using the matrices in Appendix A) of policies subject to EQIA during 2005-06, new/proposed/revised policies screened during 2005-06, ongoing EQIA monitoring activities and 2006-07 EQIA timetable.

## Section 3: Training

- Outline staff and Management Board/Committee training during 2005-06 associated with the Section 75 duties/Equality Scheme requirements (Provide details of types of training provision e.g. general awareness raising, specialist training on EQIA, Screening and Consultation). Provide a summary of any training evaluations and comments on the benefits of such training.

(Enter text below)

## Section 4: Communication

- Provide details of how the authority communicated progress on delivery of the statutory duties during 2005-06.
- Provide details of any review of communication activities during the year to ensure effective communication on progressing the statutory duties.

(Enter text below)

## Section 5: Data Collection & Analysis

- Describe any systems that were established during 2005-06 to supplement available statistical and qualitative research, including consideration given to using internal organisational data and external networks.
- Describe any systems established during the year to monitor the future adverse impact of policies that were subject to EQIA.
- Detail any research undertaken/commissioned during 2005-06 to obtain data/information relating to the nine equality categories.

(Enter text below)

## Section 6: Information Provision, Access to Information and Services

- Outline what action has been taken during 2005-06 to develop arrangements for the provision of information in accessible formats.
- Detail any initiatives/steps taken to improve access to services.

(Enter text below)

## Section 7: Complaints

- Identify, during 2005-06, the number of Section 75 complaints:
  - received by the authority;
  - resolved by the authority;
  - which were not resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant; and
  - which were referred to the Equality Commission.

(Enter text below)

## Section 8: Scheme Timetable

- Provide an update of your equality scheme implementation timetable (covering all the scheme commitments), identifying any changes since your previous report. Please detail any planned actions outstanding.

(Enter text below)

## Section 9: Consultation, Participation and Engagement

- Provide details of the processes adopted to engage with representative groups during 2005-06.
- Outline measures taken to enhance the level of engagement that were successful and unsuccessful.

(Enter text below)

## Section 10: The Good Relations Duty

- Provide details of steps taken to implement or progress the good relations duty during the year. Please indicate any findings or expected outcomes from this work.

(Enter text below)

## Section 11: Additional Comments on Mainstreaming

- The main aim of the statutory duties is to mainstream equality of opportunity and good relations considerations into the functions of the authority, leading to better policies and service delivery. Please provide any additional information/comments you think may be relevant.

(Enter text below)

## Section 12: Concluding Questions

12a) Does the authority believe its work on implementing the statutory duties during 2005-06 produced positive benefits for the organisation?

Yes  if yes please complete the following

No

	Very noticeably	Noticeably	No real change
i) Increased awareness of equality issues in policy making			
ii) Increased ability to ensure policies are designed and targeted to reflect equal opportunities objectives			
iii) Increased awareness of good relations issues in policy making			
iv) Increased ability to ensure policies are designed and targeted to reflect good relations objectives			
v) Increased awareness of equality issues in service delivery			
vi) Increased ability to ensure services are designed and targeted to reflect Section 75 requirements			

12b ) Does the authority believe its work on implementing the statutory duties during 2005-06 produced positive benefits for groups within the Section 75 categories?

Yes  if yes please complete the following

No

	Very noticeably	Noticeably	No real change
Persons of different religious belief			
Persons of different political opinion			
Persons of different racial groups			
Persons of different age			
Persons with different marital status			
Persons of different sexual orientation			
Men and women generally			
Persons with and without a disability			
Persons with and without dependants			

**QUESTION 12C**

If you answered yes to QUESTION 12 B, for each of the categories where a noticeable or very noticeable change has occurred, please give examples of those changes to policies or practices which have resulted in positive change. If the change was a result of an EQIA please tick the appropriate box in column 3:

	Policy or Practice	Tick if result of EQIA
Persons of different religious belief		
Persons of different political opinion		
Persons of different racial groups		
Persons of different age		
Persons with different marital status		
Persons of different sexual orientation		
Men and women generally		
Persons with and without a disability		
Persons with and without dependants		

## Appendix A Screening & EQIA Update

Please enter details relating to the authority's progress using the following matrices.

i) EQIA Timetable - 2005-06

Title of policy EQIA underway during April 2005 - March 2006	Stage (as per Steps 1-7 of EQIA Process) As at end March 2006	If joint - EQIA please state partner authorities	Outline any adjustments to policy intended to benefit individuals from the nine equality categories and outline the relevant categories affected.	Were adjustments to policy a result of Assessment of adverse impact/ feedback from Consultation, or Both Please enter A, C or Both	If EQIA decision making stage completed, is amended policy being implemented? Yes/No
1.					
2.					
3.					
4.					
5.					

ii) Ongoing Screening Activities 2005-06

Title of policy subject to screening during April 2005 - March 2006	If joint policy please state partner authorities	Was initial screening decision changed following consultation? Yes/No	If Screening completed is policy being subject to EQIA? Yes/No	If EQIA planned indicate year for assessment
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				

iii) Ongoing EQIA Monitoring Activities 2005-06

Title of EQIA subject to Stage 7 monitoring during April 2005- March 2006	If joint policy please state partner authorities	Indicate if differential impacts previously identified have reduced or increased	Indicate if adverse impacts previously identified have reduced or increased
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			

iv) 2006-07 EQIA Time-table

Title of EQIAs due to be commenced during April 2006 - March 2007	Existing or New policy? Please enter E or N below.	If joint-EQIA please state partner authorities	Please indicate expected date of completion of EQIA Stage 6 i.e Decision making stage
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			
7.			
8.			
9.			
10.			

