

# **REVISED EQUALITY SCHEME FOR WESTERN EDUCATION AND LIBRARY BOARD**

**Prepared in accordance with Section 75 and  
Schedule 9 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998**

This document can also be made available, on request, in alternative formats including in large print, in Braille, by e-mail, on computer disc, on audio-cassette and in minority languages to meet the needs of those people who are not fluent in English.

**July 2011**

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## **FOREWORD**

Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 (the Act), requires public authorities, in carrying out their functions relating to Northern Ireland, to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity and have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations across a range of categories as outlined in the Act<sup>1</sup>.

In this Equality Scheme, we set out how the Western Education and Library Board (the Board) proposes to fulfil the Section 75 statutory duties.

This Scheme is important because as well as being a statement of compliance, it outlines a plan for the more effective mainstreaming of equality issues, thus ensuring that they are central to the whole range of policy decision-making within the Board.

We will commit the necessary resources in terms of people, time and money to make sure that the Section 75 statutory duties are complied with and that the Equality Scheme is implemented effectively and on time.

We commit to having effective internal arrangements in place for ensuring effective compliance with the Section 75 statutory duties and for monitoring and reviewing progress.

We will develop and deliver a programme of communication and training with the aim of ensuring that all our staff and also Board members are made fully aware of this Equality Scheme and understand the commitments and obligations contained within. We will develop a programme of awareness raising for consultees on the Section 75 statutory duties and the related commitments in this Equality Scheme.

As Chairman and Chief Executive respectively of the Western Education and Library Board, we are fully committed to fulfilling in an effective manner our Section 75 statutory duties across all functions (including service provision, employment and procurement) through the effective implementation of this Equality Scheme.

We realise the important role that the community and voluntary sectors and the general public have to play to ensure Section 75 statutory duties are implemented effectively. This Equality Scheme demonstrates how determined we are to ensure there are opportunities for people affected by the work of the Board to positively influence how we carry out our functions in accordance with the Section 75 statutory duties. This Scheme also offers the means whereby any person directly affected by what they consider to be a failure on the part of the Board can make a complaint.

On behalf of the Board we are pleased to support and endorse this Equality Scheme which has been drawn up in accordance with Section 75 and Schedule 9 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and in accordance with the guidelines published by the Equality Commission.

**Chairman: Peter Duffy**

**Chief Executive: Barry Mulholland**

**Date: 26 July 2011.**

**Date: 26 July 2011**

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<sup>1</sup> See section 1.1 of our Equality Scheme

## **CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION**

### **Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998**

- 1.1** Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 (the Act) requires the Board to comply with two statutory duties:

#### **Section 75 (1)**

In carrying out its functions relating to Northern Ireland the Board is 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;
- men and women generally;
- persons with a disability and persons without; and
- persons with dependants and persons without.

#### **Section 75 (2)**

In addition, without prejudice to the obligations above, in carrying out its functions in relation to Northern Ireland, the Board is required to have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group.

### **How we propose to fulfil the Section 75 duties in relation to the relevant functions of the Board**

- 1.2** Schedule 9 paragraph 4 (1) of the Act requires the Western Education and Library Board as a designated public authority to set out in an Equality Scheme (the Scheme) how it proposes to fulfil the duties imposed by Section 75 in relation to its relevant functions. Under Section 98 (1) of the Act, 'Functions' include the 'powers and duties' of a public authority. This includes employment and procurement functions. A detailed explanation of the functions of the Board is set out at paragraphs 1.4 and 1.5.

This Equality Scheme is intended to fulfil the Board's statutory requirements under the Act. It is both a statement of the arrangements for fulfilling the Section 75 statutory duties and a plan for their implementation.

- 1.3** The Board is committed to the discharge of its Section 75 obligations throughout the organisation and will commit the necessary available resources in terms of people, time and money to ensure compliance with the Section 75 statutory duties and the effective implementation of this Equality Scheme.

### **Who we are and what we do**

- 1.4** The Western Education and Library Board ('the Board') was established in 1973, following the reorganisation of Local Government in Northern Ireland. It is a corporate body, established under statute as the local authority for education. Its functions and responsibilities are derived from statute. Currently its central core activities are the provision of:

- Pre-school, primary and secondary education;

- Special education; and
- Youth services<sup>2</sup>

throughout the geographical area encompassed by the Board.

The Board is also responsible for ancillary, supplementary and often complementary functions such as:

- Pre-school Education;
- Primary Education;
- Secondary Education;
- Special Education;
- Maintenance of the estate for both Controlled and Maintained Schools;
- Youth Services;
- School Attendance;
- Suspension and Expulsion of Pupils;
- Student Support;
- Home-to-School Transport;
- School Meals and related facilities;
- Employment of Teachers in Controlled Schools and Peripatetic Teachers;
- Employment of non-teaching staff in Controlled and Maintained Schools;
- Curriculum Support;
- Open Enrolment and Transfer;
- Financing of Controlled and Maintained Schools;
- Governor Training;
- Behavioural Support;
- Exceptional Provision.

**1.5** To give effect to its functions the Board engages in a range of corporate activities which include the recruitment of staff, the maintenance of the Board's estate, the delivery and development of services, including financial services, and the procurement of goods and services. In keeping with the Equality Commission's Guidance, these activities are included in the concept of 'functions' for the purposes of this Scheme.

**1.6** An organisational structure of the Board is contained at Appendix 1.

**1.7** Comprehensive information on the range of services provided by the Board is available at [www.welbni.org](http://www.welbni.org) and also in various publications including the Board's Annual Report and the annual Section 75 report to the Equality Commission.

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<sup>2</sup> Under the Review of Public Administration, Library Services transferred to the Northern Ireland Library Authority on 1 April 2009

## **CHAPTER 2 - ARRANGEMENTS FOR ASSESSING COMPLIANCE WITH THE SECTION 75 DUTIES [Schedule 9 paragraph 4 (2) (a)]**

**2.1** This chapter explains the Board's arrangements for assessing compliance with the Section 75 statutory duties. Other compliance issues are further outlined in relevant chapters of this Scheme; consultation arrangements (see pages 6 - 8); assessing the impact of policies (see pages 9 - 14); ensuring public access to information and services (see pages 17 - 18); and complaints procedure (see page 20).

### **Responsibilities and Reporting**

**2.2** The Board is committed to the fulfilment of the Section 75 obligations in all parts of its work.

**2.3** Responsibility for the effective implementation of the Scheme rests with Mr Peter Duffy (Chairperson) and Mr Barry Mulholland (Chief Executive) of the Board. Mrs Rosemary Watterson, Chief Administrative Officer, is accountable to the Board for the development, implementation, maintenance and review of the Scheme in accordance with Section 75 and Schedule 9 of the Act, including any good practice or guidance that has been or may be issued by the Equality Commission.

**2.4** Each member of the Senior Management Team is responsible to the Chief Executive for ensuring that his/her Business Unit complies fully with this Scheme.

**2.5** The first point of contact for the Scheme is Mrs Pat Ward, Head of Corporate Services. If you have any questions or comments regarding this Scheme, please contact Mrs Ward at the address below and the Board will respond to you as soon as possible.

Contact Details: WELB HQ, 1 Hospital Road, Omagh, Co Tyrone BT79 0AW

Email: [pat\\_ward@welbni.org](mailto:pat_ward@welbni.org)

Telephone/Fax/Textphone: (028) 8241 1485 / (028) 8241 1400 / (028) 8241 1550

**2.6** Objectives and targets relating to the statutory duties will be integrated into the Board's strategic and operational business plans.

**2.7** Employees' job descriptions and performance appraisals reflect their contribution to the discharge of the Section 75 statutory duties and implementation of the Scheme. Appraisal plans are subject to an annual performance review.

**2.8** The Board will prepare an annual report on the progress it has made on implementing the arrangements set out in this Scheme to discharge its Section 75 statutory duties (Section75 annual progress report).

The Section 75 annual progress report will be sent to the Equality Commission by 31 August each year and will follow any guidance on annual reporting issued by the Equality Commission.

Progress on the delivery of Section 75 statutory duties will be contained in the Board's Annual Report.

- 2.9** The latest Section 75 annual progress report is available on the Board's website at [www.welbni.org/publications](http://www.welbni.org/publications) or by contacting Mrs Ward - see paragraph 2.5 on page 4 for contact details.
- 2.10** The Board will liaise closely with the Equality Commission to ensure that progress on the implementation of the Scheme is maintained.
- 2.11** Regular progress reports will be provided to the Board on the implementation of the Section 75 duties.

### **Action plan/action measures**

- 2.12** The action measures that will make up the Board's action plan will be relevant to its functions. They will be developed and prioritised on the basis of an audit of inequalities. The audit of inequalities will gather and analyse information across the Section 75 categories to identify the inequalities that exist for service users and those affected by the Board's policies.
- 2.13** Action measures will be specific, measurable, linked to achievable outcomes, realistic and time bound. Action measures will include performance indicators and timescales for their achievement.
- 2.14** The Board will develop an annual action plan and will align it to the corporate and business planning cycle. Implementation of the action measures will be incorporated into the business planning process.
- 2.15** The Board will seek input from stakeholders and consult on the action plan before sending it to the Equality Commission and thereafter when reviewing the plan, paragraph 2.16 refers.
- 2.16** The Board will monitor progress on the delivery of the action measures annually and update the plan as necessary to ensure that it remains effective and relevant to our functions and work.
- 2.17** The Board will inform the Equality Commission of any changes or amendments to the action plan and will also include this information in the Section 75 annual progress report to the Equality Commission. The Section 75 annual progress report will incorporate information on the progress made in implementing the action plans/action measures.
- 2.18** Once finalised, the action plan will be available at [www.welbni.org/publications](http://www.welbni.org/publications) and also on the Board's intranet for staff.

If you require the action plan in an alternative format or language, including in large print, in Braille, by e-mail, on computer disc, on audio-cassette or in a minority language to meet the needs of those who are not fluent in English, please contact Mrs Ward - see paragraph 2.5 on page 4 for contact details.

## **CHAPTER 3 - ARRANGEMENTS FOR CONSULTING** [Schedule 9 para. 4 (2) (a) & (b)]

**3.1** The Board recognises the importance of consultation on all aspects of the implementation of its statutory equality duties. The Board will consult on its Equality Scheme, action measures, equality impact assessments and other matters relevant to the Section 75 statutory duties.

**3.2** The Board is committed to carrying out consultation in accordance with the principles as contained in the Equality Commission's Guidance '*Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 - A Guide for Public Authorities (April 2010)*' and the inter-Board/Staff Commission's '*Equality Consultation Guidelines*'.

**3.2.1** All consultations will seek the views of those directly affected by the policy; the Equality Commission, representative groups of Section 75 categories, other public authorities, voluntary and community groups, staff and their trade unions and professional bodies, and such other groups as may have a legitimate interest, whether or not they have a direct economic or personal interest in the matter under consideration.

Initially all consultees (see Appendix 2) will, as a matter of course, be notified (by email or post) of the policy being consulted upon to ensure they are aware of all consultations. Thereafter, to ensure the most effective use of resources, the Board will take a targeted approach to consultation for those consultees that may have a particular interest in the policy and for whom the policy is of particular relevance. This may include, for example, regional or local consultations, sectoral or thematic consultation etc. This approach will not preclude other parties having a legitimate interest from participating in consultations.

**3.2.2** Consultation with all stakeholders will begin as early as possible. The Board will engage with affected individuals and representative groups to identify how best to consult or engage with them. The Board will ask consultees what their preferred consultation methods are and will give consideration to these. Methods of consultation could include:

- face-to-face meetings;
- focus groups;
- written documents with the opportunity to comment in writing;
- questionnaires;
- information/notification by email with an opportunity to opt in/opt out of the consultation;
- internet discussions; or
- telephone discussions.

This list is not exhaustive and may be developed to include other methods of consultation more appropriate to key stakeholders and the matter being consulted upon.

**3.2.3** The Board will consider carefully the accessibility and format of every method of consultation in order to remove barriers to the consultation process. Specific consideration will be given as to how best to communicate with children and young people, people with disabilities (in particular people with learning disabilities), and minority ethnic communities. Such methods may be facilitated through the use of advocates and/or specifically trained facilitators and by making information accessible and providing improved visual signage. It will take account of existing and developing good practice, including the Equality Commission's guidance '*Let's Talk Let's Listen - Guidance for public authorities on consulting and involving children and young people (2008)*'

Information will be made available, on request, in alternative formats in a timely manner, usually within 20 working days, and consultees will be given equal time to respond.

**3.2.4** Specific training will be provided to those facilitating consultations to ensure that they have the necessary skills to communicate effectively with consultees.

**3.2.5** To ensure effective consultation a programme of awareness raising will be developed on the Section 75 statutory duties and the commitments in the Equality Scheme by undertaking the following:

- consultation on the development, implementation and review of the revised Equality Scheme, Audit of Inequalities and Action Plan;
- organisation of regular meetings of the Education Sector Joint Consultative Forum to review progress on the Scheme; and the implementation of the Section 75 duties linked to Board functions;
- publication of regular updates to the members of the Education Sector Joint Consultative Forum and to consultees on the Equality Scheme mailing list.

**3.2.6** The consultation period lasts for a minimum of twelve weeks to allow adequate time for groups to consult amongst themselves as part of the process of forming a view. However, in exceptional circumstances when this timescale is not feasible (for example implementing EU Directives or UK wide legislation, meeting Health and Safety requirements, addressing urgent public health matters or complying with Court judgements), the timescale may be shortened to eight weeks or less before the policy is implemented. Consultation may continue thereafter and the Board will review the policy as part of its commitment to monitoring<sup>3</sup>.

Where, under exceptional circumstances, a policy must be implemented immediately, for reasons outside the Board's control, consultation may occur after implementation of the policy, in order to ensure that any impacts of the policy are considered.

**3.2.7** If a consultation exercise is to take place over a period when consultees are less able to respond, for example, over the summer or Christmas break, or if the policy under consideration is particularly complex, the Board will consider the feasibility of allowing a longer period for the consultation.

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<sup>3</sup> Please see 4.27 to 4.31 below for details on monitoring

- 3.2.8** The Board is aware that individuals and representative groups may have different needs and therefore appropriate measures will be taken to ensure full participation in any meetings that are held. These measures may include, for example, the time of day, the appropriateness of the venue, in particular whether it can be accessed by those with disabilities, how the meeting is to be conducted, the use of appropriate language, whether a signer and/or interpreter is necessary, and whether the provision of childcare and support for other carers is required.
- 3.2.9** The Board will make all relevant information available to consultees in appropriate formats to ensure meaningful consultation. This will include detailed information on the policy proposal being consulted upon and any relevant quantitative and qualitative data.
- 3.2.10** In making any decision with respect to a policy adopted or proposed to be adopted, the Board will take into account any assessment and consultation carried out in relation to the policy.
- 3.2.11** The Board will provide feedback to consultees in a timely manner. A feedback report will be prepared to include summary information on the policy consulted upon, a summary of consultees' comments and a summary of the consideration of and response to consultees' input. The feedback will be provided in formats suitable to consultees who engaged in the process.
- 3.3** A list of the Board's consultees is included in this Equality Scheme at Appendix 2. It can also be obtained from our website at: [www.welbni.org/publications](http://www.welbni.org/publications) or by contacting Mrs Pat Ward - see paragraph 2.5 on page 4 for contact details.
- 3.4** This consultation list is not exhaustive and will be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure it remains relevant to the Board's functions and policies.

Enquiries are welcome from any person/s or organisations wishing to be added to the list of consultees. Please contact Mrs Ward – see paragraph 2.5 on page 4 for details - to provide your contact details and have your areas of interest noted or have your name/details removed or amended. Please also inform us at this stage if you would like information sent to you in a particular format or language including in large print, in Braille, by e-mail, on computer disc, on audio-cassette or in a minority language for those who are not fluent in English.

## **CHAPTER 4 - ARRANGEMENTS FOR ASSESSING, MONITORING AND PUBLISHING THE IMPACT OF POLICIES [Schedule 9 paragraphs (2) (b - d) and 9. (2)]**

This chapter outlines the Board's arrangements for assessing the likely impact of policies adopted or proposed to be adopted on the promotion of equality of opportunity (Schedule 9 paragraph 4 (2) (b))

### **What is a policy?**

- 4.1** In the context of Section 75, 'policy' is very broadly defined and covers all the ways in which the Board will carry out or proposes to carry out its functions in relation to Northern Ireland. In respect of this Scheme, the term policy is used for any (proposed/amended/existing) strategy, policy initiative or practice and/or decision, whether written or unwritten and irrespective of the label given to it, e.g. 'draft', 'pilot', 'high level' or 'sectoral'.
- 4.2** In making any decision with respect to a policy adopted or proposed to be adopted, the Board will take into account any assessment and consultation carried out in relation to the policy, as required by Schedule 9 paragraph 9 (2) of the Act.
- 4.3** The Board will use the tools of **screening** and **Equality Impact Assessment** to assess the likely impact of a policy on the promotion of equality of opportunity and good relations. In carrying out these assessments it will relate them to the intended outcomes of the policy in question and will also follow:
- the guidance on screening, as detailed in the Equality Commission's Guidance '*Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 - A Guide for Public Authorities (April 2010)*' and the inter-Board/Staff Commission '*Equality Screening Toolkit*' developed in consultation with consultees on our mail list; and
  - (when undertaking an Equality Impact Assessment), the Equality Commission's detailed guidance '*Practical Guidance on Equality Impact Assessment (February 2005)*'

### **What is Screening?**

- 4.4** The purpose of screening is to identify those policies that are likely to have an impact on equality of opportunity and/or good relations.
- 4.5** Screening is completed at the earliest opportunity in the policy development/review process. Policies should normally be screened prior to presentation to the Board for consideration and implementation. For more detailed strategies or policies that are to be implemented in stages, the Board will consider screening at the various stages during implementation.
- 4.6** The lead role in the screening of a policy is taken by the policy decision maker who has the authority to make changes to that policy. However, screening will also involve other relevant team members, for example, equality specialists, those who implement the policy and staff members from other relevant work areas. Where possible the screening process will include key stakeholders.

- 4.7** The following questions are applied to all policies as part of the screening process:
- What is the likely impact on equality of opportunity for those affected by this policy, for each of the Section 75 equality categories? (minor/major/none)
  - Are there opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity for people within the Section 75 equality categories?
  - To what extent is the policy likely to impact on good relations between people of a different religious belief, political opinion or racial group? (minor/major/none)
  - Are there opportunities to better promote good relations between people of a different religious belief, political opinion or racial group?
- 4.8** In order to answer the screening questions, the Board will gather all relevant information and data, both qualitative and quantitative. In taking this evidence into account it will consider the different needs, experiences and priorities for each of the Section 75 equality categories. Screening decisions will be informed by this evidence.
- 4.9** Completion of screening, after taking into account consideration of the answers to all four screening questions set out in 4.7 above, will lead to one of the following three outcomes:
1. The policy will be ‘screened in’ for Equality Impact Assessment;
  2. The policy will be ‘screened out’ with mitigation<sup>4</sup> or an alternative/amended policy proposed;
  3. The policy will be ‘screened out’ without mitigation or an alternative/amended policy proposed.
- 4.10** If screening concludes that the likely impact of a policy is ‘minor’ in respect of one or more of the equality of opportunity and/or good relations categories, the Board may decide to proceed with an Equality Impact Assessment, depending on the policy. If an EQIA is not to be conducted, the Board will nonetheless consider measures that might mitigate the policy impact as well as alternative policies that might better achieve the promotion of equality of opportunity and/or good relations.
- Where mitigation is appropriate the Board will outline in its screening template the reasons to support this decision, together with the proposed changes, amendments or alternative policy.
- The screening decision will be ‘signed off’ by the appropriate responsible lead officer for the policy area concerned.
- 4.11** If screening concludes that the likely impact of a policy is ‘major’ in respect of one or more of the equality of opportunity and/or good relations categories, the Board will consider whether the policy should be subject to an Equality Impact Assessment. The screening decision will be ‘signed off’ by the appropriate responsible lead officer for the policy area concerned.

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<sup>4</sup> Mitigation - Where an assessment (screening in this case) reveals that a particular policy has an adverse impact on equality of opportunity and/or good relations, a public authority must consider ways of delivering the policy outcomes which have a less adverse effect on the relevant Section 75 categories.

- 4.12** If screening concludes that the likely impact of a policy is ‘none’, in respect of all of the equality of opportunity and/or good relations categories, the Board may decide to screen the policy out. If a policy is ‘screened out’ as having no relevance to equality of opportunity or good relations, the reasons for this decision will be provided.

The screening decision will be ‘signed off’ by the appropriate responsible lead officer for the policy area concerned.

- 4.13** As soon as possible following the completion of the screening process, the screening template, signed off and approved by the senior manager responsible for the policy, will be made available on the Board’s website at [www.welbni.org/publications](http://www.welbni.org/publications) and on request from Mrs Pat Ward – see paragraph 2.5 on page 4 for contact details.
- 4.14** If a consultee, including the Equality Commission, raises a concern about a screening decision based on supporting evidence, the Board will be prepared to review the screening decision.
- 4.15** Screening reports will be published quarterly (see paragraphs 4.20 - 4.22 and 4.23 for details)

### **What is an Equality Impact Assessment?**

- 4.16** An Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) is a thorough and systematic analysis of a policy, whether that policy is formal or informal, and irrespective of the scope of that policy. The primary function of an EQIA is to determine the extent of any impact of a policy upon the Section 75 categories and to determine if the impact is an adverse one. It is also an opportunity to demonstrate the likely positive outcomes of a policy and to seek ways to more effectively promote equality of opportunity and good relations.
- 4.17** Once a policy is screened and screening has identified that an EQIA is necessary, the Board will carry out the EQIA in accordance with the Equality Commission’s Guidance ‘*Practical Guidance on Equality Impact Assessment*’ and the inter-Board Guidance ‘*A Recommended Approach to Conducting an Equality Impact Assessment*’. The EQIA will be carried out as part of the policy development process, normally before the policy is implemented.
- 4.18** Any EQIA will be subject to consultation at the appropriate stage(s). (For details see chapter 3 on page 6: ‘*Arrangements for Consulting*’).

### **Arrangements for publishing the results of the assessments of the likely impact of policies we have adopted or propose to adopt on the promotion of equality of opportunity**

[Schedule 9 paragraphs 4 (2) (d); 9 (1)]

- 4.19** The Board will make publicly available the results of its assessments (screening and EQIA) of the likely impact of policies on the promotion of equality of opportunity and good relations.

## What do we publish?

### 4.20 Screening Reports

These are published quarterly. Screening reports explain:

- The policies screened by the Board over the preceding three months period;
- a statement of the aim(s) of the policy/policies screened;
- the consideration given to measures which might mitigate any adverse impact identified;
- the consideration given to alternative policies which might better achieve the promotion of equality of opportunity;
- screening decisions, i.e.:
  - whether the policy has been 'screened in' for EQIA;
  - whether the policy has been 'screened out' with mitigation or an alternative/amended policy proposed;
  - whether the policy has been 'screened out' without mitigation or an alternative/amended policy proposed;
- Where applicable, a timetable for conducting an EQIA;
- A link to the completed screening template(s) on the Board's website at [www.welbni.org/publications](http://www.welbni.org/publications) .

### 4.21 Screening Templates

For details of the availability of the completed screening templates refer to 4.13.

### 4.22 Equality Impact Assessments

EQIA reports are published once the impact assessment has been completed. These reports will include:

- a statement of the aim of the policy assessed;
- information and data collected;
- details of the assessment of impact(s);
- consideration given to measures which might mitigate any adverse impact;
- consideration given to alternative policies which might better achieve the promotion of equality of opportunity;
- consultation responses;
- the decision taken;
- future monitoring plans.

## How do we publish the information?

- 4.23 All information published by the Board is accessible and can be made available in alternative formats on request – see paragraph 6.3 below for details.

## **Where do we publish the information?**

- 4.24** The results of assessments (screening reports and completed templates, the results of EQIAs) are available on the Board's website at [www.welbni.org/publications](http://www.welbni.org/publications) and by contacting Mrs Pat Ward – see paragraph 2.5 on page 4 for contact details.
- 4.25** In addition to the above, screening reports (electronic link or hard copy on request if more suitable for recipients) to include all policies screened over a 3 month period will be sent directly to all consultees on a quarterly basis.
- 4.26** The Board will inform the general public about the availability of this material through communications such as press releases where appropriate.

## **Arrangements for monitoring any adverse impact of policies we have adopted on equality of opportunity [Schedule 9 paragraph 4 (2) (c)]**

- 4.27** Monitoring can assist the Board to deliver better public services and continuous improvements. Monitoring Section 75 information involves the processing of sensitive personal data (data relating to the racial or ethnic origin of individuals, sexual orientation, political opinion, religious belief, etc.) In order to carry out monitoring in a confidential and effective manner, the Board follows the guidance from the Office of the Information Commissioner and the Equality Commission.
- 4.28** The Board will monitor any adverse impact on the promotion of equality of opportunity of policies and is also committed to monitoring more broadly to identify circumstances to better promote equality of opportunity and good relations in line with the Equality Commission's guidance.
- 4.29** The following systems have been established to monitor the impact of policies and identify opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity and good relations:
- the collection, collation and analysis of existing relevant primary quantitative and qualitative data across all nine equality categories (where possible) on an ongoing basis;
  - the collection, collation and analysis of existing relevant secondary sources of quantitative and qualitative data across all nine equality categories on an ongoing basis;
  - an audit of existing information systems (within one year of approval of this Equality Scheme) to identify the extent of current monitoring and take action to address any gaps in order to have the necessary information on which to base decisions;
  - undertaking or commissioning new data if necessary.
- 4.30** If, over a two year period, monitoring and evaluation show that a policy results in greater adverse impact than predicted, or if opportunities arise which would allow for greater equality of opportunity to be promoted, the Board will ensure that the policy is revised to achieve better outcomes for relevant equality groups.

**4.31** The Board will review its EQIA monitoring information on an annual basis. Other monitoring information will also be reviewed on an annual basis e.g. monitoring of complaints, review of research literature etc.

**Arrangements for publishing the results of our monitoring** [Schedule 9 paragraph 4 (2) (d)]

**4.32** Schedule 9 paragraph 4 (2) (d) requires the publication of the results of the monitoring of any adverse impacts of policies. The Board is committed to monitoring more broadly and all the results of policy monitoring will be published as follows:

**4.33** EQIA monitoring information will be published as part of the Board's Section 75 annual progress report – see paragraph 2.16.

**4.34** Monitoring information is available on the Board's website at [www.welbni.org/publications](http://www.welbni.org/publications)

**4.35** All information published is accessible and can be made available in alternative formats including in large print, in Braille, by e-mail, on computer disc, on audio-cassette or in minority languages to meet the needs of those who are not fluent in English, on request from Mrs Pat Ward - see paragraph 2.5 on page 4 for contact details.

## **CHAPTER 5 - STAFF TRAINING [(Schedule 9 paragraph 4 (2) (e)]**

### **5.1 Commitment to Staff Training**

The Board recognises that awareness raising and training play a crucial role in the effective implementation of its Section 75 statutory duties.

**5.2** The Board is committed to communicating its commitment to the Section 75 statutory duties, both internally and externally. To this end it has introduced an effective communication and training programme for all staff and will ensure that its commitment to the Section 75 statutory duties is made clear in all relevant publications.

### **Training Objectives**

**5.3** The Board will draw up a detailed training plan for its staff which will aim to achieve the following objectives:

- to raise awareness of the provisions of Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, the Equality Scheme commitments and the particular issues likely to affect people across the range of Section 75 categories, to ensure that staff fully understand their role in implementing the Scheme;
- to provide those staff involved in the assessment of policies (screening and EQIA) with the necessary skills and knowledge to do this work effectively;
- to provide those staff who deal with complaints in relation to compliance with the Equality Scheme with the necessary skills and knowledge to investigate and monitor complaints effectively;
- to provide those staff involved in consultation processes with the necessary skills and knowledge to do this work effectively;
- to provide those staff involved in the implementation and monitoring of the effective implementation of the Board's Scheme with the necessary skills and knowledge to do this work effectively.

### **Awareness raising and training arrangements**

**5.4** The following arrangements are in place to ensure all staff and Board members are aware of and understand the equality obligations:

- a summary of this Scheme will be made available to all staff;
- access will be provided for all staff to copies of the full Scheme and any queries or questions of clarification from staff will be addressed effectively;
- staff will be briefed on the Scheme within 6 months following its approval by the Equality Commission;
- the Section 75 statutory duties will form part of induction training for new staff;
- focused training will be provided for key staff who are directly engaged in taking forward the implementation of the Equality Scheme commitments (for example, those involved in research and data collection, policy development, service design, conducting EQIAs, consultation, monitoring and evaluation);

- where appropriate, training will be provided to ensure staff are aware of the issues experienced by the range of Section 75 groups;
- when appropriate and on an ongoing basis, arrangements will be made to ensure staff are kept up to date with Section 75 developments.

**5.5** Training and awareness raising programmes will, where relevant, be developed in association with the appropriate Section 75 groups and staff:

In order to share resources and expertise, the Board will, where possible, work closely with other bodies and agencies in the development and delivery of training.

### **Monitoring and evaluation**

**5.6** The Board's training programme will be subject to the following monitoring and evaluation arrangements:

- an evaluation of the extent to which all participants in the training programme have acquired the necessary skills and knowledge to achieve each of the above objectives;
- the extent to which training objectives have been met will be reported on as part of the Board's Section 75 Annual Progress Report, which will be sent to the Equality Commission.

## **CHAPTER 6 - ARRANGEMENTS FOR ENSURING AND ASSESSING PUBLIC ACCESS TO INFORMATION AND SERVICES [Schedule 9 paragraph 4 (2) (f)]**

- 6.1** The Board is committed to ensuring that the information it disseminates and the services it provides are fully accessible to all parts of the community in Northern Ireland. Arrangements will be kept under review to ensure that this remains the case.
- 6.2** The Board is aware that some groups will not have the same access to information as others. In particular:
- people with sensory, learning, communication and mobility disabilities may require printed information in other formats;
  - members of ethnic minority groups, whose first language is not English, may have difficulties with information provided only in English;
  - children and young people may not be able to fully access or understand information.

### **Access to information**

- 6.3** To ensure equality of opportunity in accessing information, the Board will provide information in alternative formats on request, where reasonably practicable. Where the exact request cannot be met we will ensure a reasonable alternative is provided.

Alternative formats may include Easy Read, Braille, audio formats (CD, mp3 or DAISY), large print or minority languages to meet the needs of those for whom English is not their first language.

The Board will respond in a timely fashion to requests for information in alternative formats; usually a response will be provided within 20 working days.

The Board liaises with representative of young people and disability and minority ethnic organisations and takes account of existing and developing good practice. Advice will be sought from those with specialist knowledge in this area as to how best to communicate with young people, those with learning disabilities, ethnic groups and others e.g. older persons and persons who have a mental illness, – this will be facilitated through the use of specially trained staff and/or advocates.

- 6.4** In disseminating information through the media the Board will seek to advertise in the press, where appropriate.
- 6.5** The Board will seek to ensure that its website is accessible and will provide information in accessible formats; e.g. the Board will use its website, Corporate Plan, Annual Report, the in-house staff magazine and other publications to disseminate information.

## **Access to services**

**6.6** The Board is committed to ensuring that all of its services are fully accessible to everyone in the community across the Section 75 categories.

The Board also adheres to the relevant provisions of current anti-discrimination legislation.

**6.7** The Board will provide interpreters for those not competent in English and those who require sign language interpreters and will also ensure access to Board buildings.

## **Accessing public access to information and services**

**6.8** The Board will monitor on an ongoing basis across all functions, in relation to access to information and services, to ensure the promotion of equality of opportunity and good relations.

**6.9** This will include:

- provision of interpreting/translation services – quarterly reports;
- monitoring of complaints – ongoing and annually;
- reasonable adjustments – ongoing and annually;
- satisfaction surveys – ongoing and annually;
- staff survey - annually;
- Article 55 Review – every three years.

## **CHAPTER 7 - TIMETABLE FOR MEASURES PROPOSED IN THIS EQUALITY SCHEME [Schedule 9 paragraph 4 (3) (b)]**

- 7.1** Appendix 3 outlines the timetable for all measures proposed within this Equality Scheme. The measures outlined in the timetable will be incorporated into the Board's business planning processes. In drawing up the timetable the Board has been open and transparent about what realistically can be achieved in an annual cycle, given the size and complexity of the organisation.
- 7.2** The timetable is different from and in addition to the commitment to develop action plans/action measures to specifically address inequalities and further promote equality of opportunity and good relations. Included in the Equality Scheme is a commitment to develop an action plan. Accordingly, this commitment is listed in the timetable of measures at Appendix 3. For information on these action measures please see paragraph 2.12 - 2.18 above

## **CHAPTER 8 - COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE** [Schedule 9 paragraph 10.]

**8.1** The Board is responsive to the views of members of the public and will endeavour to resolve all complaints promptly. Section 75 complaints are integrated into a general complaints procedure within the Board.

**8.2** Schedule 9 paragraph 10 of the Act refers to complaints. A person can make a complaint to the Board if the complainant believes he or she may have been directly affected by an alleged failure of the Board to comply with its approved Equality Scheme.

If the complaint is not resolved within a reasonable timescale, the complainant may refer the matter to the Equality Commission.

**8.3** A person wishing to make a complaint that the Board has failed to comply with its approved Equality Scheme should, in the first instance, bring his/her complaint to the attention of the Board's Chief Executive, Mr Barry Mulholland:

Contact details: 1 Hospital Road, Omagh, Co Tyrone BT79 0AW.  
Telephone (028) 8241 1411, fax (028) 8241 1400, e-mail: [info@welbni.org](mailto:info@welbni.org)

**8.4** In accordance with its Complaints Procedure the Board will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within 5 working days.

**8.5** The Board will investigate the complaint and will seek to provide a substantive response normally within 15 working days from the date of receipt of the complaint. If this is not possible, e.g. if the matter is complex, the period for response to the complainant may be extended. In such circumstances the complainant will be advised accordingly.

**8.6** During this process the complainant will be kept fully informed of the progress of the investigation into the complaint.

**8.7** In any subsequent investigation by the Equality Commission, the Board will co-operate fully, providing access in a timely manner to any relevant documentation that the Equality Commission may require.

Similarly, the Board will co-operate fully with any investigation by the Equality Commission under sub-paragraph 11 (1) (b) of Schedule 9 to the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

**8.8** The Board will make all efforts to implement promptly and in full any recommendations arising out of any Equality Commission investigation.

## **CHAPTER 9 - PUBLICATION OF THE EQUALITY SCHEME [Schedule 9 para 4 (3) (c)]**

- 9.1** The Board is committed to ensuring that its Equality Scheme will be widely published and in a manner which will ensure equality of access. The Scheme will be made available to staff, service users, individuals and representatives of Section 75 organisations. An Equality Scheme Summary will be available as will an 'Easy Read' version. The Board's Equality Scheme will be available, free of charge, in print form and in alternative formats from Mrs Pat Ward – see paragraph 2.5 on page 4 for contact details.
- 9.2** The Equality Scheme, Summary and Easy Read version will be available on the Board's website at [www.welbni.org/publications](http://www.welbni.org/publications) .
- 9.3** The following arrangements are in place for the publication of the Equality Scheme:
- The Board will make every effort to communicate widely the existence and contents of its Scheme. These efforts may include the issue of press releases, advertisements in the press and direct mail shots to groups representing the categories of persons covered by Section 75;
  - a link to the approved Equality Scheme will be emailed to consultees on the Board's mailing list – see Appendix 2. Other consultees will be notified by letter that the Scheme is available on request. The Board will respond to requests for the Equality Scheme in alternative formats in a timely manner, usually within 20 working days;
  - The Scheme will be available on request in alternative formats such as Braille, large print, audio formats (CD, mp3, DAISY) and in minority languages to meet the needs of those not fluent in English;
  - Advice will be sought from those with specialist knowledge as to how best to communicate with young people, those with learning disabilities, ethnic groups and others e.g. older persons and persons who have a mental illness, – this will be facilitated through the use of specially trained staff and/or advocates.
- 9.4** For a list of consultees please see Appendix 2 of this Scheme.

## **CHAPTER 10 - REVIEW OF THE EQUALITY SCHEME [Schedule 9 paragraph 8 (3)]**

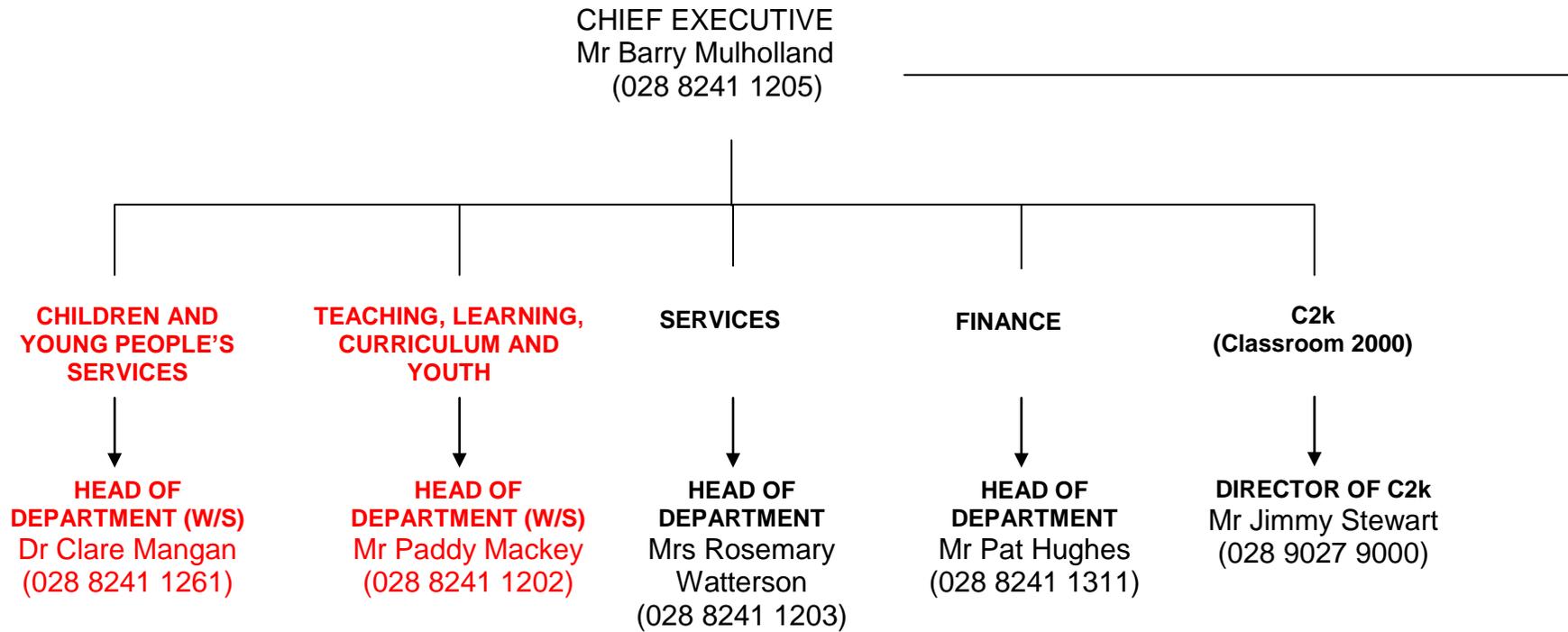
- 10.1** As required by Schedule 9 paragraph 8 (3) of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, the Board is committed to conducting a thorough review of this Equality Scheme. This review will take place either within five years of submission of the Scheme to the Equality Commission, or within a shorter timescale to allow alignment with the review of other planning cycles.

The review will evaluate the effectiveness of the Scheme in relation to the implementation of the Section 75 statutory duties relevant to the functions of the Board.

- 10.2** In undertaking this review the Board will follow the guidance issued by the Equality Commission.

A report of this review will be submitted to the Equality Commission and made public via the Board's website at [www.welbni.org/publications](http://www.welbni.org/publications) and issued to consultees on the Board's mailing list – Appendix 2 refers.

ORGANISATION CHART



W/S - CROSS-BOARD POST (WESTERN BOARD AND SOUTHERN BOARD)

**MAILING LIST FOR THE BOARDS'/STAFF COMMISSION'S  
REVISED EQUALITY SCHEME**

***\*Please note an email address list has been compiled for the majority of the organisations listed.***

**Each Board to insert Consultee Groups in its geographical area.**

- 1. Nine Equality Categories**  
*Religious Belief*  
*Political Opinion*  
*Racial Group*  
*Age - Young and Old*  
*Marital Status*  
*Sexual Orientation*  
*Gender*  
*Disability*  
*Dependents*
- 2. Equality and Good Relations (Agencies/Groups)**
- 3. Multi-dimensional Community and Voluntary Organisations**
- 4. Education Bodies**
- 5. Universities**
- 6. Further Education Colleges**
- 7. All Schools** *(direct communication through C2K), as appropriate.*  
*Controlled Primary/Secondary*  
*Maintained Primary/Secondary*  
*Voluntary Grammar*  
*Integrated*  
*Irish Medium*  
*Others*
- 8. Youth Clubs and Youth Centres, as appropriate**
- 9. Trade Unions**
- 10. District Councils**
- 11. Health Trusts**
- 12. Other Government Departments**
- 13. Other Public Bodies**

<p><b>Religious Belief</b>  Bahai Community of Belfast  Baptist Union of Ireland  Belfast Hebrew Congregation  Bishop of Down and Connor  Bishop of Derry  Church of Ireland Board of Education (NI)  Church of Ireland Board for Social Responsibility  Diocesan Office, Armagh  Diocesan Office, Clougher  Diocesan Office, Dromore  Dr Desi Alexander  Elim Pentecostal  First Larne Presbyterian Church  Free Presbyterian Church  Methodist Church in Ireland  Belfast Islamic Centre  Transfer Representative Council  Presbyterian Church in Ireland  Presbyterian Housing Association NI Ltd</p> <p><b>Racial Group</b>  Al-Nisa Association  Al-Nur Craigavon Asian Association  An Munia Tober  Chinese chamber of Commerce  Chinese Welfare Association  Craigavon Travellers' Support Committee  Embrace  Indian Community Centre  Italian Society  Mandarin Speaking Association  Multicultural Group - Windsor Women's Centre  Multi-Cultural Resource Centre  Polish Association NI  NI African Cultural Centre  NICEM  NI Filipino Association  NI Filipino Community in Action  NI Muslim Family Association  Oi Kwan Chinese Women's Group  Oi Yin Bangor Chinese Women's Group  Pobal  Wah Hep Chinese Community Association  South Tyrone Empowerment Programme (STEP)  Southern Travellers Early Years Partnership  Ulster Scots Agency</p>	<p><b>Political Opinion</b>  Alliance Party  Democratic Unionist Party  Green Party  NI Unionist Party  Sinn Fein HQs  PUP Central Office  Ulster Unionist Party  SDLP  Traditional Unionist Voice  Labour Party  Workers Party  UK Independence Party  Education Committee of the NI Assembly  Women into Politics  Counteract</p> <p><b>Age – Young &amp; Old</b>  Barnardos  Barnardos Tuar Ceatha Project  Boys' Brigade, Belfast Battalion  Challenge for Youth  Children in Northern Ireland  Child Poverty Group  Children's Law Centre  Guide Association  Include Youth  National Children's Bureau NI  National Society Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC)  Playboard  NIPPA  NI Youth Forum  NUS USI  Save the Children  Youth Council for NI  Youth Action NI  Youthnet  Youth Link NI  Age Concern/Help the Aged  Newry &amp; Mourne Senior Citizen's Consortium</p> <p><b>Marital Status</b>  Mediation N I  Relate NI</p>
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<p><b>Sexual Orientation</b>  Belfast Butterfly Club  Carafriend  Coalition on Sexual Orientation  Foyle Friend  Gay and Lesbian Youth NI  Lesbian Line  NIGRA  NI Gay Rights Association  Press for Change  Queer Space  The Rainbow Project</p> <p><b>Gender</b>  Atlas Women's Centre  Ballybeen Women's Centre  Belfast &amp; Lisburn Women's Aid  Derry Well Women  Down Advocacy Movement  Federation of Women's Institutes NI  Fermanagh Women's Network  Magherafelt Women's Group  Newry &amp; Mourne Women  NI Women's Aid Federation  NI Women's European Platform  The Men's Project  Omagh Women's Area Network  Training for Women Network Ltd  The Women's Centre  Women's Resource and Development Agency  Women's Forum NI  Women's Information Group  Women's Tec Charity  Women's Support Network  Family Planning Association</p> <p><b>Disability</b>  Action Mental Health  Agencies in Consortium for Education &amp; Training (ACET)  Alzheimer's Society  Appleby Trust  Arts and Disability Forum  ArtAbility NI Ltd  Arthritis Care NI  Arts and Disability Forum  Association of Spina Bifida &amp; Hydrocephalus  Ballymena Access Group  Employers' For Disability  British Deaf Association (NI)  British Epilepsy Association  Cedar Foundation</p>	Disability Action Disability Sports NI Disabled Drivers Association Down and Lisburn Forum on Learning Disability Down's Syndrome Association Dyslexia Assessment & Advice Service Face Inclusion Matters Fermanagh Voluntary Association of the Disabled Fibromyalgia Support NI Friends of Millview Friends of Mitchell House Headway Belfast Guide Dogs for the Blind Association IPSEA Lisburn Access Group MENCAP Mindwise MS Society Multiple Sclerosis Society NI Muscular Dystrophy Campaign Muscular Dystrophy Group National Deaf Children's Society NI ADD Support Centre NI Association for Mental Health NI Chest, Heart & Stroke Association NI Disability Council NI ME Association NI Dyslexia Association NI Institute for the Disabled North West Forum of People with Disabilities NI Music Therapy Trust NI Union of Supported Employment Parkinson's Disease Society NI Parent's Education as Autism Therapists Parents & Professionals and Autism Praxi Mental Health Open Arts Orchardville Society Sense NI Royal National Institute for the Blind (NI) Royal National Institute for the Deaf (NI) Stroke Association Share Holiday Village Skill Northern Ireland Ulster Supported Employment Ltd.
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<p><b>Dependents</b>  CARE in Northern Ireland  Carers in Northern Ireland  Glenluce Quality Caring Centre  Gingerbread NI</p> <p><b>Equality &amp; Good Relations (Agencies/Groups)</b>  Equality Commission  NI Human Rights Commission  Labour Relations Agency  Community Relations Agency  NI Ombudsman  NI Children’s Commissioner  Information Commissioner  Equality Coalition  Committee on the Administration of Justice  Equality Forum  Equality 2000  Confederation of Community Groups  Community Change NI  Community Development &amp; Health  Community Arts Forum  Community Relations Training &amp; Learning Consortium  NI Council for Voluntary Action  Co-operation Ireland  Incore Conflict Resolutions Ltd.  Confederation of Community Groups  East Belfast Community Development Agency  Falls Community Centre  Survivors of Trauma  South West Belfast Community Forum  North West Community Network  Oakleaf Rural Community Network  Rural Community Network  Rural Development Council  Rural Support  Willowbank Community Resource Centre  Divis Community Centre  Breakthru</p> <p><b>Multi-dimensional Community &amp; Voluntary Organisations</b>  Belfast Charitable Society  Circles Network NI  Council for Homeless (NI)  Cruise Bereavement Care NI  Education Guidance Service for Adults</p>	<p>Extern  HIV Support Centre  Library Association  NI Anti-Poverty Network  NIACRO  NI Council for Voluntary Action  NI Open College Network  Ulster People’s College  Volunteer Development Agency  West Belfast Economic Forum</p> <p><b>Education Bodies</b>  Comhairle na Gaelscolaiochta  Conradh na Gaelge  Department of Culture, Arts &amp; Leisure  Department of Education  Department of Employment &amp; Learning  ESAIT  General Teaching Council  Governing Bodies Association  NICIE  Trustee Support Service NI/NI  Commission for Catholic Education</p> <p><b>Universities</b>  Queens University  University of Ulster, Newtownabbey  University of Ulster, Coleraine  Stranmillis University College  St Mary’s University College  The Open University</p> <p><b>Further Education Colleges</b>  Association of NI Colleges  Belfast Metropolitan College  Northern Regional College  North West Regional College  South Eastern Regional College  Southern Regional College  South West Regional College</p> <p><b>All Schools (<i>communication can be through C2K</i>), as appropriate</b>  Controlled Primary/Secondary  Maintained Primary/Secondary  Integrated  Irish Medium  Voluntary Grammar  Others</p>
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**All Youth Clubs/Centres (as appropriate)****Trade Unions**

Association of Education Psychologists  
Association of Teachers and Lecturers  
GMB  
Irish Congress of Trade Unions  
Irish National Teachers  
National Association of Educational  
Inspectors, Advisors & Consultants  
National Association of Head Teachers  
National Association of Social Workers in  
Education  
NASUWT  
NIPSA  
NIPSA (Retired Members' Group)  
Ulster Teachers' Union  
UNISON  
UNITE  
University & College Union

**District Council**

Antrim Borough Council  
Ards Borough Council  
Armagh City Council  
Ballymena Borough Council  
Ballymoney Borough Council  
Banbridge District Council  
Belfast City Council  
Carrickfergus Borough Council  
Castlereagh Borough Council  
Coleraine Borough Council  
Cookstown District Council  
Craigavon Borough Council  
Derry City Council  
Down District Council  
Dungannon & South Tyrone Borough Council  
Fermanagh District Council  
Larne Borough Council  
Limavady Borough Council  
Lisburn City Council  
Magherafelt District Council  
Moyle District Council  
Newry & Mourne District Council  
Newtownabbey Borough Council  
North Down Borough Council  
Omagh District Council  
Strabane District Council  
Local Government Staff Commission  
NI Local Government Association

**Health Trusts**

Belfast Health & Social Care Trust  
Northern Health & Social Care Trust  
Southern Health & Social Care Trust  
South Eastern Health & Social Care  
Trust  
Western Health & Social Care Trust  
Health & Social Care Board  
Health Promotion Agency

**Other Government Departments**

Department of Agriculture & Rural  
Development  
Department of Enterprise Trade &  
Investment  
Department of the Environment  
Department of Finance & Personnel  
Department of Health, Social Services  
and Public Safety  
Department of Social Development  
Department of Regional Development  
Northern Ireland Office  
Office of the First Minister and Deputy  
First Minister

**Other Public Bodies**

British Council  
Law Centre (N)  
Law Society of NI  
NI Housing Executive  
NI Library Authority  
NI Museums Council  
Northern Ireland Sports Forum  
PSNI HQs

**TIMETABLE FOR MEASURES PROPOSED WITHIN THE SCHEME**  
**[Schedule 9 paragraph 4 (3) (b)]**

<b>Measure</b>	<b>Action Taken/ To Be Taken</b>	<b>Lead Responsibility</b>	<b>Timetable</b>
<b>ARRANGEMENTS FOR ASSESSING OUR COMPLIANCE WITH SECTION 75 DUTIES</b>			
Have in place appropriate structures and reporting mechanisms	Structures and reporting mechanism established.	Chief Executive Senior Management Team	Structures in place.
Ensure Section 75 duties are mainstreamed within the Board	Section 75 objectives and targets will be integrated into annual operational business plans	Chief Executive Senior Management Team	In line with planning cycle [April 2012 onwards]
	Employees' job descriptions and staff performance plans as appropriate	Human Resources Manager	Annually
Prepare Section 75 Annual Progress Report and include section in Board's own Annual Report	Information collated throughout the year for inclusion in the Annual Progress Report. Article written for inclusion in Boards' Annual Report	Inter-Board Statutory Duty Group Board's Rep	31 August (annually)  Annually
Progress Reports provided to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Association of Chief Administrative Officers</li> <li>• Board members</li> <li>• Joint Negotiating Council/Teachers' Salaries and Conditions of Service Committee</li> <li>• Education Sector: Joint Consultative Forum</li> </ul>	Reports compiled on an inter/intra Board basis as appropriate	Inter Board Statutory Duty Group Board's Rep	Monthly Quarterly "  "
<b>ACTION PLAN</b>			
Development of an Action Plan to include anticipated outcomes and timescales, and aligned to corporate planning cycle	Conduct an audit of Inequalities	Inter-Board Statutory Duty Group	April – June 2011.
	Consult with voluntary/community sector on the findings of the Audit	Association of Chief Administrative Officers	July – October 2011.

<b>Measure</b>	<b>Action Taken/ To Be Taken</b>	<b>Lead Responsibility</b>	<b>Timetable</b>
Consultation on draft Action Plan	Consult with stakeholders before submission to Equality Commission	Inter-Board Statutory Duty Group	September - December 2011
Publish Action Plan	Publish on Board's website and intranet and advise of its availability; take account of alternative formats etc	Equality Rep.	January 2012
Deliver on Action Plan	Implement the actions contained within the Action Plan.	Senior Management Team/Managers/Equality Rep.	Annually
Arrangements for monitoring progress in place	Identify whether targets have been met – update plan as necessary	Equality Rep. in conjunction with Senior Management Team	Every August in line with Annual Progress Report
<b>ARRANGEMENTS FOR CONSULTING</b>			
Consultation list reviewed and updated	All current consultees notified and contact details and preferred method/format of communication updated on central consultation list	Inter-Board Statutory Duty Group	May 2011 and annually thereafter
Consultation Skills Training	Specific training provided for those conducting consultations	Inter-Board provision delivered in partnership with Disability Action	Training Pack developed in partnership with Disability Action
Undertake programme of awareness raising to ensure effective consultation with consultees	Develop pack for dissemination via Education Sector Joint Consultative Forum	Inter-Board Equality Duties Group	October 2011
Conduct consultation as part of the policy-making process	Review Screening Toolkit	Senior Management Team	Publish screening reports on a quarterly basis on website.
Provide feedback report to consultees in timely manner in formats suited to consultees	As per consultation list in their preferred format  Review feedback received  Publicise and communicate decisions made	Lead Policy Officer/ Equality Rep.	Mechanisms in place to provide feedback

Measure	Action Taken/ To Be Taken	Lead Responsibility	Timetable
<b>SCREENING</b>			
Implement new screening toolkit to reflect revised Guidance	<p>Develop screening toolkit in association with Section 75 Groups</p> <p>Provide training on revised screening method.</p> <p>Monitor screening of policies.</p> <p>Publish quarterly review reports.</p>	Screening Panel/ Equality Rep.	October 2011
<b>EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENTS</b>			
Produce an EQIA timetable	Provide advance notice of scheduled EQIAs	Inter-Board Statutory Duty Group	On-going
Conduct EQIAs in accordance with Equality Commission Guidance and inter-Board 'Recommended Approach to Conducting an EQIA'	<p>EQIA Project Team appointed</p> <p>Training provided to EQIA Project Team</p> <p>EQIA consultation reports and results of EQIAs published on the internet</p> <p>Information issued to consultees, as appropriate, in their preferred format as per the Equality Scheme and Equality Commission Guidelines</p>	EQIA Project Team	As each consultation exercise ends
<b>MONITORING</b>			
Revision of policies as a result of monitoring	<p>Collect and analyse qualitative and quantitative data in order to monitor any adverse impact of policies adopted.</p> <p>Identify opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity and good relations through the policy-making monitoring processes.</p>	Lead Policy Officer/ Equality Rep	On-going
Publication of monitoring information	Publish monitoring information in Section 75 Annual Progress Report and on the Board's website	Equality Rep	Annually

Measure	Action Taken/ To Be Taken	Lead Responsibility	Timetable
<b>STAFF TRAINING</b>			
Draw up a training plan	To cover briefing on the revised scheme, and focused training for staff involved in data collection, policy development, service design, conducting consultations, screening EQIAs, monitoring and evaluation, and dealing with complaints, as appropriate	Board's Training Officer/ Equality Rep	October 2011
Prepare a summarised version of the scheme	Summary Scheme currently being revised and will be issued to all staff	Equality Rep	September 2011, subject to approval by the Equality Commission
Provide access to full copy of Scheme to all staff	Full Scheme to be published on intranet and internet and made available in alternative formats on request	Equality Rep	September 2011, subject to approval by the Equality Commission
Evaluation of training	Assess the extent to which those being trained have acquired the necessary skills and knowledge to undertake screening, conduct EQIAs, etc  Provide refresher training	Training Officer/ Equality Rep	Mechanisms in place i.e. Policy Leads undertake screening and EQIAs  As required
<b>ARRANGEMENTS FOR ENSURING AND ASSESSING PUBLIC ACCESS TO INFORMATION AND SERVICES WE PROVIDE</b>			
Ensure information we disseminate and services we provide are fully accessible to all parts of the community in Northern Ireland`	Update of Section 75 consultation list will ask for preferred methods and formats of communication  Provide information in alternative formats on request	Equality Rep	Mechanisms in place
Ensure buildings are accessible	Access audits have been conducted and remedial works undertaken where buildings were not found to be accessible to include more loop systems, touch-pad doors, lifts etc	Estates Services Department	Further works undertaken as required

Measure	Action Taken/ To Be Taken	Lead Responsibility	Timetable
	New builds take account of access requirements		
Assessing access to information and services	We will monitor uptake of interpreting services and requests for translations and alternative formats	Equality Rep	Quarterly reports produced
Provide reasonable adjustments	As above, buildings are accessible to all service users, using reasonable adjustments where necessary for both service users and staff members	Equality Rep	Reasonable adjustments provided when required by service users and staff
Monitor complaints	We will monitor complaints received to identify areas where equality of opportunity and good relations could be improved	Complaints Officer/ Equality Rep	Analyse quarterly to identify any trends
<b>COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE</b>			
Ensure arrangements are in place to deal with complaints under the Equality Scheme	The Board has a complaints procedure and information has been made available in alternative formats e.g. various languages  Complaints regarding failure to adhere to our Equality Scheme are acknowledged and responded to within the terms of the Complaints Procedure	Chief Administrative Officer/Equality Rep.	May 2010  All complaints dealt with according to prescribed timescales
<b>PUBLICATION OF OUR EQUALITY SCHEME</b>			
Revised Equality Scheme to be published on the Board's website and intranet.	Current Scheme and Annual Progress Report on our website	Equality Rep.	Scheme uploaded when approved by ECNI.  Annual Progress Reports uploaded each August
Communication of revised Equality Scheme to consultees and staff	Once approved, the new Equality Scheme will be communicated via the Education Sector Joint Consultative Forum,	Inter-Board Equality Duties Group	October 2011, subject to approval by the Equality Commission

Measure	Action Taken/ To Be Taken	Lead Responsibility	Timetable
	Trade Union Negotiating Machinery and through the Equality Scheme mail list with internet link		
Produce Scheme in alternative formats on request	The Scheme will be produced in alternative formats on request as per the Scheme	Equality Rep.	October 2011, subject to approval by the Equality Commission
<b>REVIEW OF EQUALITY SCHEME</b>			
Scheme will be reviewed within five years of submission to the Equality Commission or within a shorter timescale to allow alignment with the review of other planning cycles	Annual review conducted in accordance with corporate planning process	Equality Rep.	August 2016

## GLOSSARY OF TERMS

### **Action plan**

A scheme which sets out the actions a public authority will take to implement its Section 75 statutory duties. It is a mechanism for the realisation of measures to achieve positive outcomes for the Section 75 equality and good relations categories.

### **Action measures and outcomes**

Specific measures to promote equality and good relations for the relevant Section 75 and good relations categories, linked to outcomes, which should be realistic and timely.

### **Adverse impact**

Where a Section 75 category of person will be affected differently by a policy and the effect is less favourable, it is known as an adverse impact. If a policy has an adverse impact the public authority must consider whether or not the adverse impact is unlawfully discriminatory. In either case the public authority must take measures to redress the adverse impact by considering mitigating measures and/or alternative ways of delivering the policy.

### **Audit of inequalities**

An audit of inequalities is a systematic review and analysis of inequalities which exist for service users and those affected by a public authority's policies. An audit can be used by the public authority to inform its work in relation to the Section 75 equality and good relations duties. It can also enable public authorities to assess progress on the implementation of the Section 75 statutory duties, as the audit provides baseline information on existing inequalities relevant to the authority's functions.

### **Consultation**

In the context of Section 75, consultation is the process of asking those affected by a policy (i.e. service users, staff, the general public) for their views on how the policy could be implemented more effectively to promote equality of opportunity across the 9 Section 75 categories. Different circumstances will call for different types of consultation; consultations could, for example, include meetings, focus groups, surveys and questionnaires.

### **Differential impact**

Differential impact occurs where a Section 75 group has been affected differently by a policy. This effect could either be positive, neutral or negative. The public authority must make a judgement as to whether a policy has a differential impact and then it must determine whether the impact is adverse, based on a systematic appraisal of the accumulated information.

### **Equality impact assessment (EQIA)**

An EQIA is the mechanism which underpins Section 75, whereby existing and proposed policies are assessed in order to determine whether they have an adverse impact on equality of opportunity for the relevant Section 75 categories. Equality impact assessments require the analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data.

## **Equality of opportunity**

The prevention, elimination or regulation of discrimination between people on grounds of characteristics including sex, marital status, age, disability, religious belief, political opinion, dependants, race and sexual orientation. The promotion of equality of opportunity entails more than the elimination of discrimination. It requires proactive measures to be taken to secure equality of opportunity between the categories identified under Section 75.

## **Equality Scheme**

A document which outlines a public authority's arrangements for complying with its Section 75 obligations. An Equality Scheme must include an outline of the public authority's arrangements for carrying out consultations, screening, equality impact assessments, monitoring, training and arrangements for ensuring access to information and services.

## **Good relations**

Although not defined in the legislation, the Equality Commission has agreed the following working definition of good relations: *'the growth of relations and structures for Northern Ireland that acknowledge the religious, political and racial context of this society, and that seek to promote respect, equity and trust, and embrace diversity in all its forms'*.

## **Mainstreaming equality**

The integration of equal opportunities principles, strategies and practices into the every day work of public authorities from the outset. In other words, mainstreaming is the process of ensuring that equality considerations are built into the policy development process from the beginning, rather than being bolted on at the end. Mainstreaming can help improve methods of working by increasing a public authority's accountability, responsiveness to need and relations with the public. It can bring added value at many levels.

## **Mitigation of adverse impact**

Where an equality impact assessment reveals that a particular policy has an adverse impact on equality of opportunity, a public authority must consider ways of delivering the policy outcomes which have a less adverse effect on the relevant Section 75 categories; this is known as mitigating adverse impact.

## **Monitoring**

Monitoring consists of continuously scrutinising and evaluating a policy to assess its impact on the Section 75 categories. Monitoring must be sensitive to the issues associated with human rights and privacy. Public authorities should seek advice from consultees and Section 75 representative groups when setting up monitoring systems.

Monitoring consists of the collection of relevant information and evaluation of policies. It is not solely about the collection of data, it can also take the form of regular meetings and reporting of research undertaken. Monitoring is not an end in itself but provides the data for the next cycle of policy screening.

## **Northern Ireland Act**

The Northern Ireland Act, implementing the Good Friday Agreement, received Royal Assent on 19 November 1998. Section 75 of the Act created the statutory equality duties.

### **Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission**

A statutory body established under Section 68 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, which works to ensure that the human rights of everyone in Northern Ireland are fully protected in law, policy and practice.

### **Northern Ireland Statistics & Research Agency (NISRA)**

The Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) is an Executive Agency within the Department of Finance and Personnel (DFP).

NISRA provides statistical and research information regarding Northern Ireland issues and provide registration services to the public in the most effective and efficient way.

### **OFMDFM**

The Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister is responsible for providing advice, guidance, challenge and support to other NI Civil Service Departments on Section 75 issues.

### **Policy**

The formal and informal decisions a public authority makes in relation to carrying out its duties. Defined in the New Oxford English Dictionary as 'a course or principle of action adopted or proposed by a government party, business or individual'. In the context of Section 75, the term **policies** cover all the ways in which a public authority carries out or proposes to carry out its functions relating to Northern Ireland. Policies include unwritten as well as written policies.

### **Positive action**

This phrase is not defined in any statute, but the Equality Commission understands it to mean any lawful action that a public authority might take for the purpose of promoting equality of opportunity for all persons in relation to employment or in accessing goods, facilities or services (such as health services, housing, education, justice, policing). It may involve adopting new policies, practices, or procedures; or changing or abandoning old ones. *Positive action* is not the same as *positive discrimination*.

Positive discrimination differs from positive action in that *positive action* involves the taking of lawful actions whereas *positive discrimination* involves the taking of unlawful actions. Consequently, *positive action* is by definition lawful whereas *positive discrimination* is unlawful.

### **Qualitative data**

Qualitative data refers to the experiences of individuals from their perspective, most often with less emphasis on numbers or statistical analysis. Consultations are more likely to yield qualitative than quantitative data.

### **Quantitative data**

Quantitative data refers to numbers, typically derived from either a population in general or samples of that population. This information is often analysed by either using descriptive statistics, which consider general profiles, distributions and trends in the data, or inferential statistics, which are used to determine 'significance' either in relationships or differences in the data.

## **Screening**

The procedure for identifying which policies will be subject to equality impact assessment, and how these equality impact assessments will be prioritised. The purpose of screening is to identify the policies which are likely to have a minor/major impact on equality of opportunity so that greatest resources can be devoted to improving these policies. Screening requires a systematic review of existing and proposed policies.

## **Schedule 9**

Schedule 9 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 sets out detailed provisions for the enforcement of the Section 75 statutory duties, including an outline of what should be included in an Equality Scheme.

## **Section 75**

Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act provides that each public authority is required, in carrying out its functions relating to Northern Ireland, 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 and sexual orientation;
- men and women generally;
- persons with a disability and persons without; and
- persons with dependants and persons without.

Without prejudice to these obligations, each public authority in carrying out its functions relating to Northern Ireland must also have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group.

## **Section 75 investigation**

An investigation carried out by the Equality Commission, under Schedule 9 of the NI Act 1998, arising from the failure of a public authority to comply with the commitments set out in its approved Equality Scheme.

There are two types of Equality Commission investigation:

1. An investigation of a complaint by an individual who claims to have been directly affected by the failure of a public authority to comply with its approved Equality Scheme;
2. An investigation initiated by the Commission, where it believes that a public authority may have failed to comply with its approved Equality Scheme.