



**Equality Commission**

FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

# **Standards of Service**

Advice & Compliance Division

September 2015

## **Our Commitment to you...**

The Advice and Compliance Division of the Equality Commission is responsible for providing equality and good relations support to public authorities, private sector employers and service providers.

The Division aims to ensure that all organisations are facilitated to comply with equality and good relations legislation and best practices are promoted.

We are committed to providing an efficient and courteous service at all times. As part of this commitment, we have set out the Standards of Service you can expect from the Division. This booklet also explains what to do if you have a complaint with the service you receive from us.

We will regularly measure and publish our performance against these Standards of Service. Please contact us if you have any questions or comments on our Standards of Service or any aspect of our work.

## **About the Advice and Compliance Division...**

Staff in the Advice and Compliance Division provide support to public authorities, private sector employers, and service providers. Our functions include:

- Advising and assisting employers and service providers to develop good equality policies, practices and procedures; and providing employer training and information sessions on a range of relevant equality issues;
- Providing employers and service providers with confidential and practical advice on a range of equality issues;
- Publishing guidance on a range of equality topics, including Codes of Practice and guides;
- Promoting the development of affirmative and positive action strategies across the full range of equality categories;
- Ensuring employers are facilitated to comply with employer duties under the Fair Employment and Treatment Order 1998, the related monitoring regulations and Article 55 Review provisions;
- Ensuring public authorities are facilitated to comply with their statutory duty obligations. This includes the development, implementation and review of equality schemes and disability action plans.

### **When you do business with us, we will...**

- Consider all requests for the provision of information in alternative formats;
- Ensure access to the Commission building for people with disabilities.

### **Correspondence...**

- Our correspondence aims to fully answer queries and is, as far as practicable, written in clear, plain language;
- We sign our correspondence stating our name, position and contact details;
- When we are not in the office, we ensure that emails advise of this and that alternative contact details are provided;
- We acknowledge all letters, faxes and emails received in the Division within three working days;
- We will provide a full reply within fifteen working days of receipt of correspondence, or we will explain the reason for the delay and when you can expect a full reply.

### **When we meet...**

- When you arrive at our offices, you will be asked to sign in and wear a visitor's badge;
- A member of staff will escort you to and from our reception;
- Our staff will arrive on time for appointments or if delayed, we will make every effort to contact you to explain this.

### **When you ask a question through our Enquiry Line...**

- The enquiry line is a confidential telephone service to respond to enquiries on the full range of equality legislation;
- Our enquiry line is open 9:00am to 5:00pm, Monday to Friday;
- We will answer your call as quickly as possible; and we aim to respond to all calls within 5 rings;
- We will answer your questions clearly, fully and as professionally as possible;
- When we cannot answer your questions immediately, we aim to provide an answer by the end of the next working day and no later than 3 working days;
- We will direct you to publications and training that we provide, if relevant.

### **When you contact a named officer...**

- If you wish to speak with a named officer, your call will be answered promptly;
- If the named officer is not available, you will be put through to another officer or diverted to voicemail where you will be able to leave a message;
- Voicemail messages will explain when that named officer will return your call.

## **Specific areas of our work...**

### **Fair Employment**

- All employers registering under the FETO legislation are provided with information to assist them to fulfill their monitoring duties;
- We acknowledge monitoring return forms, if requested to do so, within three working days;
- Within 20-working days of submission, we advise employers if their Article 55 Review is in compliance with legislation;
- When appropriate, we provide substantive feedback on the Article 55 Review in the form of a letter and/or meeting within 3 months of receipt of completed report.

### **Public Authorities Statutory Duties**

- We provide substantive feedback to all public authorities within 3-months of receipt of their equality scheme;
- We engage with each designated public authority at least once each year to review progress on implementing the public authority statutory equality duties;
- The Commission provides feedback on each disability action plan submitted by public authorities as requested.

## **Questions of format and language...**

The Commission is committed to being accessible and inclusive. Key to that commitment is that our customers have access to our information and services.

## **Customer Feedback...**

We welcome feedback as a means to improve our services. We will conduct regular surveys to see whether employers are satisfied with our services, and whether any changes or improvements are needed.

We will report how we have met our standards and how we have taken on board your feedback on a regular basis on the Commission's Internet site.

## **If things go wrong...**

If you are unhappy about the service you received, we will try to put matters right for you, and we will provide clarification and/or an explanation. We will provide information as to whether we will make changes to our services.

Further information on our complaints procedure and a downloadable complaints form, is available from the Commission's web site at [www.equalityni.org](http://www.equalityni.org) and at our reception desk.

## How to contact us...

Equality Commission for Northern Ireland  
Advice and Compliance Division  
Equality House  
7-9 Shaftesbury Square  
Belfast BT2 7DP

Enquiry Line: 028 90 890 890

Tel: 028 90 500 600 (reception)

Fax: 028 90 238 039 (fax)

Textphone: 028 90 500 589

Email: [edenquiries@equalityni.org](mailto:edenquiries@equalityni.org)

Website: [www.equalityni.org](http://www.equalityni.org)

If you would like to provide us with any comments or feedback on these standards or on our service please call:

Alden Henderson

Compliance Manager

Advice & Compliance Division

Direct Line: 028 90 890 866

Textphone: 028 90 500 589

Email: [ahenderson@equalityni.org](mailto:ahenderson@equalityni.org)

Web site: [www.equalityni.org](http://www.equalityni.org)