

AGREED TERMS OF REFERENCE:

That the Forum will meet twice per annum (late May and September) before and after the publication of the public authorities' Annual Reports to the Equality Commission on the implementation of the Equality Schemes. Further meetings may be called to discuss specific issues. The Forum will provide a formal working link between public authorities in the education sector and the community and voluntary and trade union sectors and statutory equality authorities namely, the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, the Community Relations Council and the Human Rights Commission.

APPOINTMENT OF STEERING GROUP

At the inaugural meeting, it was agreed that a balance needed to be struck between being inclusive and being able to function effectively. Members agreed that if the Steering Group was too large it may be less effective. They also agreed that a small group with rotational membership and a good feedback mechanism should be established. It was agreed that the officers would seek to establish a Steering Group taking account of these factors.

Proposals for the appointment of the Steering Group:

Public Authorities:

- Department of Education, one representative
- five Education & Library Boards, one representative
- smaller public bodies, namely, CCMS, CCEA, Youth Council, NICIE, Staff Commission, one representative

Note: the Boards/smaller public body representatives would rotate on an annual basis.

Trade Unions:

- Teachers Negotiating Council and Joint Negotiating Council, one representative

Note: rotational membership on an annual basis between the two Councils.

Community & Voluntary Sector:

(Age) Save the Children, Youthnet, Children's Law Centre and Age Related Reference Group, two representatives

(Disability) Disability Action, MENCAP, one representative

(Race) NICEM, Chinese Welfare Association, Indian Community Centre, one representative

(Sexual Orientation) CoSO, one representative

(Religion) Inter-Faith Forum, one representative

(Gender) Women's Support Network, one representative

(Dependants) Carers Northern Ireland, one representative

Note: Where there is more than one group mentioned membership will rotate.

All views are important, if your sector or group is not mentioned and you feel it should be, please contact us. We have tried to ensure that Groups with an obvious interest in education matters are included and to fulfil our mandate of inclusively v effectiveness.

Proposals for the operation of the Steering Group:

- all Forum members will be advised who is represented on the Steering Group and when meetings are scheduled. This will allow members of the Forum to contact the representative of their sector and/or the Secretary to ask for items to be considered;
- a user-friendly leaflet will be issued after each meeting to consult and/or update members on the work of the Steering Group;
- all minutes, when approved, will be available on a designated website and/or in hard copy to members of the Forum.

Please let us know what you think of these proposals. Contact details for all of the officers are on the front cover of this leaflet.

Note: The Forum has agreed that a review will be carried out after a two year period to consider its effectiveness.

WHO ATTENDED THE MEETING?

41 people participated in the inaugural meeting, attendance was evenly divided between the community/voluntary and trade union sectors and the public authorities represented in education.

WHAT ELSE HAPPENED AT THE MEETING?

Philomena McDermott, Anti Bullying Strategy, Cross-Phase Adviser, Western Education and Library Board outlined the Board's three year Anti-Bullying Strategy. She explained that the strategy had two strands:

- Prevention – Proactive strategies
- Intervention – Reactive strategies to support both the child being bullied and the child who is doing the bullying.

Dame Joan Harbison, Chief Commissioner, Equality Commission addressed the Forum and endorsed the collaborative nature of the initiative she said that it “would build on the tradition of joint working on equality issues within the education sector.

WHAT'S NEXT?

The Steering Group's first task is to prepare a snap shot of what's happening across the education service in implementing the Equality Schemes with particular attention being paid to the equality impact assessment timetables.

WHAT ISSUES WOULD YOU LIKE TO HAVE CONSIDERED?

Produced by:
Department of Education, five Education and Library Boards,
Staff Commission for Education and Library Boards, CCMS, Youth Council and CCEA

Joint Consultative Forum

Education Sector

Quarterly Update
&

Invitation to Comment on
the Arrangements for
the Steering Group

APPOINTMENT OF OFFICERS

Tansy Hutchinson Policy Officer

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Congratulations to Tansy and John, who were appointed Joint Chairs of the Forum at the meeting on 30 September 2004.

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Deirdre was appointed Secretary.

Please contact any of the officers if you wish to feed back on the issues raised in this leaflet.

Deirdre Vaughn Senior Principal Officer - Equality

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