

# **Equality Scheme**

## **Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council**



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

**This document is available in a range of formats on  
request. Please contact us with your requirements. (see  
page 9 for contact details)**

**Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council  
Island Civic Centre  
The Island  
Lisburn  
BT27 4RL**

**Reviewed 2020. Original scheme approved by the Equality  
Commission for Northern Ireland 25 March 2015.**

## **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 regard to the desirability of promoting good relations across a range of categories outlined in the Act.**

**In our equality scheme we set out how Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council proposes to fulfil the Section 75 statutory duties.**

**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 our effective compliance with the Section 75 statutory duties and for monitoring and reviewing our progresss.**

**We will develop and deliver a programme of communication and training with the aim of ensuring that all our staff and Elected Members are made fully aware of our equality scheme and understand the commitments and obligations within it. We will develop a programme of awareness raising for our consultees on the Section 75 statutory duties and our commitments in our equality scheme.**

**We the Mayor and Chief Executive Officer of Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council are fully committed to effectively fulfilling our Section 75 statutory duties across all our functions (including service provision, employment and procurement) through the effective implementation of our equality scheme.**

**We realise the important role that the community and voluntary sector and the general public have to play to ensure the Section 75 statutory duties are effectively implemented. Our equality scheme demonstrates how determined we are to ensure there are opportunities, for people affected by our work, to positively influence how we carry out our functions in line with our Section 75 statutory duties. It also offers the means whereby persons directly affected by what they consider to be a failure, on our part, to comply with our equality scheme, can make complaints.**

**On behalf of Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council and our staff 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 Equality Commission guidelines.**

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**The Mayor  
Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council**

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**Chief Executive  
Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council**

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**Date**

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**Please note:**

**The contact details provided in this Equality Scheme originally covered both Lisburn City Council and Castlereagh Borough Council.**

**These contact details have since been updated to solely cover Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council.**

## **Chapter 1 Introduction**

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

**1.1 Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 (the Act) requires Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council to comply with two statutory duties:**

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

**In carrying out our functions relating to Northern Ireland we are 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  
persons with dependants and persons without.**

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

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

**“Functions” include the “powers and duties” of a public authority. This includes our employment and procurement functions. Please see below under “Who we are and what we do” for a detailed explanation of our functions.**

**How we propose to fulfil the Section 75 duties in relation to the relevant functions of Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council**

**1.2 Schedule 9 4. (1) of the Act requires Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council as a designated public authority to set out in an equality scheme how it proposes to fulfil the duties imposed by Section 75 in relation to its relevant functions. This equality scheme is intended to fulfil that statutory requirement. It is both a statement of our arrangements for fulfilling the Section 75 statutory duties and our plan for their implementation.**

**1.3 Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council is committed to the discharge of its Section 75 obligations in all parts of our organisation and we will commit the necessary available resources**

**in terms of people, time and money to ensure that the Section 75 statutory duties are complied with and that our equality scheme can be implemented effectively.**

**Who we are and what we do**

**At this present time the following covers the functions and activities of Council:**

**Council performs five main roles locally:**

- 1. The direct provision of a range of services and facilities;**
- 2. The promotion of the arts, tourism, community and economic development;**
- 3. The regulation/licensing of certain activities regarding environmental health, consumer protection and public safety;**
- 4. A representative role on a range of Boards etc.;**
- 5. A consultative role in relation to functions conducted by other agencies and Government Departments.**

**The functions of Council cover the following main areas:**

**The provision of facilities for recreational, social and cultural activities;**

**Street cleansing;**

**Waste collection & disposal;**

**The provision of burial grounds;**

**The provision of various grant aid support e.g. arts, community development, tourism and economic development;**

**The administration and regulation of a variety of matters e.g. environmental health, building control, dog control, health and safety;**

**The licensing and regulation of various matters e.g. street trading, amusement centres, cinemas and petroleum stations;**

**The making and regulation of bye-laws.**

**To implement the above functions Council adopts a broad range of policies. Such policies can be both cross-departmental (“Council wide”) and specific to individual departments.**



**To enable the Council to provide the above services and perform its other functions, the Council must levy an annual rate and has the power to:**

**Acquire and dispose of land  
Borrow money  
Employ staff  
Procure goods and services**

**It can be noted that from April 2015 Council acquired additional responsibilities in relation to:**

**Local Planning Functions  
Off Street Parking  
Local Economic Development  
Community Planning  
Urban Regeneration and Community Development**

**All of the above is undertaken through Council Departments, a range of working groups and the various Committees of Council.**

## **Chapter 2      Our arrangements for assessing our compliance with the section 75 duties (Schedule 9 4. (2) (a))**

**2.1 Some of our arrangements for assessing our compliance with the Section 75 statutory duties are outlined in other relevant parts of this equality scheme, see for example chapters on monitoring, the assessment of policies and consultation.**

**In addition we have the following arrangements in place for assessing our compliance:**

### **Responsibilities and reporting**

**2.2 We are committed to the fulfilment of our Section 75 obligations in all parts of our work.**

**2.3 Responsibility for the effective implementation of our equality scheme lies with the Chief Executive. The Chief Executive is accountable to the full Council for the development, implementation, maintenance and review of the equality scheme in accordance with Section 75 and Schedule 9 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, including any good practice or guidance that has been or may be issued by the Equality Commission.**

**2.4 If you have any questions or comments regarding our equality scheme, please contact us using the details given below and we will respond to you as soon as possible.**

**The Equality Officer  
Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council  
Island Civic Centre  
The Island  
Lisburn  
BT27 4RL**

**TELEPHONE: 028 9250 9250**

**TEXTPHONE: 028 9250 9508**

**E-mail: [equality.officer@lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk](mailto:equality.officer@lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk)**

**2.5 Objectives and targets relating to the statutory duties will be integrated into our strategic and operational business plans.**

**2.6 Employees' job descriptions and performance plans reflect their contributions to the discharge of the Section 75 statutory duties and implementation of the equality scheme, where relevant. The personal performance plans are subject to appraisal in the annual performance review.**

**2.7 Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council prepares an annual report on the progress we have made on implementing the arrangements set out in this equality scheme to discharge our Section 75 statutory duties (Section 75 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 also be included in our (organisational) annual report.**

**2.8 The latest Section 75 annual progress report is available on our website:**

[www.lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk](http://www.lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk)

or by contacting:

**The Equality Officer  
Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council  
Island Civic Centre  
The Island  
Lisburn  
BT27 4RL**

**TELEPHONE: 028 9250 9250**

**TEXTPHONE: 028 9250 9508**

**E-mail: [equality.officer@lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk](mailto:equality.officer@lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk)**

**2.9 Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council liaise closely with the Equality Commission to ensure that progress on the implementation of our equality scheme is maintained.**

**2.10 Implementation of the equality scheme will be further supported by regular meetings with senior staff, awareness raising with staff as required as well as continued networking with the designated groups. Regular reporting to Committee and Council is also undertaken to keep Elected Members informed of relevant matters and developments.**

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

**2.11 Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council will develop an action plan after the establishment of the new Council, to promote equality of opportunity and good relations. This action plan will be set out in Appendix 6 to this equality scheme.**

**2.12 The action measures that will make up our action plan will be relevant to our 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 our service users and those affected by our 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 We will develop any action plans for a period of between one and five years in order to align them with our corporate and business planning cycles. Implementation of the action measures will be incorporated into our business planning process.**

**2.15 We will seek input from our stakeholders and consult on our action plan before we send it to the Equality Commission and thereafter when reviewing the plan as per 2.16 below.**

**2.16 We will monitor our progress on the delivery of our action measures annually and update the action plan as necessary to ensure that it remains effective and relevant to our functions and work.**

**2.17 The Council will inform the Commission of any changes or amendments to our action plan and will also include this information in our Section 75 annual progress report to the Commission. Our Section 75 annual progress report will incorporate information on progress we have made in implementing our action plans/action measures.**

**2.18 Once finalised, our action plan will be available, from our website:**

**[www.lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk](http://www.lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk)**

**or by contacting:**

**The Equality Officer  
Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council  
Island Civic Centre  
The Island  
Lisburn  
BT27 4RL**

**TELEPHONE: 028 9250 9250**

**TEXTPHONE: 028 9250 9508**

**E-mail: [equality.officer@lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk](mailto:equality.officer@lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk)**

**If you require it in an alternative format please contact us on the details provided.**

## **Chapter 3      Our arrangements for consulting** (Schedule 9 4. (2) (a)) - on matters to which a duty (S75 (1) or (2)) is likely to be relevant (including details of the persons to be consulted).

(Schedule 9 4. (2) (b)) on the likely impact of policies adopted or proposed to be adopted by us on the promotion of equality of opportunity.

**3.1 We recognise the importance of consultation in all aspects of the implementation of our statutory equality duties. We will consult on our equality scheme, equality impact assessments and other matters relevant to the Section 75 statutory duties.**

**3.2 We are committed to carrying out consultation in accordance with the following principles (as contained in the Equality Commission’s guidance ‘Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 – A Guide for Public Authorities (April 2010)’):**

**3.2.1 All consultations will seek the views of those directly affected by the matter/policy, the Equality Commission, representative groups of Section 75 categories, other public authorities, voluntary and community groups, our staff and their trades unions and such other groups who have a legitimate interest in the matter, whether or not they have a direct economic or personal interest.**

Initially all consultees (see Appendix 3), as a matter of course, will be notified (by email or post) of the matter/policy being consulted upon to ensure they are aware of all consultations. Thereafter, to ensure the most effective use of our and our consultees’ resources, we will take a targeted approach to consultation for those consultees that may have a particular interest in the matter/policy being consulted upon and to whom the matter/policy is of particular relevance. This may include for example regional or local consultations, sectoral or thematic consultation etc.

**3.2.2 Consultation with all stakeholders will begin as early as possible. We will engage with affected individuals and representative groups to identify how best to consult or engage with them. We will ask our 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 consultations.**

**This list is not exhaustive and we may develop other additional methods of consultation more appropriate to key stakeholders and the matter being consulted upon.**

**3.2.3 We will consider the accessibility and format of every method of consultation we use 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. We 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).**

**Positive networks are maintained and developed with all such groups in order to help ensure that any particular requirements are accommodated to allow inclusion within any consultation process.**

**Information will be made available, on request, in alternative formats, in a timely manner, usually within 5 working days. We will ensure that such consultees have equal time to respond.**

**3.2.4 Specific training is 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 with consultees on Section 75 matters, we will develop a programme of awareness raising on the Section 75 statutory duties and the commitments in our equality scheme by undertaking the following:**

**As noted at 3.2.3 Councils actively promotes and maintains networks and links with the designated groups. Through such networks and links the broad range of work undertaken within Council regarding implementing the statutory duties is continually conveyed to the group or groups in question. Additionally, events are held in relation to specific groups and these too support the activities of Council and allows feedback from those attending.**

**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), we may shorten timescales to eight weeks or less before the policy is implemented. We may continue consultation thereafter and will review the policy as part of our monitoring commitments.**

**Where, under these exceptional circumstances, we must implement a policy immediately, as it is beyond our authority's control, we may consult 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, we will give consideration to the feasibility of allowing a longer period for the consultation.**

**3.2.8 We are conscious of the fact that affected individuals and representative groups may have different needs. We will take appropriate measures to ensure full participation in any meetings that are held. We will consider 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 We make all relevant information available to consultees in appropriate formats to ensure meaningful consultation. This**



includes 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, we take into account any assessment and consultation carried out in relation to the policy.

**3.2.11** We provide feedback to consultees in a timely manner. A feedback report is prepared which includes summary information on the policy consulted upon, a summary of consultees' comments and a summary of our consideration of and response to consultees' input. The feedback is provided in formats suitable to consultees. (Please see also 6.3)

**3.3** A list of our consultees is included in this equality scheme at Appendix 3. It can also be obtained from our website at:

[www.lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk](http://www.lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk)

or by contacting:

The Equality Officer  
Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council  
Island Civic Centre  
The Island  
Lisburn  
BT27 4RL

TELEPHONE: 028 9250 9250

TEXTPHONE: 028 9250 9508

E-mail: [equality.officer@lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk](mailto:equality.officer@lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk)

Through continual networking with the designated groups the consultation list will be reviewed and updated on an on-going basis. This will allow groups to become involved in any consultation process and ensure an up to date consultation list is available to Council at all times.

**3.4** Our consultation list is not exhaustive and is reviewed on an annual basis to ensure it remains relevant to our functions and policies.

**We welcome enquiries from any person/s or organisations wishing to be added to the list of consultees. Please contact the Equality Officer 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.**

## **Chapter 4 Our arrangements for assessing, monitoring and publishing the impact of policies**

**(Schedule 9 4. (2) (b); Schedule 9 4. (2) (c); Schedule 9 4. (2) (d); Schedule 9 9. (1); Schedule 9 9.(2))**

**Our arrangements for assessing the likely impact of policies adopted or proposed to be adopted on the promotion of equality of opportunity (Schedule 9 4. (2) (b))**

**4.1 In the context of Section 75, ‘policy’ is very broadly defined and it covers all the ways in which we carry out or propose to carry out our functions in relation to Northern Ireland. In respect of this equality 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, eg, ‘draft’, ‘pilot’, ‘high level’ or ‘sectoral’.**

**4.2 In making any decision with respect to a policy adopted or proposed to be adopted, we take into account any assessment and consultation carried out in relation to the policy, as required by Schedule 9 9. (2) of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.**

**4.3 Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council uses 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 we will relate them to the intended outcomes of the policy in question and will also follow Equality Commission guidance:**

**the guidance on screening, including the screening template, as detailed in the Commission’s guidance ‘Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 – A Guide for Public Authorities (April 2010)’ and on undertaking an equality impact assessment as detailed in the Commission’s guidance ‘Practical guidance on equality impact assessment (February 2005)’.**

## **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 which we propose to adopt will be subject to screening prior to implementation. For more detailed strategies or policies that are to be put in place through a series of stages, we will screen at 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 we will include key stakeholders in the screening process.**

**4.7 The following questions are applied to all our 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, we gather all relevant information and data, both qualitative and quantitative. In taking this evidence into account we consider the different needs,**

**experiences and priorities for each of the Section 75 equality categories. Any screening decision will be informed by this evidence.**

**4.9 Completion of screening, taking into account our 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 has been ‘screened in’ for equality impact assessment**
- 2. the policy has been ‘screened out’ with mitigation or an alternative policy proposed to be adopted**
- 3. the policy has been ‘screened out’ without mitigation or an alternative policy proposed to be adopted.**

**4.10 If our 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, we may on occasion decide to proceed with an equality impact assessment, depending on the policy. If an EQIA is not to be conducted we 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 we mitigate we will outline in our screening template the reasons to support this decision together with the proposed changes, amendments or alternative policy.**

**This screening decision will be ‘signed off’ by the appropriate policy lead within Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council.**

**4.11 If our 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, we will normally subject the policy to an equality impact assessment. This screening decision will be ‘signed off’ by the appropriate policy lead within Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council.**

**4.12 If our 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, we may decide to screen the policy out. If a policy is ‘screened out’ as having no relevance to equality of opportunity or good relations, we will give details of the reasons for**

the decision taken. This screening decision will be 'signed off' by the appropriate policy lead within Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council.

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 our website:

[www.lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk](http://www.lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk)

and on request from:

The Equality Officer  
Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council  
Island Civic Centre  
The Island  
Lisburn  
BT27 4RL

TELEPHONE: 028 9250 9250

TEXTPHONE: 028 9250 9508

E-mail: [equality.officer@lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk](mailto:equality.officer@lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk)

4.14 If a consultee, including the Equality Commission, raises a concern about a screening decision based on supporting evidence, we will review the screening decision.

4.15 Our screening reports are published quarterly [see below at 4.20 - 4.22 and 4.23 for details].

## **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 equality impact assessment is necessary, we will carry out the EQIA in accordance with Equality Commission guidance. The equality impact assessment will be carried out as part of the policy development process, before the policy is implemented.**

**4.18 Any equality impact assessment will be subject to consultation at the appropriate stage(s). (For details see above Chapter 3 “Our Arrangements for Consulting”).**

**Our 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 4. (2) (d); Schedule 9 9. (1))**

**4.19 We make publicly available the results of our assessments (screening and EQIA) of the likely impact of our policies on the promotion of equality of opportunity and good relations.**

### **What we publish**

#### **4.20 Screening reports**

**These are published quarterly. Screening reports detail:**  
**All policies screened by Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council over the three month period**  
**A statement of the aim(s) of the policy/policies to which the assessment relates**  
**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;  
Screening decisions, i.e:**

**whether the policy has been ‘screened in’ for equality impact assessment.**

**whether the policy has been ‘screened out’ with mitigation or an alternative policy proposed to be adopted.**

**whether the policy has been ‘screened out’ without mitigation or an alternative policy proposed to be adopted.**

**Where applicable, a timetable for conducting equality impact assessments**

**A link to the completed screening template(s) on our website**

#### **4.21 Screening templates**

**For details on the availability of our screening templates please refer to 4.13.**

#### **4.22 Equality impact assessments**

**EQIA reports are published once the impact assessment has been completed. These reports 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 we publish the information

4.23 All information we publish is accessible and can be made available in alternative formats on request. Please see 6.3 below.

## Where we publish the information

4.24 The results of our assessments (screening reports and completed templates, the results of equality impact assessments) are available on our website:

[www.lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk](http://www.lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk)

and by contacting:

The Equality Officer  
Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council  
Island Civic Centre  
The Island  
Lisburn  
BT27 4RL

TELEPHONE: 028 9250 9250

TEXTPHONE: 028 9250 9508

E-mail: [equality.officer@lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk](mailto:equality.officer@lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk)

**4.25 All policies screened over a 3 month period will be sent directly to consultees on a quarterly basis. Also, policies screened over the year will likewise be sent directly to all consultees.**

**4.26 We will inform the general public about the availability of this material through communications such as press releases where appropriate.**

**Our arrangements for monitoring any adverse impact of policies we have adopted on equality of opportunity (Schedule 9 4. (2) (c))**

**4.27 Monitoring can assist us 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 Council follows guidance from the Office of the Information Commissioner and the Equality Commission.**

**4.28 We monitor any adverse impact on the promotion of equality of opportunity of policies we have adopted. We are also committed to monitoring more broadly to identify opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity and good relations in line with Equality Commission guidance.**

**4.29 The systems we have established to monitor the impact of policies and identify opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity and good relations are:**

- The collection, collation and analysis of existing relevant primary quantitative and qualitative data across all nine equality categories 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, we will ensure that the policy is revised to achieve better outcomes for relevant equality groups.**

**4.31 We review our EQIA monitoring information on an annual basis. Other monitoring information will also be reviewed on an annual basis.**

**Data requirements to assist with monitoring are kept under review across Council and as necessary, in association with relevant Departments, data requirements may be amended in order to facilitate implementation of the statutory duties and monitoring over time of the same.**

**Our arrangements for publishing the results of our monitoring (Schedule 9 4. (2) (d))**

**4.32 Schedule 9 4. (2) (d) requires us to publish the results of the monitoring of adverse impacts of policies we have adopted. However, we are committed to monitoring more broadly and the results of our policy monitoring are published as follows:**

**4.33 EQIA monitoring information is published as part of our Section 75 annual progress report [see 2.7]**

**4.34 As stated at 4.33 monitoring information is published as part of our Annual Report to the Equality Commission. Consequently this information is available on the web-site of Council.**

**4.35 All information published is accessible and can be made available in alternative formats on request. Please see below at 6.3 for details.**

## **Chapter 5      Staff training (Schedule 9 4.(2) (e))**

### **Commitment to staff training**

**5.1 We recognise that awareness raising and training play a crucial role in the effective implementation of our Section 75 duties.**

**5.2 Our Chief Executive wishes to positively communicate the commitment of the Council to the Section 75 statutory duties, both internally and externally.**

**To this end we have introduced an effective communication and training programme for all staff and will ensure that our commitment to the Section 75 statutory duties is made clear in all relevant publications.**

### **Training objectives**

**5.3 The Council 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, our equality scheme commitments and the particular issues likely to affect people across the range of Section 75 categories, to ensure that our 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 our 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 Council's equality 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 our staff and Elected Members are aware of and understand our equality obligations.**

**We will develop a summary of this equality scheme and make it available to all staff.**

**We will provide access to copies of the full equality scheme for all staff; ensure that any queries or questions of clarification from staff are addressed effectively.**

**Staff in the Council will receive a briefing on this equality scheme within as soon as possible after approval of scheme.**

**The Section 75 statutory duties form part of induction training for new staff.**

**Focused training is provided for key staff within Council who are directly engaged in taking forward the implementation of our equality scheme commitments (for example those involved in research and data collection, policy development, service design, conducting equality impact assessments, 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 our staff.**

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

## **Monitoring and evaluation**

**5.6 Our training programme is subject to the following monitoring and evaluation arrangements:**

**We 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.**

**The extent to which training objectives have been met will be reported on as part of the Section 75 annual progress report, which will be sent to the Equality Commission.**

**Data is also collected in relation to staff trained, their department/unit, the type of training provided (generic or specific) and if they are “customer-facing” etc. By so doing relevant training and awareness raising sessions are undertaken to cover all staff as may be required within Council.**

## **Chapter 6 Our arrangements for ensuring and assessing public access to information and services we provide (Schedule 9 4. (2) (f))**

**6.1 Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council is committed to ensuring that the information we disseminate and the services we provide are fully accessible to all parts of the community in Northern Ireland. We keep our arrangements under review to ensure that this remains the case.**

**6.2 We are 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, we 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 Council liaises with representatives of young people and disability and minority ethnic organisations and takes account of existing and developing good practice.**

**We will respond to requests for information in alternative formats in a timely manner, usually within 5 working days where possible.**

**Council maintains networks with a range of relevant organisations in respect of such groups and by so doing ensures that any information that may be required to be provided is done so in an appropriate format**

**6.4 In disseminating information through the media we will seek to advertise in the press where appropriate.**

**6.5 Information will be made available in alternative formats as may be required.**

#### **Access to services**

**6.6 Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council is committed to ensuring that all of our services are fully accessible to everyone in the community across the Section 75 categories.**

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

**6.7 Much information, regarding service provision matters is placed on the web-site of Council and this is accessible to, for example, those with disabilities as well as other groups.**

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

**6.8 We monitor on an annual basis across all our functions, in relation to access to information and services, to ensure equality of opportunity and good relations are promoted.**

**6.9 The annual service performance reviews supports the monitoring of access to information and services in that matters that may have arisen over the period can be identified and, if necessary, appropriate remedial actions agreed or indeed actions agreed to further roll-out identified good practice within Council.**



## **Chapter 7      Timetable for measures we propose in this equality scheme (Schedule 9 4. (3) (b))**

**7.1 Appendix 4 outlines our timetable for all measures proposed within this equality scheme. The measures outlined in this timetable will be incorporated into our business planning processes.**

**7.2 This timetable is different from and in addition to our commitment to developing action plans/action measures to specifically address inequalities and further promote equality of opportunity and good relations. We have included in our equality scheme a commitment to develop an action plan. Accordingly, this commitment it is listed in the timetable of measures at Appendix 4. For information on these action measures please see Chapter 2 above.**

## **Chapter 8      Our complaints procedure (Schedule 9 10.)**

**8.1 Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council is responsive to the views of members of the public. We will endeavour to resolve all complaints made to us.**

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

**If the complaint has not been resolved within a reasonable timescale, the complaint can be brought to the Equality Commission.**

**8.3 A person wishing to make a complaint that the Council has failed to comply with its approved equality scheme should contact:**

**The Equality Officer  
Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council  
Island Civic Centre  
The Island  
Lisburn  
BT27 4RL**

**TELEPHONE: 028 9250 9250**

**TEXTPHONE: 028 9250 9508**

**E-mail: [equality.officer@lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk](mailto:equality.officer@lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk)**

**8.4 We will in the first instance acknowledge receipt of each complaint within 5 working days.**

**8.5 The Council will carry out an internal investigation of the complaint and will respond substantively to the complainant within one (1) month of the date of receiving the letter of complaint. Under certain circumstances, if the complexity of the matter requires a longer period, the period for response to the complainant may be extended to two (2) months. In those**

**circumstances, the complainant will be advised of the extended period within one month of making the complaint.**

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

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

**Similarly, the Council 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 Council will make all efforts to implement promptly and in full any recommendations arising out of any Commission investigation.**

## **Chapter 9      Publication of our equality scheme (Schedule 9 4. (3) (c))**

**9.1 Our Council's equality scheme is available free of charge in print form and alternative formats from:**

**The Equality Officer  
Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council  
Island Civic Centre  
The Island  
Lisburn  
BT27 4RL**

**TELEPHONE: 028 9250 9250**

**TEXTPHONE: 028 9250 9508**

**E-mail: [equality.officer@lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk](mailto:equality.officer@lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk)**

**9.2 Our equality scheme is also available on our website at:**

**[www.lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk](http://www.lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk)**

**9.3 The following arrangements are in place for the publication in a timely manner of our equality scheme to ensure equality of access:**

**We will make every effort to communicate widely the existence and content of our equality scheme. This may include press releases, prominent advertisements in the press, the internet and direct mail shots to groups representing the various categories in Section 75.**

**We will email a link to our approved equality scheme to our consultees on our consultation lists. Other consultees without e-mail will be notified by letter that the scheme is available on request. We will respond to requests for the equality scheme in alternative formats in a timely manner, usually within 5 working days where possible.**

**Our equality scheme is available on request in alternative formats such as Easy Read, Braille, large print, audio formats ( CD, mp3, DAISY) and in minority languages to meet the needs of those not fluent in English.**

**As noted at 6.3 Council maintains networks with relevant organisations in respect of groups such as children and young people and those with disabilities. By doing so communication with such groups can be effectively implemented as may be required.**

**It is envisaged that a “Plain English” version of our equality scheme will be produced, placed on our website and made available as may be required to further facilitate publication of the scheme.**

**9.4 For a list of our stakeholders and consultees please see Appendix 3 of the equality scheme, visit our website at:**

**[www.lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk](http://www.lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk)**

**or contact:**

**The Equality Officer  
Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council  
Island Civic Centre  
The Island  
Lisburn  
BT27 4RL**

**TELEPHONE: 028 9250 9250**

**TEXTPHONE: 028 9250 9508**

**E-mail: [equality.officer@lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk](mailto:equality.officer@lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk)**

## **Chapter 10    Review of our equality scheme (Schedule 9 8. (3))**

**10.1 As required by Schedule 9 paragraph 8 (3) of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 we will conduct a thorough review of this equality scheme. This review will take place either within five years of submission of this equality 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 our scheme in relation to the implementation of the Section 75 statutory duties relevant to our functions in Northern Ireland.**

**10.2 In undertaking this review we will follow any guidance issued by the Equality Commission. A report of this review will be made public, through press advertisements and made available on our website, and a copy sent to the Equality Commission.**

## **Appendix 1 Organisational Chart**

**An updated organisational chart of Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council will be added when finalised.**

**Appendix 2 Example groups relevant to the Section 75 categories for Northern Ireland purposes**

Please note, this list is for illustration purposes only, it is not exhaustive.

<b>Category</b>	<b>Example groups</b>
<b>Religious belief</b>	<p><b>Buddhist; Catholic; Hindu; Jewish; Muslims, people of no religious belief; Protestants; Sikh; other faiths.</b></p> <p>For the purposes of Section 75, the term “religious belief” is the same definition as that used in the Fair Employment &amp; Treatment (NI) Order. Therefore, “religious belief” also includes any perceived religious belief (or perceived lack of belief) and, in employment situations only, it also covers any “similar philosophical belief”.</p>
<b>Political opinion</b>	<b>Nationalist generally; Unionists generally; members/supporters of other political parties.</b>
<b>Racial group</b>	<b>Black people; Chinese; Indians; Pakistanis; people of mixed ethnic background; Polish; Roma; Travellers; White people.</b>
<b>Men and women generally</b>	<b>Men (including boys); Trans-gendered people; Transsexual people; women (including girls).</b>
<b>Marital status</b>	<b>Civil partners or people in civil partnerships; divorced people; married people; separated people; single people; widowed people.</b>
<b>Age</b>	<b>Children and young people; older people.</b>
<b>Persons with a disability</b>	<b>Persons with disabilities as defined by the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.</b>
<b>Persons with dependants</b>	<b>Persons with personal responsibility for the care of a child; for the care of a person with a disability; or the care of a dependant older person.</b>
<b>Sexual orientation</b>	<b>Bisexual people; heterosexual people; gay or lesbian people.</b>



**Appendix 3 List of consultees  
(Schedule 9 4. (2) (a))**

The consultation list given below is indicative and will be reviewed as appropriate to ensure it remains relevant to the functions of Council.

**Community Relations Council  
Committee on the Administration of Justice (CAJ)  
Equality Forum NI  
NI Human Rights Commission  
The Equality Commission NI  
The Equality Unit OFMDFM**

**Accept Mental Health  
Action Hearing Loss  
Action MS  
Arts & Disability Forum  
British Deaf Association  
Carers Northern Ireland  
Carers Forum on Learning Disability  
Disability Action  
Disability Sports NI  
Downs Syndrome Association  
Disabled in Community Action  
Employers' Forum on Disability  
Guide Dogs NI  
Leonard Cheshire  
Lisburn Access Group  
MENCAP  
MindWise  
National Schizophrenia Fellowship  
Northern Ireland Association for Mental Health  
N.I. Forum of People with Disability  
Parents and Professionals and Autism (Autism NI)  
PRAXIS  
RNIB Northern Ireland  
Sense Northern Ireland  
The Cedar Foundation**

**An Munia Tober  
Chinese Welfare Association  
Indian Community Centre  
Multi-Cultural Resource Centre  
NI African Cultural Centre  
NI Council for Ethnic Minorities  
NI Filipino Association  
NI Muslim Family Association  
Pobal  
Polish Association NI  
Ulster Scots Agency**

**OFMDFM**

**Department of Agriculture and Rural Development  
Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure  
Department of Education  
Department for Employment & Learning  
Department of Enterprise, Trade & Investment  
Department of the Environment  
Department of Finance and Personnel  
Department of Health, Social Services & Public Safety  
Department for Regional Development  
Department for Social Development  
Department for Justice**

**Local Government Sector - All Councils The  
Local Government Staff Commission NI**

**Alliance Party  
Democratic Unionist Party  
Social Democratic and Labour Party  
Sinn Fein  
Ulster Unionist Party  
NI21  
TUV  
(And other political parties as may be relevant at any point in time)**

**Carafriend  
Coalition on Sexual Orientation (CoSo)  
Gay and Lesbian Youth NI  
NI Gay Rights Association  
Queerspace  
The Rainbow Project  
Lisburn LGBT Group**

**Barnardo's  
Children in NI  
Children's Law Centre  
Child Care NI  
Childrens Commissioner NI  
Child Poverty Action Group (NI)  
Gingerbread NI  
N I Youth Forum  
NSPCC  
NIPPA  
Putting Children First  
Playboard N.I. Ltd  
Save the Children  
Youth Council for Northern Ireland  
Youthnet  
Youth Action N.I.**

**Youth Link N.I.**

**Age NI  
Age Sector Reference Group  
Lisburn Seniors Forum**

**Association of Bahai Women NI  
Family Planning Association NI  
NI Womens Aid Federation  
Womens Information Group  
Womens Forum NI  
Womens Resource & Development Agency (WRDA)  
Womens Support Network  
Community Change**

**NICVA**

**Rural Community Network  
Rural Development Council NI  
NI Anti-Poverty Network**

**Community Development & Health Network NI**

**Community Safety Centre**

**Sports Council NI  
Arts Council NI  
Lisburn Sports Advisory Council  
Lisburn Arts Advisory Council**

**NI Tourist Board**

**NIHE  
Council for the Homeless NI  
Simon Community NI**

**Translink  
Lagan Valley Rural Transport**

**Education Authority NI  
SE Regional College**

**Eastern Health & Social Services Board  
SE Health & Social Care Trust**

**PSNI**

**All community groups within L&CCC at any point in time**

**Association of Chief Officers of Voluntary Organisations (ACOVO)**

**Lisburn Safer Neighbourhoods  
Lisburn Chamber of Commerce  
Lisburn & Castlereagh Peace IV Partnership**

**CARE NI**

**Baptist Union of Ireland  
Irish Council of Churches  
Church of Ireland Diocesan Office  
Methodist Church in Ireland  
Presbyterian Church in Ireland**

**Local Churches/Faith Groups:**

**Methodist Churches (inc. Independent & Free)  
Baptist Churches  
Pentecostal Churches  
Interdenominational Churches  
Moravian Churches  
Congregational Churches  
Jehovah Witness  
Church of the Nazareen  
Apostolic Church  
Presbyterian Churches (inc. Reformed, Free & Non-Subscribing)  
Church of Ireland  
Churches/Chapels of the Catholic Faith  
Fresh Oil Church  
Church of God  
Polish Mission Church  
Friends Meeting House  
Christian Fellowship  
Mission Halls  
And other churches/faith groups as may be relevant at any point in time**

**RESPOND**

**Caring Together  
Include Youth**

**Amalgamated Transport & General Workers Union  
NIPSA  
UNISON  
NI Committee, ICTU**

**Citizens Advice Bureau**

**Appendix 4 Timetable for measures proposed (Schedule 9 4.(3) (b))**

<b>Measure</b>	<b>Lead responsibility</b>	<b>Timetable</b>
<b>Section 75 Annual Progress Report [2.7]</b>	<b>Equality Officer &amp; CEO</b>	<b>31 August (annually)</b>
<b>Development of an action plan</b>	<b>Equality Officer &amp; other staff as relevant</b>	<b>An action plan will be developed after the new Council is established</b>
<b>Consultation list reviewed and updated [3.4]</b>	<b>Equality Officer</b>	<b>September (annually)</b>
<b>Screening timetable* [4.4]</b>	<b>Equality Officer &amp; other staff as relevant</b>	<b>On-going (see Appendix 4a)</b>
<b>Screening Reports* [4.15]</b>	<b>Equality Officer &amp; other staff as relevant</b>	<b>Quarterly</b>
<b>EQIA timetable* [4.16]</b>	<b>Equality Officer &amp; other staff as relevant</b>	<b>EQIA's will be undertaken as necessary (see Appendix 4a)</b>
<b>Monitoring</b>		
<b>Review of monitoring information [4.31]</b>	<b>Equality Officer &amp; other staff as relevant</b>	<b>Annually (31 August)</b>
<b>Publication of monitoring information [4.33;4.34]</b>	<b>Equality Officer &amp; other staff as relevant</b>	<b>Annually (31 August)</b>
<b>Training</b>		
<b>Development of summary scheme [5.4]</b>	<b>Equality Officer</b>	<b>Asap once scheme approved by ECNI</b>
<b>Development of overall training programme [5.5]</b>	<b>Equality Officer &amp; other staff as relevant</b>	<b>January – March annually</b>

<b>Focussed training [5.4]</b>	<b>Equality Officer</b>	<b>On-going</b>
<b>Update training [5.4]</b>	<b>Equality Officer</b>	<b>On-going</b>
<b>Evaluation of training [5.6]</b>	<b>Equality Officer &amp; other staff as relevant</b>	<b>Annually (31 August)</b>
<b>Assessing access to information and services [6.9]</b>	<b>Equality Officer &amp; other staff as relevant</b>	<b>Annually</b>
<b>Communication of equality scheme [9.3]</b>	<b>Equality Officer</b>	<b>As appropriate after approval by ECNI</b>
<b>Notification of consultees [9.3]</b>	<b>Equality Officer</b>	<b>As appropriate after approval by ECNI</b>
<b>Review of equality scheme [10.1]</b>	<b>Equality Officer &amp; other relevant staff, senior management, Committees &amp; Council as appropriate</b>	<b>Within 5 years of submission to ECNI</b>

**Appendix 4a – Timetable for Measures Proposed (Screening para 4.4 and EQIA’s para 4.16)**

**The Equality Commission notes that in establishing the new Councils there will be a lot of work in developing new/revised policies and mainstreaming the Section 75 duties through screening and EQIA.**

**The Equality Commission advises that Councils include a timetable for screening and EQIA.**

**Council would not yet be in a position to list all new/revised policies. Work on developing such policies is and will be an ongoing process and will include screening and, as appropriate, EQIA.**

**Council will be structured on the basis of 6 Committees (Corporate Services, Development, Environmental Services, Governance & Audit, Leisure & Community Development and, finally, Planning) and 4 Directorates (Corporate Services, Development & Planning, Environmental Services and Leisure & Community Services).**

**Given below is a number of examples of areas to be dealt with in the immediate forthcoming period:**

<b>Functional Area</b>		<b>Timetable Re: Screening/EQIA</b>
<b>Governance:</b>	<b>Flying of Flag(s) at Council HQ Building</b>	<b>2015-2016</b>
<b>Environmental Services:</b>		
<b>Building Control</b>	<b>Street Naming &amp; Numbering</b>	<b>2015-2016</b>
<b>Environmental Health</b>	<b>Child &amp; Adult Safeguarding</b>	<b>2015-2016</b>

**Consultees will be kept informed and updated on the above process on a regular basis through the issue of (quarterly) screening reports.**

## **Appendix 5 Glossary of terms**

### **Action plan**

**A plan which sets out actions a public authority will take to implement its Section 75 statutory duties. It is a mechanism for the realisation of measures to achieve equality 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 achievable outcomes, which should be realistic and timely.**

### **Adverse impact**

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

### **Affirmative action**

**In general terms, affirmative action can be defined as being anything consistent with the legislation which is necessary to bring about positive change. It is a phrase used in the Fair Employment and Treatment Order (NI) 1998 to describe lawful action that is aimed at promoting equality of opportunity and fair participation in employment between members of the Protestant and Roman Catholic communities in Northern Ireland.**

### **Article 55 Review**

**Under the Fair Employment and Treatment (NI) Order 1998, all registered employers must conduct periodic reviews of the composition of their workforces and of their employment practices for the purposes of determining whether members of the Protestant and Roman Catholic communities are enjoying, and are likely to continue to enjoy, fair participation in employment in each employer's concern.**

**These reviews, which are commonly known as Article 55 Reviews, must be conducted at least once every three years.**

### **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 a 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 it provides baseline information on existing inequalities relevant to a public authority's functions.**



## **Consultation**

In the context of Section 75, consultation is the process of asking those affected by a policy (ie, 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 categories. Different circumstances will call for different types of consultation. Consultations could, for example, include meetings, focus groups, surveys and questionnaires.

## **Council of Europe**

The Council of Europe, based in Strasbourg, covers virtually the entire European continent, with its 47 member countries. Founded on 5 May 1949 by 10 countries, the Council of Europe seeks to develop throughout Europe common and democratic principles based on the European Convention on Human Rights and other reference texts on the protection of individuals.

## **Desk audit**

An audit of a draft equality scheme to ensure that the scheme conforms with the requirements on form and content as detailed in the Commission's Guidelines (the Guide).

## **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. A 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.

## **Discrimination**

The anti-discrimination laws prohibit the following forms of discrimination:

- Direct discrimination
- Indirect Discrimination
- Disability Discrimination
- Victimisation

## **Harassment**

Brief descriptions of these above terms follow:

### **Direct discrimination**

This generally occurs where a public authority treats a person less favourably than it treats (or, would treat) another person, in the same or similar circumstances, on one or more of the statutory non-discrimination grounds. A decision or action that is directly discriminatory will normally be unlawful unless: (a) in an age discrimination case, the decision can be objectively justified, or (b) in any other case, the public authority can rely on a statutory exception that permits it – such as a genuine occupational requirement exception; or, a positive action exception which permits an employer to use “welcoming statements” or to take other lawful positive action to encourage participation by under-represented or otherwise disadvantaged groups.

### **Indirect discrimination**

The definition of this term varies across some of the anti-discrimination laws, but indirect discrimination generally occurs where a public authority applies to all persons a particular provision, criterion or practice, but which is one that has the effect of placing people who share a particular equality characteristic (e.g. the same sex, or religious belief, or race) at a particular disadvantage compared to other people. A provision, criterion or practice that is indirectly discriminatory will normally be unlawful unless (a) it can be objectively justified, or (b) the public authority can rely on a statutory exception that permits it.

### **Disability discrimination**

In addition to direct discrimination and victimisation and harassment, discrimination against disabled people may also occur in two other ways: namely, (a) disability-related discrimination, and (b) failure to comply with a duty to make reasonable adjustments.

- (a) Disability-related discrimination generally occurs where a public authority, without lawful justification, and for a reason which relates to a disabled person's disability, treats that person less favourably than it treats (or, would treat) other people to whom that reason does not (or, would not) apply.
- (b) Failure to comply with a duty to make reasonable adjustments: One of the most notable features of the disability discrimination legislation is that in prescribed circumstances it imposes a duty on employers, service providers and public authorities to take such steps as are reasonable to remove or reduce particular disadvantages experienced by disabled people in those circumstances.

### **Victimisation**

This form of discrimination generally occurs where a public authority treats a person less favourably than it treats (or, would treat) another person, in the same or similar circumstances, because the person has previously exercised his/her rights under the anti-discrimination laws, or has assisted another person to do so. Victimisation cannot be justified and is always unlawful.

### **Harassment**

Harassment generally occurs where a person is subjected to unwanted conduct that is related to a non-discrimination ground with the purpose, or which has the effect, of violating their dignity or of creating for them an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. Harassment cannot be justified and is always unlawful.

### **Economic appraisal**

An economic appraisal is a systematic process for examining alternative uses of resources, focusing on assessment of needs, objectives, options, costs benefits, risks, funding and affordability and other factors relevant to decisions.

### **Equality impact assessment**

The mechanism underpinning Section 75, where 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 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). They provide 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.**

#### **PAFT**

**The Policy Appraisal and Fair Treatment (PAFT) Guidelines constituted the first non-statutory attempt at mainstreaming equality in Northern Ireland in January 1994. The aim of the PAFT Guidelines was to ensure that issues of equality and equity informed policy making and activity in all spheres and at all levels of government. PAFT has now been superseded by Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.**

#### **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 covers 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.

#### **SACHR**

The Standing Advisory Commission on Human Rights (SACHR) has now been replaced by the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission. SACHR, as part of its review of mechanisms in place to promote employment equality and reduce the unemployment differential, recommended that the PAFT Guidelines should be made a statutory requirement.

#### **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 Commission investigation, these are as follows:**

- 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.**

## **Appendix 6 Action Plan/Action Measures**

**The action plan/action measures of Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council will be updated as necessary over the time period of this Equality Scheme.**