

**STAFF COMMISSION FOR  
EDUCATION AND LIBRARY BOARDS**

**EQUALITY SCHEME**

**NORTHERN IRELAND ACT 1998  
SECTION 75  
STATUTORY EQUALITY OBLIGATIONS**

**Staff Commission for Education & Library Boards,  
Forestview, Purdy's Lane, Belfast BT8 7AR  
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February 2001**

# **EQUALITY SCHEME FOR THE STAFF COMMISSION FOR EDUCATION AND LIBRARY BOARDS**

## **FOREWORD BY THE CHAIRMAN AND CHIEF OFFICER/SECRETARY**

Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act requires public authorities to promote equality of opportunity and good relations. These new duties are designed, in particular, to make equality issues central to the whole range of public policy decision making. Public authorities will be required to submit "Equality Schemes" to the newly established Equality Commission for Northern Ireland.

The Staff Commission is fully committed to the fulfilment of the Section 75 obligations imposed by the Northern Ireland Act 1998. This Equality Scheme sets out how the Commission proposes to fulfil those obligations.

The Commission is committed to the allocation of necessary resources to ensure effective implementation of the Scheme. Internal arrangements will be put in place to monitor and review progress and to ensure that the duties are complied with effectively. The Commission is committed to the development and provision of a planned programme of communication and training on the Equality Scheme.

The Commission will consult with all those with a legitimate interest in the services that the Commission provides and careful consideration will be given to comments received during the consultation process. We hope that you will find this Scheme presented in such a way that it affords you the maximum opportunity to have a constructive input into its context. Alternative formats are available if you require. We look forward to hearing your views.

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**MAURICE MORONEY**  
Chairman

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**PATRICIA WEIR**  
Chief Officer/Secretary

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# STAFF COMMISSION FOR EDUCATION AND LIBRARY BOARDS

## Equality Scheme

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

**1.1** By virtue of Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 (the Act) the Staff Commission for Education and Library Boards ("the Commission") in carrying out all its functions, powers and duties relating to Northern Ireland is required to 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;
- d) between persons with dependants and persons without.

**1.2** Without prejudice to its obligations at paragraph 1.1 above, the Commission 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. The Commission shall include the promotion of good relations as part of the corporate planning process.

**1.3** The Commission is committed to the fulfilment of its Section 75 obligations throughout the organisation and will allocate the resources necessary, in terms of people, time and money, to ensure that the statutory duty is complied with.

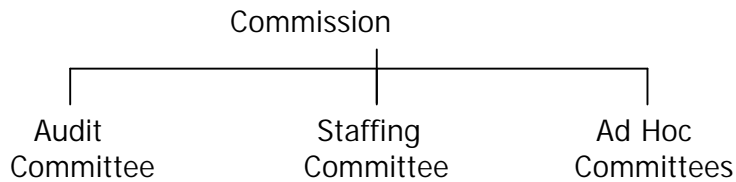
**1.4** This Equality Scheme sets out how the Commission proposes to fulfil the duties imposed by Section 75 and Schedule 9 of the Act.

### **2. ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE**

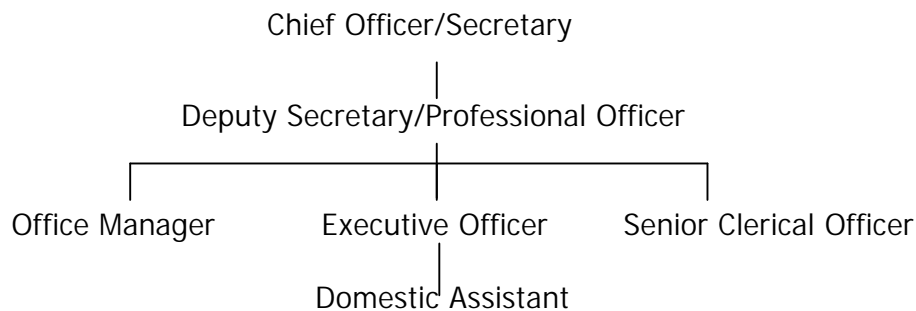
**2.1** The Commission is a body corporate which was established in 1972 under the provisions of Article 70 and Schedule 11 of the Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 1972 (now consolidated as Article 82 and Schedule 15 of the

Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 1986. The Commission was established for the purpose of exercising general oversight of matters connected with the recruitment, training and terms and conditions of employment of officers of boards and of making recommendations to boards on such matters.

**2.2** In order to carry out its statutory functions (which are outlined in Section 4 of this Scheme) the Commission has established the following Committee structure.



**2.3** The Commission has a small staff complement comprising 6 members of staff. The staffing structure is as follows:-



**2.4** The Chief Officer is responsible for strategic direction and advice to the Commission, for the day to day management of services and the longer term planning and allocation of resources. The Chairman is responsible for the overall delivery of the service.

**2.5** The Chief Officer has a personal responsibility to the Commission, as far as practicable, to ensure that the Commission fully complies with this Scheme. Each member of staff is personally responsible to the Chief Officer for ensuring, as far as practicable, that he/she fully complies with the Scheme. The Chief Officer has:-

- a. an advisory role ensuring priorities are identified;
- b. a priority setting role;

- c. a duty to keep the Chairman regularly informed of progress and problems in the implementation of the statutory duty.

Operational responsibility for the implementation of the Scheme rests with the Commission's Professional Officer Deirdre Vaughn.

- 2.6** As and when required the Commission will purchase services to assist the Chief Officer in carrying out the statutory responsibilities. For example the Commission may need to purchase research services when conducting impact assessments.
- 2.7** As part of the corporate planning process, objectives and targets relating to the statutory duty will be built into the corporate and annual operating plans. Progress on meeting objectives including those relating to the statutory duty will be monitored and reported upon by the Chief Officer to the Commission on a quarterly basis.
- 2.8** Where a policy under consideration by the Commission has the potential to have significant implications for equality of opportunity, it must be subject to a full impact assessment (see paragraph 6.2 for screening criteria and Annex 2). The Chief Officer has responsibility for ensuring that the screening process has been carried out and for reporting to the Commission on the procedure.
- 2.9** The Commission will:-
  - a. conduct an annual review of progress made in relation to compliance with the Scheme and statutory duty, including the duty to promote good relations;
  - b. forward a report of this review to the Equality Commission;
  - c. liaise with the Equality Commission with a view to ensuring that such progress is maintained;
  - d. details of progress each year will be contained in the Commission's annual report which will be made public.

### **3. CONSULTATION ON GENERAL ISSUES**

**3.1** The Commission is required to state its arrangements for consulting on matters to which an equality of opportunity promotional duty or a community relations promotional duty is likely to be relevant. The Commission is committed to carrying out consultation and in doing so it may use any of the following methods:-

- a. letters;
- b. meetings with the public, in groups or as individuals;
- c. standing or ad hoc consultative fora;
- d. attitude surveys of service users and potential service users.
- e. consultative panels;
- f. press releases/advertisements, including specialist publications where appropriate;
- g. internet;
- h. direct invitation to groups.

The Commission shall consult the Equality Commission and other public authorities and voluntary, community, trade unions and other groups who have a legitimate, particular interest in the work of the Commission and/or the impact of the Commission's policies on equality of opportunity and good relations, Annex 1 of this Scheme refers.

The Commission will ensure training is provided for those engaged in the consultation exercise to ensure effective communication with consultees.

**3.2** In choosing the appropriate method of consultation, costs (in terms of time, money and people) will need to be weighed against the intended purpose and outcome.

**3.3** The Commission will ensure that there are no barriers to the consultation process. Information will be available on request in accessible formats such as braille, disc and audiocassette and in minority languages to meet the needs of those who are not fluent in English. The Commission will ensure that systems are put in place to ensure that such information is available in accessible formats in a timely fashion. Specific consideration will be given on how best to communicate with young people

and those with learning disabilities. The Commission will contribute to an Inter-Education and Library Board Working Group comprised of senior officers which has been established to prepare guidance on this issue.

**3.4** The Commission will commence consultation as soon as possible to allow adequate time for groups to consult amongst themselves as part of the process of forming a view. The Commission will aim to allow an eight-week consultation period. Where it has not been possible to comply with this requirement the Commission will monitor and keep under review such circumstances and justify its actions, in the Commission's Annual Review. The Commission will also be sensitive to the different needs and customs of consultees. When public or other meetings with consultees are being organised the Commission will consider the following:

- a. time of day when the meeting is held;
- b. the appropriateness of the venue, in particular, whether it can be accessed by those with disabilities;
- c. how the meeting is to be run;
- d. whether a separate meeting for particular groups, for example, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender (LGBT) is necessary;
- e. the use of appropriate language and the format of information;
- f. interpretation including whether a signer is necessary;
- g. the provision of childcare.

Information will be made available to ensure meaningful consultation. This will include relevant quantitative and qualitative data, and any commissioned consultants' reports.

#### **4. THE COMMISSION - ITS FUNCTIONS AND POLICIES**

**4.1.** The Staff Commission for Education and Library Boards was established in 1972 under the provisions of Article 70 and Schedule 11 of the Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 1972 (now consolidated as Article 82 and Schedule 15 of the Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 1986).

The terms of reference of the Commission are to exercise general oversight of matters connected with the recruitment, training and terms and conditions of employment of officers of boards and to make recommendations to boards on such matters.

## **4.2 Statutory Functions**

**4.2.1** The functions of the Staff Commission are set out in Schedule 15 of the Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 1986 as follows:-

- a. to make recommendations regarding the training of officers of boards;
- b. to recommend appointment and promotion procedures for officers of boards and to establish a Code of Procedure for securing fair and equal consideration of applications to boards by persons seeking to be employed as officers of boards and fair and equal treatment of persons who are so employed;
- c. to establish advisory panels for the purpose of giving advice to boards on the suitability of applicants for appointment to such offices as the Commission considers appropriate;
- d. to ensure that suitable machinery exists for negotiating the terms and conditions of employment of all officers of boards;
- e. to perform such other functions as the Department of Education may from time to time assign it.

**4.3** In order to carry out its functions relating to Northern Ireland the Commission has adopted the following policies.

### **4.3.1 Training**

To formulate training policy based on discussions with the boards and through participation on the Regional Training Unit's (RTU) Consultative Committee. The Commission's policy is to make recommendations according to identified training needs in relation to specific initiatives and to pilot and deliver training programmes where appropriate.

#### **4.3.2 Appointments and Promotion Procedures**

The Commission's policy is to ensure that its Code of Employment and Promotion Procedures is effective in ensuring equality of opportunity on a multi-dimensional basis for those who are employed as well as those who seek to be employed within the Education and Library Service. To ensure that the Code is adhered to Commission staff act as observers on selection panels throughout the boards.

The Commission's policy in relation to fair and equal treatment is to ensure that equality issues are reflected in its Code and all other Commission recommendations.

#### **4.3.3 Advisory Panels**

The Commission's policy is to appoint assessors with relevant expertise and seniority to give advice to boards on the suitability of applicants for appointment to such offices as the Commission and boards consider appropriate. A list of assessors is kept and reviewed regularly.

#### **4.3.4 Negotiating Machinery**

The Commission establishes negotiating machinery and monitors the effectiveness of that machinery. The machinery consists of the following:-

- a. Joint Negotiating Council and Ad hoc Committees thereof;
- b. Executive Committee;
- c. Senior Management Pay Review Panel.

The Commission's policy is to ensure that the negotiating machinery is representative of both management and staff sides. In relation to the Senior Management Pay Review Panel the policy is to appoint an independent Chair, four other independent members and representatives from the trade union and management sides.

It is Commission policy to provide secretariat and research facilities for the above committees and to contribute to the formulation of joint agreements and policies affecting the terms and conditions of service of the boards' non-teaching staff.

#### **4.3.5 Employment of Commission Staff**

Commission staff are appointed on the same terms and conditions of service as officers of Education and Library Boards as determined by the Joint Negotiating Council for the Education and Library Boards. The Commission contributes to the formulation of agreements/policies at the Joint Negotiating Council and adopts those policies for implementation within the Commission. The Commission will co-operate with the boards in the screening of employment policies and will initiate a review of the Code of Employment and Promotion Procedures.

#### **4.3.6 Refer Non-compliance to the Department**

The policy is to refer all non-compliance with Commission recommendations to the Department of Education.

#### **4.3.7 Procurement Policies**

The Commission's procurement policy is dictated by Government Accounting Northern Ireland and by relevant E C directives and guidance from the Government Purchasing Agency.

### **5. ARRANGEMENTS FOR ASSESSING COMPLIANCE WITH SECTION 75 DUTIES.**

- 5.1** The Commission will assess over a 5 year period how each of its policies can contribute to the promotion of equality of opportunity and the promotion of good relations within the terms of Section 75 of the Act.

### **6. SCREENING AND TIMETABLING**

- 6.1** In fulfilling its statutory obligations the Commission intends to adopt a four stage approach:-

- Stage 1 - Screening of Policies.
- Stage 2 - Timetable for setting priorities.
- Stage 3 - Consultation.
- Stage 4 - Detailed report in the Annual Report to the Equality Commission.

## **6.2 Stage 1**

### ***Screening of Policies.***

**6.2.1** The Commission intends to screen its policies in order to determine which would require a fuller equality analysis in the form of an impact assessment.

**6.2.2** The screening criteria which the Commission will use are as follows:-

- Is there any evidence of higher or lower participation or uptake by different groups?
- Is there any evidence that different groups have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to the particular policy?
- Is there an opportunity to better promote equality of opportunity or better community relations by altering the policy or working with others in government or in the larger community?
- Have consultations with relevant groups, organisations or individuals indicated that particular policies create problems which are specific to them?

**6.2.3** The Commission will subject all its policies detailed in section 4 to these screening criteria within 3 months from submitting this Scheme to the Equality Commission. If the answer to any of the criteria set out above is positive consideration will be given whether to subject the policy to an equality impact assessment as described more fully at Annex 2.

## **6.3 Stage 2**

### ***Setting priorities for impact assessment***

**6.3.1** Having screened its policies as outlined in Stage 1 the Commission will prioritise its policies for equality impact assessment.

**6.3.2** The Commission would propose to prioritise policies for impact assessments based upon the following factors:-

- social need;
- affect on people's daily lives;

- affect on economic, social and human rights.

#### **6.4 Stage 3**

##### ***Consultation***

- 6.4.1** The Commission will carry out Stages 1 and 2 within 3 months of submitting its Scheme to the Equality Commission. It will then consult with the organisations listed at Annex 1 on the results of the screening and the timetabling/prioritisation exercise. The Commission will allow 8 weeks for this consultation process.

#### **6.5 Stage 4**

##### ***Report of the screening exercise***

- 6.5.1** The Commission will prepare a detailed Report of the screening and consultation exercise in the annual report to the Equality Commission. The Report will detail the policies proposed by those consulted as appropriate for impact assessment which have not been so included and why. The timetable arrived at following consultation will be included in the Report of the screening exercise.

#### **6.6 New Policies**

- 6.6.1** New policies may be developed during the 5-year period, which cannot yet be specified. Any new policies will be screened for fuller impact assessment using the criteria identified at paragraph 6.2 above.

### **7. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENTS**

- 7.1** The Commission intends to carry out equality impact assessments for assessing and consulting on the likely impact of the policies adopted or proposed to be adopted on the promotion of equality of opportunity and for monitoring any adverse impact of policies adopted or proposed to be adopted by the Commission on the promotion of equality of opportunity.

- 7.2** The Commission in making any decision with respect to a policy adopted or proposed to be adopted by it shall take into account any equality impact assessment and consultation carried out in relation to the policy.

**7.3** The methodology, which will be used for an equality impact assessment, is set out in Annex 2.

## **8. CONSULTATION ON IMPACT ASSESSMENTS**

**8.1** Consultation will take place with the relevant interest groups as well as the Equality Commission, other public bodies, voluntary, community, trade union and other groups directly affected by the policy/subject matter under review. The Commission will use such methods of consultation as are described in 3.1.

## **9. MONITORING**

**9.1** Knowledge of the uptake of services provided by the Commission and the impact of its policies on the different groups within the Section 75 categories will be of assistance in assessing progress towards equality of opportunity. The Commission will establish a system to monitor the impact of policies in order to identify their effects on relevant groups. Within one year of approval of this Scheme, the Commission will assess the extent of existing monitoring and the scope for extending it. In addition to the value of any further information required for assessing progress towards equality of opportunity, this review will also take into account the following factors:-

- resource implications;
- readiness of the public to supply information;
- availability of proxy measures.

**9.2** In some cases an equality impact assessment may identify an anticipated differential adverse impact on particular groups within the Section 75 category. Assuming that no alternative policy is feasible, steps should be taken, wherever possible, to mitigate such anticipated adverse impact. The Commission may, in these circumstances, commission special monitoring to confirm the extent of the adverse impact and/or the success of any mitigating measures. Information collected in this special monitoring would be taken into account in any future review of the policy.

**9.3** In conducting monitoring the Commission may use the following data sources:-

- Information from the Department of Education, Department of Culture Arts and Leisure, Department of Further and Higher Education and Training and the Education and Library Boards in Northern Ireland.
- Comparable information from Great Britain or Europe.
- Census.
- Labour Force Survey.
- Continuous Household Survey.
- Pressure group data.
- Statutory Agencies.
- Deprivation studies and other appropriate indices.
- Published research reports.
- Community views.

This list is not exhaustive.

The Commission will review on an annual basis the results of monitoring. If 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 Commission will ensure that the policy is revised.

## **10. PUBLICATION OF RESULTS OF EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENTS AND OF MONITORING OF ANY ADVERSE IMPACT OF POLICIES**

**10.1** The Commission will make publicly available the outcome of any equality impact assessment and of any monitoring undertaken under section 9 above. Such reports will be publicised through press releases and/or the website ([www.staffcom.org.uk](http://www.staffcom.org.uk)). The Commission will also inform interested bodies when this information is available. The published information will include:

- the aims of the policy to which the assessment relates;
- details of any consideration given by the Commission to measures which might mitigate any adverse impact of that policy on the promotion of equality of opportunity;
- associated available monitoring data;

- details of any consideration given by the Commission to alternative policies which might better achieve the promotion of equality of opportunity.

**10.2** Such information will be made available on request in accessible formats such as braille, disc and audiocassette and in minority languages to meet the needs of those who are not fluent in English. The Commission will ensure that systems are put in place to ensure that such information is available in accessible formats in a timely fashion.

## **11. TRAINING**

**11.1** The Commission is committed to the development and provision of an effective communication and training programme on the content of the Equality Scheme.

**11.2** Following the receipt of further guidance on training, the Commission will be drawing up a planned programme of its delivery in line with the Equality Commission's published guidelines and advice. The key training objectives of this training plan will be:-

- ♦ to prepare a detailed training plan for all of the Commission's staff and members over the five-year period to which the Equality Scheme refers, which will aim to achieve the objectives outlined below;
- ♦ to raise awareness of current anti-discrimination legislation in Northern Ireland, including the provisions of Section 75, Schedule 9 and Section 76 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. This should include an explanation of the duties and their implications for all employees;
- ♦ to provide those employees involved in the screening of policies with the necessary skills and knowledge to do this work effectively;
- ♦ to provide those employees involved in the equality impact assessment of policies with the necessary skills and knowledge to do this work effectively;
- ♦ to provide those employees who deal with complaints in relation to the implementation of the Commission's Scheme, with the necessary skills and knowledge to investigate and monitor complaints effectively;

- ♦ to provide those employees involved in the consultation processes with the necessary skills and knowledge to do this work effectively;
- ♦ to provide those employees involved in the implementation and monitoring of the effective implementation of the Commission's Equality Scheme to do this work effectively;
- ♦ to provide more focused training for specialist staff;
- ♦ to evaluate the extent to which all participants in this training programme have acquired the necessary skills and knowledge to achieve each of the above objectives.

**11.3** Within one year of the approval of the Scheme all staff and Commission members will be trained in the Equality Scheme. All new staff and newly appointed Commission members will be informed of the requirements of Section 75 in their induction training. The Commission will also supply copies of this Scheme to all Commission members and staff. The Chief Officer will demonstrate her personal commitment to implementation of the Scheme by publishing the Scheme and engaging in consultation/communication with external groups.

## **12. PUBLIC ACCESS TO INFORMATION SERVICES**

**12.1** In disseminating information through the local press, the Commission will ensure that press releases and public advertisements are accessible in a way which ensures equality of opportunity. The Commission will also ensure that information is available on request in accessible formats such as braille, disc and audiocassette and in minority languages to meet the needs of those who are not fluent in English. The Commission will ensure that systems are put in place to ensure that such information is available in accessible formats in a timely fashion. The Commission will monitor and review access to its information and services.

## **13. PUBLICATION OF THE SCHEME**

**13.1** The Commission will publish its scheme by means of press release, a prominent advertisement in the press, the Internet and by providing a copy to the groups mentioned in Annex 1.

**13.2** The Commission will ensure that its Scheme is accessible to all those with a legitimate interest using the following media as appropriate:-

- a. Hard Print Copy
- b. On Floppy Disk
- c. Audiocassette
- d. Braille
- e. Web Site: [www.staffcom.org.uk](http://www.staffcom.org.uk)

**13.3** If the Commission becomes aware that individuals or groups have difficulty in accessing the Scheme the Commission will, in consultation with those affected, endeavour to address these difficulties.

#### **14. ARRANGEMENTS FOR DEALING WITH COMPLAINTS**

**14.1** Where the Commission investigates a complaint it will seek to provide a substantive response to a complaint normally within one month from the date of receipt of the written complaint. The Commission will consider any special needs of persons making a complaint e.g. interpreter fees. Where a complainant claims to have been directly affected by the failure of the Commission to comply with this Scheme, the complainant will be informed of his/her right to refer the matter to the Equality Commission.

**14.2** The Commission will monitor complaints that it has not complied with this Scheme. The Commission will investigate the complaint or give the complainant reasons for not investigating it.

**14.3** The Chief Officer, Mrs P Weir, will be the central contact for complaints. She can be contacted at:

Staff Commission for Education and Library Boards  
Forestview, Purdy's Lane, Belfast, BT8 7AR

Telephone	028 9049 1461
Facsimilie	028 9049 1744
E-mail	patricia.weir@scelb.org.uk

## **15. REVIEWING THE EQUALITY SCHEME**

- 15.1** The Commission is committed to conducting a review of this Scheme within 5 years of its submission to the Equality Commission and it will forward a report of this review to the Equality Commission.

**List of Consultees**

- ❑ Action Mental Health
- ❑ Age Concern Northern Ireland
- ❑ Baptist Union of Ireland
- ❑ Belfast City Council
- ❑ Cara Friend
- ❑ Children's Law Centre
- ❑ Chinese Chamber of Commerce
- ❑ Chinese Welfare Association
- ❑ Chief Executives' Forum
- ❑ Church of Ireland
- ❑ Coalition on Sexual Orientation
- ❑ Congregational Union of Ireland
- ❑ Committee on the Administration of Justice
- ❑ Community Relations Council
- ❑ Council for Catholic Maintained Schools
- ❑ Department of Culture Arts and Leisure
- ❑ Department of Education
- ❑ Department of Further and Higher Education and Training
- ❑ Department of Social Development
- ❑ Disability Action
- ❑ Education and Library Boards
- ❑ Elim Pentecostal
- ❑ Equality Commission
- ❑ Free Presbyterian Church of Ulster
- ❑ Gaeloiliuin
- ❑ Help the Aged, Northern Ireland
- ❑ Methodist Church in Ireland
- ❑ Multicultural Group – Windsor Women's Centre
- ❑ Multi-Cultural Resource Centre

- ❑ National Union of Students
- ❑ Northern Ireland African Cultural Centre
- ❑ Northern Ireland Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders
- ❑ Northern Ireland Committee, Irish Congress of Trade Unions (NIC-ICTU)
- ❑ Northern Ireland Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment
- ❑ Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education
- ❑ Northern Ireland Council for Ethic Minorities
- ❑ Northern Ireland Housing Executive
- ❑ Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission
- ❑ Northern Ireland Youth Forum
- ❑ Political Parties
  - Alliance Party
  - Democratic Unionist Party
  - Northern Ireland Unionist Party
  - Northern Ireland Women's Coalition
  - Progressive Unionist Party
  - Sinn Fein
  - Social Democratic Labour Party
  - Ulster Democratic Party
  - Ulster Unionist Assembly Party
  - Ulster Unionist Party
  - United Kingdom Unionist Party
- ❑ Presbyterian Church in Ireland
- ❑ Putting Children First
- ❑ Roman Catholic Church
- ❑ Royal National Institute for Deaf People (NI)
- ❑ Royal National Institute for the Blind (NI)
- ❑ Save the Children
- ❑ Staff Commission Members
- ❑ Trade Unions
  - AEEU (Amalgamated Electrical & Engineering Union)
  - APEX (Association of Professional, Executive, Clerical & Computer Staff)

- AT&GWU (Amalgamated Transport & General Workers Union)
  - GMB (General Municipal Boilermakers)
  - NAEIAC (National Assoc of Educational Inspectors, Advisers & Consultants)
  - NIPSA (Northern Ireland Public Service Alliance)
  - MSF (Manufacturing, Science and Finance)
  - UCATT (Union of Construction, Allied Trades & Technicians)
  - UNISON (Amalgamation of NALGO, COHSE & NUPE)
- ❑ Traveller Movement (NI)
  - ❑ Union of Students in Ireland
  - ❑ Universities
  - ❑ West Belfast Economic Forum
  - ❑ Women's Forum Northern Ireland
  - ❑ Women's Support Network
  - ❑ Youth Action Northern Ireland
  - ❑ Youth Council for Northern Ireland
  - ❑ Youth Link Northern Ireland
  - ❑ Youthnet

This list is not exhaustive and may be amended in the light of experience. If your group has not been included and you wish to be considered for inclusion please contact the Commission's Professional Officer, Deirdre Vaughn at

Telephone	028 9049 1461
Facsimilie	028 9049 1744
E-mail	<a href="mailto:deirdre.vaughn@scelb.org.uk">deirdre.vaughn@scelb.org.uk</a>
Address	Staff Commission for Education and Library Boards Forestview, Purdy's Lane, Belfast, BT8 7AR

### **Methodology for an equality impact assessment**

Having screened its policies (as outlined in Section 6), the Commission will determine which policies will be included for a fuller impact assessment and will determine a timetable for carrying out impact assessments. In addition when the Commission is considering a new policy it will determine whether the policy has the potential to have significant implications for equality of opportunity and if so it will conduct a full impact assessment. When undertaking impact assessments, the Commission will follow the process set out below:-

#### **i. Available data**

The Commission will examine any data it already has, for example, participation records or market research already undertaken. The Commission will work with the Education and Library Boards on this matter to ensure the most effective and efficient use of public resources and access to the optimum information.

The Commission will collect and analyse existing quantitative data by relevant characteristics as a minimum base from which to judge outcomes.

The Commission will use qualitative or evaluative research or information gathered by Government and bodies such as Education and Library Boards, Schools, Voluntary and Trade Union organisations.

The Commission will identify where more detailed data are needed in order to have the optimum information on which to base decisions.

If necessary new data will be commissioned whether qualitative or quantitative.

Issues of particular sensitivity may arise when dealing with sexual orientation and disability and discussions and information gathering may be the appropriate method of obtaining information.

## **ii. Assessment of Impacts**

The Commission will use the information gathered to decide whether there is or is likely to be a differential impact whether direct or indirect upon the relevant group or groups. If an adverse effect can be identified the Commission will need to assess whether the policy is unlawfully discriminatory taking into account that some policies are intended to increase equality of opportunity by requiring or permitting affirmative or positive action to address disadvantages. The Commission will decide how to ensure that it acts lawfully. Even if the policy is not unlawful the Commission will consider what to do in light of the adverse impact identified. The Commission will consider:-

- a. If the policy is intended specifically to address the needs of a particular group, it may well be justifiable, indeed necessary in order to promote the equality of opportunity of that group.
- b. If (a) is not the case, the Commission will consider whether there is any alternative measure which would achieve the end desired without the differential impact identified.

## **iii. Consideration of measures which might mitigate any adverse impact and alternative policies.**

The Commission will consider measures which might mitigate against adverse impact and any alternative policies which might better achieve the promotion of the equality of opportunity. The Commission will show in its policy assessments the detail of mitigation considered and any implementation. In addition clear evidence of the consideration of the impact of alternatives will be contained within the assessment.

## **iv. Consultation**

Consultation will be carried out with relevant interest groups as well as the Equality Commission, other public bodies, voluntary, community, trade union and other groups with a legitimate interest in the matter. However, potential consultees will also include the actual groups/persons affected by the policy in question. This will include those whom the Commission believes are directly affected by the policy to be

assessed. The Commission will choose a method which it believes provides a fair opportunity to present pertinent information and to provide a sound basis for decision without rendering decision making unmanageable.

**v. Decisions made by the Commission**

The Commission shall take into account any equality impact assessment and consultation in making any decisions with respect to the policy adopted or proposed to be adopted by it.

**vi. Publication of results of equality impact assessments**

The Commission will publish the results of equality impact assessments and this publication will accord with the format outlined in paragraphs 3.3 and 10.1 of this Scheme.

**vii. Monitoring for adverse impact in the future and publication of the results of such monitoring**

The Commission will monitor the impact of its services and key policies for adverse impact in the future. The Commission will use those methods specified for monitoring in section 9 of this Scheme. Monitoring will be carried out in a systematic manner and the results will be widely and openly published.

## **Summary of Consultation on the Draft Equality Scheme**

The Commission has consulted all the organisations which were listed in Annex 1 of its Draft Scheme. The Commission also placed an advertisement in the local press. Responses were received from the following bodies:

- ◆ Action Mental Health
- ◆ Belfast City Council
- ◆ Council for Catholic Maintained Schools
- ◆ Council for Curriculum, Examinations and Assessments
- ◆ Coalition on Sexual Orientation
- ◆ Committee on the Administration of Justice
- ◆ Community Relations Council
- ◆ Department of Culture Arts & Leisure
- ◆ Department of Education
- ◆ Department of Social Development
- ◆ Disability Action
- ◆ Education and Library Boards
- ◆ Equality Commission
- ◆ Newry & Mourne HSS Trust
- ◆ Northern Ireland Association for the Care and resettlement of Offenders
- ◆ Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities
- ◆ Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education
- ◆ Northern Ireland Housing Executive
- ◆ Royal National Institute for Deaf People
- ◆ West Belfast Economic Forum
- ◆ Women's Forum Northern Ireland

Trade Unions and Education and Library Boards are consulted through the Commission's negotiating machinery.

The Commission is grateful to those who provided responses to its Draft Scheme.

The substantive comment covered a range of issues including the following:-

- the Scheme should follow more closely the wording of the Guidelines;
- training arrangements should be elaborated upon and include more focused training for specialist staff;
- there should be a summary of the timetable for implementation of the Scheme;
- the consultation process should be elaborated upon and the list of bodies to be consulted should be extended;
- groups as well as individuals should be permitted to use the complaint procedure.

The Commission has considered these general comments and amendments have been made where deemed appropriate to the Scheme. The following paragraphs in the Draft Scheme were amended as a result of the consultation process:

1.2; 1.3; 2.9; 3.1; 3.3; 3.4; 6.2.3; 6.4.1; 9.3; 11.1; 12.1; 13.1; 13.2; 14.1; Annexe 1 and Annex 2.

## Timetable

The following timetable summaries the measures which the Commission plans to take during the 5 years following the commencement of the Equality Scheme:-

### **Year 1 (July 2000 – June 2001)**

- ◆ Screening of policies;
- ◆ Preparation of timetable for setting priorities;
- ◆ Consultation on the screening process;
- ◆ Initiation of complaints procedure;
- ◆ Review of information sources and data;
- ◆ Review of monitoring arrangements;
- ◆ Review of arrangements for providing information to the public;
- ◆ Training of staff and members;
- ◆ Publication of the scheme;
- ◆ Equality impact assessments;
- ◆ Quarterly reports to the Commission;
- ◆ Preparation of annual report to Equality Commission.

### **Year 2 (July 2001 – June 2002)**

- ◆ Further screening of policies where appropriate;
- ◆ Equality impact assessments;
- ◆ Training of staff;
- ◆ Quarterly reports to the Commission;
- ◆ Preparation of annual report to Equality Commission.

### **Year 3 (July 2002 – June 2003)**

- ◆ Further screening of policies where appropriate;
- ◆ Equality impact assessments;
- ◆ Training of staff;
- ◆ Quarterly reports to the Commission;

- ◆ Preparation of annual report to Equality Commission.

#### **Year 4 (July 2003 – June 2004)**

- ◆ Further screening of policies where appropriate;
- ◆ Equality impact assessments;
- ◆ Training of staff;
- ◆ Quarterly reports to the Commission;
- ◆ Preparation of annual report to Equality Commission.

#### **Year 5 (July 2004 – June 2005)**

- ◆ Further screening of policies where appropriate;
- ◆ Equality impact assessments;
- ◆ Training of staff;
- ◆ Quarterly reports to the Commission;
- ◆ Preparation of annual report to Equality Commission
- ◆ Consultation on effectiveness of the Equality Scheme;
- ◆ Review of the Equality Scheme

**April 2000**

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