

Workshop on the Education Authorities' Five Year Review of Equality Schemes

Aim: To provide an opportunity for affected representative groups to participate in the review process.

Full programme is attached, the workshops will consider:-

- Workshop 1 - Screening and Impact Assessment
- Workshop 2 - Engagement and Consultation
- Workshop 3 - Training
- Workshop 4 - Impacts and Outcomes

In each of the workshops there will be an opportunity to discuss:

- what has been achieved;
- what remains to be done;
- how do we build on our success; and
- how can we meet the challenges identified.

Presentations by Education & Library Boards on:

Sharing of Services:

John Curran (Joint Chair) in his presentation reported that the Boards shared a wide range of services such as:-

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| • Regional Training Unit | • Inter-Board Solicitors Unit |
| • Inter-Board Services Unit | • Student Support |
| • Negotiating Machinery for non-teacher staff | • Negotiating Machinery for teaching staff |
| • Electronic Libraries for Northern Ireland | • Payroll system common to all Boards |
| • Finance system common to all Boards | • Manhattan Project - Five Board Estate Management Project |

The Boards are currently working on a range of bilateral projects for shared services. John indicated that while there were a number of views on how best to take forward further collaboration it was expected that over the next few months greater clarification on the way forward, post the Review announcement, would be available. In this context it was concluded that there would be considerable merit in inviting the Department to discuss the implications of the Review for the education sector at the next meeting.

Boards' Current Financial State & Projected Financial Position

Terry Heron, Chief Finance Officer - Southern Education & Library Board, provided an overview of the Boards' current financial state and projected financial position. While the presentation was based on Southern Board figures the situation is similar across the five Boards. The purpose of his presentation was to explain:

- the Northern Ireland Draft Priorities and Budget Consultation 2006-08;
- the Indicative 2006/07 funding for Education.

In summarising the position Terry said that on top of the £30m cuts imposed on school services in the current financial year, based on the indicative budget figures, cuts in school and library services would be required in 2006/07.

New Post-Primary Arrangements and Proposal for a draft Education (NI) Order

The Department of Education has published a summary of the responses to the consultation on the new admissions arrangements for post-primary schools. It has also published for consultation a Proposal for a draft Education (NI) Order, an Explanatory Memorandum and a Response Booklet. The closing date for comments is 7 March 2006. Copies of the draft Order and Explanatory Memorandum are available on www.deni.gov.uk.

Research into Identifying Best Practice in Promoting Equality in Schools

Catriona Campbell from the National Foundation for Educational Research Centre at Queens reported that the Centre had been commissioned by the Equality Commission to undertake a research project to identify a range of workable and realistic options to further equality in schools in Northern Ireland. A public consultation exercise to get views on the best ways to mainstream equality in schools will shortly take place. Further information is available on: http://www.qub.ac.uk/nfer/research/project_outlines/project_outline_ecni.htm.

Anti-Bullying Policies in Schools

Research Commissioned by the Department of Education

Gerry McAlleavy - University of Ulster outlined the research project which the University of Ulster was currently conducting on behalf of the Department of Education into the nature and extent of bullying in Northern Ireland schools. He explained that the Department had asked that the research pay particular attention to the Section 75 categories.

Anti-Bullying Forum's Initial Three Year Strategy

David Simpson - Save the Children outlined the background to the formation of the Anti-Bullying Forum, its vision and mission statement. He also provided information on:

- the Forum's membership;
- its overall aims; and
- its key strategy elements for 2005 - 08.

Revision of Religious Education Core Syllabus

The Department of Education has indicated that a twelve week consultation exercise will commence in January 2006 in relation to the EQIA on the Revision of Religious Education Core Syllabus.

Review of the Department of Education's Equality Scheme Timetable

The Department has indicated that it is currently analysing the feedback received during the consultation process on its revised Policy Screening and EIQA Timetable. The Department anticipates that its new EQIA timetable will be confirmed shortly.

Minutes of the Joint Consultative Forum Meeting – 30 November 2005

The drafting of these minutes are at an advanced stage. It is hoped to have a copy issued to you shortly. The minutes will contain more information on what transpired at the meeting.

Produced by:
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Joint
Consultative
Forum

Education Sector

Quarterly Update

Joint Consultative Forum
Meeting

Antrim Board Centre
30 November 2005

FIVE YEAR REVIEW - WORKSHOP 23 JANUARY 2006

The Equality Commission's Guidance on the Five Year Review of Equality Schemes by public authorities states that *"it is important that engagement is maintained with Section 75 umbrella groups and that any general consultation mechanisms e.g., equality forums, sectoral networks, customer panels etc. are exploited to maximise the effect of the Five Year Review."*

To this end it was agreed at the Joint Consultative Forum (JCF) meeting held on 30 November 2005 that a workshop be organised, *under the auspices of the JCF*, to allow consultees an opportunity to input to the five year reviews of the public authorities within the education sector.

In our last leaflet we provided the submission dates for the reviews by public authorities. Due to the different deadlines not all public authorities will have their draft available at the workshop. However, to inform the consultation process all public authorities will be represented and an exchange of views on all key aspects of the implementation of the Equality Schemes will take place. A draft core document for the Boards/Staff Commission has been issued.

The workshop has been organised for Monday, 23 January 2006 - details overleaf.

Availability to attend:

To facilitate us in making the arrangements for the workshop, please complete the attached reply slip.