

Foreword

As Chairman and Chief Executive of the South Eastern Education and Library Board we are pleased to present the Board's Equality Scheme ("the Scheme"). The Scheme has been drawn up in line with the requirements of Section 75 and Schedule 9 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 which places new duties on public authorities to promote equality of opportunity and good relations.

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

The Board is committed to:-

- (i) allocating necessary resources in terms of people, time and money to ensure implementation of the Scheme;
- (ii) putting in place internal arrangements to ensure that the duties are effectively complied with and for monitoring and reviewing progress;
- (iii) introducing a planned programme of communication and training on the Scheme.

In drawing up the Scheme the Board has sought to consult as widely as possible with those involved in the services which it provides. The Board has tried to take account, wherever possible, of the views which have been expressed during the consultation process.

Alternative formats of the Scheme will be made available on request.

Chairman

Chief Executive

C O N T E N T S

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

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

pre-school, primary and secondary education
special education
youth services; and
library services

throughout the geographical area encompassed by the Board.

Ancillary, supplementary and often complementary to these activities, the Board is responsible for a wide variety of functions such as, by way of example only, school meals, home to school transport and the curriculum support service to schools.

1.1.1 The Board consists of thirty five members appointed for a four year period by the Minister responsible for Education to represent:

- each district council
- the interests of transferors of schools
- the interests of trustees of maintained schools
- the services for which the Board is responsible.

The members meet on a monthly basis (except in the summer months) and on a regular basis as committees and sub-committees.

1.1.2 Organisational Structure of the Board

See Appendix A.

- 1.1.3 The Chief Executive is responsible for ensuring that the decisions of the Board are implemented, for the day to day management of the organisation, and for ensuring the organisation works effectively in accordance with Government policy and public service values. The Chief Executive is also the Board's Accounting Officer and in that capacity is responsible for the effective and efficient use of resources and the maintenance of appropriate standards of financial accountability.

The Duties

- 1.2 Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 ("the Act") imposes two sets of duties upon the Board:

- 1 a set of equality of opportunity promotional duties
- 2 a set of good relations promotional duties.

- 1.3 The equality of opportunity promotional duties require that the Board shall, in carrying out its functions, powers and duties have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity:

- 1 between persons of different religious belief
- 2 between persons of different political opinion
- 3 between persons of different racial groups
- 4 between persons of different age
- 5 between persons of different marital status
- 6 between persons of different sexual orientation
- 7 between men and women generally
- 8 between persons with a disability and persons without
- 9 between persons with dependants and persons without.

1.4 The good relations promotional duties require that the Board shall without prejudice to its obligation at 1.3 above have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations:

- 1 between persons of different religious belief
- 2 between persons of different political opinions
- 3 between persons of different racial groups.

1.5 The Extent of the Duties

1.5.1 None of the equality of opportunity promotional duties, and none of the good relations promotional duties are free-standing. Instead, each duty arises only in relation to the discharge of the Board's other functions. In this context, "functions" includes:

- 1 the Board's legal duties
- 2 the Board's legal powers and discretions.

1.5.2 The functions of the Board are wide ranging and relate to the following main areas:

- 1 pre-school education
- 2 primary education
- 3 secondary education
- 4 special education
- 5 maintenance of maintained schools
- 6 youth services
- 7 school attendance
- 8 suspension and expulsion of pupils
- 9 student support
- 10 home to school transport
- 11 school meals and related facilities
- 12 employment of teachers in controlled schools and peripatetic teachers

- 13 library services
- 14 employment of non-teaching staff in controlled and maintained schools
- 15 curriculum support
- 16 open enrolment and transfer
- 17 financing of controlled and maintained schools
- 18 governor training
- 19 behavioural support
- 20 exceptional provision.

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

The Equality Scheme

1.6 The Act requires the Board to set out in an Equality Scheme how it proposes to fulfil its duties imposed by Section 75. This document is intended to fulfil that statutory requirement and is the Board's Equality Scheme.

1.7 The Act requires that the Scheme must show how the Board intends to implement both the equality of opportunity promotional duties and the good relations promotional duties. The Act, in particular, requires that the Scheme must include the Board's arrangements for:

1. consulting on a draft Scheme *(See Chapter 2 below)*
2. assessing the Board's compliance with the two sets of promotional duties *(See Chapter 3 below)*

3. consulting on matters to which an equality of opportunity promotional duty or a good relations promotional duty is likely to be relevant (See *Chapter 4 below*)
4. ensuring public access to (a) Board information and (b) Board services (See *Chapter 5 below*)
5. assessing public access to (a) Board information and (b) Board services (See *Chapter 6 below*)
6. monitoring any adverse impact (on the equality of opportunity promotional duties) of Board policies (See *Chapter 6 below*)
7. assessing (and consulting on) the equality of opportunity impact of Board policies (See *Chapter 7 below*)
8. training of officers (See *Chapter 8 below*)
9. the publication of:-
 - (a) this Scheme (See *Chapter 3 below*)
 - (b) results of monitoring (See *Chapter 6 below*)
 - (c) results of equality impact assessment (See *Chapter 7 below*)
10. establishing a complaints procedure (See *Chapter 9 below*)

1.8 The Board is committed to the fulfilment of its Section 75 obligations.

2.0 CONSULTATION ON THE DRAFT SCHEME

2.1 Paragraph 5 of Schedule 9 of the Act provides that, before submitting an Equality Scheme to the Commission, the Board shall consult, in accordance with any directions given by the Commission:

- 1 representatives of persons likely to be affected by the Board scheme; and
- 2 such other persons as may be specified in the directions.

2.2 The Board has widely publicised its willingness to consult on the draft scheme with a broad range of interested bodies:

- 1 public advertisement
- 2 direct mail shot to the bodies listed in Appendix B
- 3 direct contact, by telephone, contact with the bodies listed in Appendix B
- 4 a series of “drop in sessions”, throughout the Board’s area in Belfast, Downpatrick and Lisburn in order to ensure geographical distribution and ease of access.

2.3 As a result of this consultation process the Board received comments from a considerable number of consultees. A summary of the submissions and the Board’s response are included in Appendix C. A list of consultees’ responses is included in Appendix D.

3.0 COMPLIANCE ISSUES

- 3.1 This Chapter explains the Board's arrangements for assessing its compliance with each of the equality of opportunity promotional duties and each of the good relations promotional duties.
- 3.2 The Chief Executive, Mr Jackie Fitzsimons, has a responsibility to the Board to ensure that the Board fully complies with this Scheme. Operational responsibility rests with the Senior Administration Officer (Administration), Mr Martin Graham, who is a member of the Board's Senior Management Team.
- 3.3 Each member of the Senior Management Team is responsible to the Chief Executive for ensuring that his/her Business Units fully comply with this Scheme.
- 3.4 An Equal Opportunities Promotional Unit, reporting to the Chief Executive will be established within the Board (Discussion is currently ongoing to determine whether an Equal Opportunities Promotional Unit is to be established on a five Board basis).
- 3.5 In particular, in the context of the equality of opportunity promotional duties, the Unit will have:
- 1 an advisory role ensuring priorities are identified
 - 2 a priority setting role; and
 - 3 a duty to keep the Chief Executive regularly informed of progress and problems in the implementing of the equality of opportunity promotional duties in the Board; that duty will be discharged by providing regular written reports.
- 3.6 The Board will screen all proposed policy proposals in accordance with Chapter 7 Paragraph 7.4.

- 3.7 No policy proposal will be presented to the Board unless it has been screened and if appropriate impact assessed. This rule will be subject only to very limited exceptions; for example an exception would be justified in circumstances of considerable urgency. However in these cases a subsequent screening and (if necessary) impact assessment will be carried out.
- 3.8 The Board will carry out a systematic review of all its existing policies to determine whether the equality of opportunity dimension and good relations are central to any of them. The process and timetable set out in Chapter 7 will be followed.
- 3.9 Objectives and targets relating to the statutory obligations will be integrated into the Board's Corporate and Business Plans. Progress on Business Plan objectives will be monitored every six months. A review of past performance is an integral part of the annual business planning process.
- 3.10 The Board will conduct an annual review of progress made in implementing the Scheme and in complying with the Statutory Duty. This report will be sent to the Equality Commission to assist it in compiling its own Annual Report as required by sub-paragraph 5(i)(b) of Schedule 8 of the Act. The Board will liaise with the Equality Commission with a view to ensuring progress is maintained.
- 3.11 The Board will communicate to, and train, its staff on the requirements of the statutory obligations and how they can be implemented. The Board will set and monitor individual objectives for staff with responsibility for policy development and training.
- 3.12 Details of progress each year will be contained in the Board's annual report.

4.0 CONSULTATION

- 4.1 Paragraph 4(2)(a) and (b) of Schedule 9 of the Act requires the Board to state, in its Scheme, the Board's arrangements for consulting on matters to which an equality of opportunity promotional duty, or a good relations promotional duty, is likely to be relevant (including details of the persons to be consulted). That statement is set out in this Chapter.
- 4.2 The Board will consult with the Equality Commission and the Community Relations Council, as appropriate, on any issue which it believes to be relevant to the fulfilment of its statutory obligations and it will take account of any proposals from those bodies arising from such consultation.
- 4.3 The Board will consult with such public sector and non-governmental organisations as are relevant as an integral part of the detailed equality impact assessment. The Board will work with representative groups and individuals of the Section 75 categories in order to identify how best to obtain their views. For each consultation, the public sector bodies and non-governmental organisations to be consulted will be identified from the list included at Appendix B of this Scheme. This list is not exhaustive and may be amended in the light of experience.
- 4.4 In addition to consultation on equality impact assessments, the Board may also from time to time have a need to consult on matters to which an equality of opportunity promotional duty or a good relations promotional duty is likely to be relevant. For such consultation the public sector bodies and non-governmental organisations to be consulted will be identified from the list included at Appendix B.
- 4.5 Consultation will commence as soon as possible to allow adequate time for groups to consult among themselves. The Board will aim to provide a period for response of at least two months. However, there may be circumstances when this timescale is not feasible for example in

circumstances of considerable urgency. Such circumstances will be monitored, kept under review, justified very clearly and detailed in the Board's Annual Review to the Equality Commission. The Board will also be sensitive to the different needs and customs of consultees.

4.6 Normally, consultations will be initiated through the publication of written proposals. In consulting on any matter to which this scheme relates, the Board may also use any of the following methods:

- letter
- attitude surveys of service users and potential service users
- press releases and advertisements
- internet
- public meetings
- standing or ad hoc consultative fora
- consultative panels
- direct invitation to groups
- questionnaires.

4.7 The Board acknowledges the importance of full participation in any meetings that are held as part of the consultation process. In organising such meetings the Board will give specific consideration to the following:

- (a) time of day when meetings are held
- (b) appropriateness of the venue and in particular whether it can be accessed by those with disabilities
- (c) accessibility of the language, the format of information and the necessity of a signer
- (d) the provision of childcare
- (e) how the meeting is to be run.

4.8 The Board will provide relevant quantitative and qualitative data, where available, in order to facilitate meaningful consultation. Any specially commissioned research for impact assessments will be made available.

- 4.9 The Board will adopt specific approaches in its consultation with young people and those with learning difficulties, directing such consultation through schools, the youth service and projects engaging young people being educated otherwise than at school throughout its area. The Board will take account of the Youth Council for Northern Ireland's guidance on consulting with young people. The Board will give due consideration on how best to consult with people with learning disabilities. An Inter Board Working Group comprised of senior officers has been established to prepare guidance on this issue.
- 4.10 The Board 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 audio cassette and in minority languages to meet the needs of those who are not fluent in English. The Board will ensure that systems are put in place to make information available in accessible formats and in a timely fashion. Previously, requests for information in an alternative format were dealt with on an individual basis. An Inter-Board Working Group is being established to address the provision of a system for providing information in alternative formats. The Working Group will review arrangements for providing information in alternative formats.

5.0 ENSURING PUBLIC ACCESS TO INFORMATION AND SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE BOARD

5.1 Paragraph 4(2)(f) of Schedule 9 of the Act requires the Board to state, in its Scheme, its arrangement for ensuring public access to information and to services provided by the Board.

That statement is contained in this Chapter.

5.2 The Board is committed to effective communication with the public. It recognises, however, that there is a risk that some sections of the public will not enjoy equality of opportunity in accessing information provided by the Board. There are four particular risk areas:

- people with sensory and learning disabilities
- members of ethnic minority groups, who are not fluent in English
- people who read newspapers predominantly associated with one section of the community
- children and young people.

5.3 The Board will, within the first year following commencement of this Scheme, undertake an assessment of its arrangements for providing information in Braille, large print, audio cassette, text phones and minority ethnic language formats for those who are not fluent in English. The assessment will take account of the likely demand for information in such formats across its direct services and key policies together with resource implications and make recommendations on how public access to information might be improved. Consideration also will be given as to how best to communicate information to young people and those with learning difficulties.

5.4 With a view to ensuring public access to the Board's accommodation which is open to the public, the Board will maintain a welcoming and harmonious environment. Due regard will be given to the relevant provisions of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.

- 5.5 In disseminating information through the local press, the Board will ensure that press statements and public advertisements are accessible to both main communities.
- 5.6 Following approval of the Scheme by the Equality Commission this Scheme will be published in a manner which will ensure equality of access to the information which it contains. The Board will publish its Scheme in hard copy, on floppy disk, on audio tape, in Braille and on the Board's website (when available). Copies of the Scheme will be forwarded to the bodies listed in Appendix B and a prominent press advertisement will be issued at the time of the Scheme's official publication. Specific consideration will be given on how best to communicate the Scheme to young people and those with learning difficulties.
- 5.7 If the Board becomes aware that individuals or groups have difficulty in accessing the Scheme, the Board will, in consultation with those affected, endeavour to address such difficulties.

6.0 MONITORING

6.1 Paragraph 4(2)(c) of Schedule 9 of the Act provides that the Board's Scheme must state the Board's arrangements for monitoring any adverse impact, in relation to the promotion of equality of opportunity, of policies adopted by the Board. That statement is set out in this Chapter.

6.2 Paragraph 4(2)(f) of Schedule 9 of the Act provides that the Board's Scheme must state the Board's arrangements for assessing public access to information and to services provided by the Board. That statement is also set out in this Chapter.

6.3 Knowledge of the uptake of services provided by the Board 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. Within one year of approval of this Scheme, the Board will assess the extent of existing monitoring and the scope for extending it to meet the new obligations imposed by the Act. In addition to the value of any further information required for assessing progress towards equality of opportunity and public access to Board information and services, this review will also take into account the following factors:-

- resource implications
- readiness of the public to supply information
- availability of proxy measures eg postcode analysis.

6.4 In some cases an equality impact assessment may identify an anticipated adverse impact on particular groups within the categories listed in Section 75 category. Assuming that no alternative policy is feasible, steps will be taken, wherever possible, to mitigate such anticipated adverse impact. The Board may, in these circumstances, commission special monitoring to confirm the extent of the differential adverse impact and/or the success of

any mitigating measures. Information collected in this special monitoring will be taken into account in any future review of the policy.

6.5 In conducting monitoring the Board may use the following data sources:-

- information from the Department of Education, Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure, Department of Further and Higher Education Training and Employment
- comparable information from Great Britain or Europe
- census
- labour force survey
- continuous household survey
- internet group data
- statutory agencies
- deprivation studies and other appropriate indices
- published research reports
- community views.

6.6 The Board will make publicly available the outcome of any monitoring undertaken in relation to paragraphs 6.3 and 6.4 above. This material will be accessible on the Board's Internet Website. It will also be available in printed form and in alternative formats from the Board's Headquarters on request. The availability of such reports will be publicised through press releases and in the Board's libraries.

7.0 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

7.0 For the purposes of this Scheme, the Board has defined a “policy” as being any “decision” taken as to how the Board should fulfil its functions both statutory and non statutory (other than individualised decision taking) and includes unwritten as well as written policies. In conducting its business, the Board has a statutory duty to implement policies from external sources, namely the Department of Education, the Department of Further and Higher Education and Training and Employment and the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure as well as formulating its own. It is the Board’s view that where it is required to implement a policy by another public authority that the implications of that policy on equality of opportunity and good relations should be addressed by the source through a process of partnership with the Board.

The Equality Impact Assessment Duty

7.1 The equality impact assessment duty is contained in paragraph 4(2)(c) of Schedule 9 of the Act. This requires the Board to state, in this Scheme, its arrangements for assessing and consulting on the likely impact (on the promotion of equality of opportunity) of existing or proposed Board policies.

That statement is set out in this Chapter.

Screening

7.2 The Board is committed to carrying out a systematic review of all its existing and proposed policies.

7.3.1 In fulfilling its statutory obligations the Board 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

7.4 Stage 1 – Screening of Policies

The purpose of screening, in relation to a particular policy, is to consider whether or not the policy, in practice, has the potential to significantly affect the prospects for success or failure in relation to one or more of the equality of opportunity promotional duties. That issue should be separately considered in the context of each of the equality of opportunity promotional duties. In considering the issue, in relation to any such duty, due regard should be paid to the following questions:

- 1 is there any evidence of higher or lower participation or uptake by different groups?
- 2 is there any evidence that different groups have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to the particular policy issue?
- 3 is there any opportunity to promote equality of opportunity between the relevant different groups, either by altering the policy, or by working with others, in Government or in the larger community, in the context of the policy?
- 4 have consultations with relevant groups, organisations or individuals indicated that policies of that type create problems specific to any relevant group?

If the answer to any of the criteria set out above is positive, the Board will consider whether to subject the policy to an equality impact assessment. The Board considers that not all its policies require a detailed equality impact assessment to be undertaken and believes that only those policies which may present a significant risk to the statutory duty in Section 75(1) of the Act to “have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity” should be subject to such detailed assessment.

7.5 Stage 2 – Timetable for setting priorities

Having screened its policies as outlined in Stage 1 and identified which policies it believes should be subjected to full impact assessment (taking into consideration the comments contained in paragraph 7.1 above), the Board proposes to prioritise these impact assessments.

In determining priority the Board will consider the following factors:

- social need
- effect on people's daily lives
- effect on economic, social and human rights
- its own best value programme
- the timetable established by other relevant statutory agencies in relation to common functions eg Youth services
- scale of expenditure incurred by the policy.

7.6 Stage 3 – Consultation

The Board will carry out stages 1 and 2 within 6 months of submitting its Scheme to the Equality Commission. It will then consult with the organisations listed at Appendix B on the results of the screening and its timetabling prioritisation exercise.

7.7 Stage 4 – Report of the Screening Exercise

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

7.8 Proposed Policies

7.8.1 During the period of 12 months following the commencement of this Scheme the Board currently anticipates that the following proposed policy will require equality impact assessment:-

Electronic Libraries

7.8.2 Other proposed policies may be developed during the five year period which cannot yet be specified. Any proposed policies will be screened for impact assessment using the criteria identified at paragraph 7.4 above.

The methodology which will be used for equality impact assessment is set out below.

7.9 Overview of The Impact Assessment Process

7.9.1 The impact assessment process will normally include each of the following stages:

- 1 consideration of available data and research
- 2 consultation in the context of the assessment
- 3 consideration of methods to mitigate any adverse impacts of the policy proposals
- 4 consideration of alternatives to the relevant policy (or proposed policy).

Considering Available Data and Research

7.10 At this stage of the impact assessment process, due account will be taken of each of the following:-

- 1 the outcome of any relevant monitoring

- 2 any available data and/or research which is likely to be helpful in assessing the impact of the proposed policy in the context of any of the equality of opportunity promotional duties.

7.11 In some circumstances it may be thought appropriate to commission new data and/or new research, for the purpose of facilitating impact assessment.

7.12 Consultation – Impact Assessments

7.12.1 Impact assessment consultation will be carried out in accordance with good practice, any relevant legal requirements and the general principles set out in Chapter 4, paragraphs 4.7 and 4.8.

7.12.2 The Board will use such methods of consultation as it considers to be best suited to facilitating effective consultation, in all the circumstances of the particular policy. In some circumstances, it may be thought appropriate to facilitate consultation through:

- represented press releases
- direct invitation to groups which are likely to be interested in and able to represent interests and views which would otherwise be inadequately represented
- prominent advertisements in the press and/or
- standing or ad hoc consultative fora.

7.12.3 For each policy the public sector and non-governmental organisations to be consulted will be drawn from Appendix B. In addition any other bodies, groups or individuals, who in the opinion of the Board are directly interested in the policy, will be consulted.

7.12.4 The outcome of any impact assessment consultation will be brought to the attention, in writing, of the relevant decision maker(s).

7.13 Assessment of Impacts

7.13.1 The Board acknowledges that relevant, reliable and up-to-date information is essential but that this alone does not provide reasons

or explanations for differences. Consequently, the Board will use the data from its information gathering process outlined above, to determine whether there is, or is likely to be, an adverse impact, whether direct or indirect, upon the relevant group(s).

7.13.2 If an adverse effect on the relevant categories can be identified, the Board will take legal advice on whether the policy is unlawfully discriminatory, taking into account that some policies are intended to increase the equality of opportunity by requiring or permitting affirmative or positive action, or action to redress disadvantage.

7.13.3 Acting on legal advice, the Board will decide how it can ensure that it is acting within the law.

7.13.4 In keeping with the Equality Commission's guidance, where a policy is found not to be unlawful, the Board will consider how to respond in light of the adverse impact identified. The guidance suggests that 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. If this is not the case, the Board will consider whether there are any alternative measures which would achieve the desired aim without the adverse impact identified.

7.14 Mitigation

7.14.1 If the policy (or proposed policy) seems likely to have the effect of creating or broadening any relevant inequality of opportunity, the Board is under a duty, as part of the impact assessment process, to consider measures to mitigate any such adverse impacts.

7.14.2 In considering mitigation, the following two questions will be addressed:

- 1 is it possible to lessen the severity of the relevant adverse impact within the policy (or proposed policy) as originally formulated?
- 2 if it is not possible to do so, or if it decided not to do so, consideration will be given to whether there is any other remedy which can be provided to the relevant group.

7.14.3 The consideration of mitigation, and the conclusions arrived at in the course of that consideration, will be documented.

7.15 Alternatives

7.15.1 As part of the process of assessing the impact of any particular policy (or proposed policy), consideration will be given to any alternative policies which might be a better means of carrying out any of the relevant equality of opportunity promotional duties.

7.15.2 Such alternative policy options will be considered separately in relation to each of the equality of opportunity promotional duties and only if either of the conditions below exist:

- there is currently a significant inequality of opportunity between people within the relevant groups; or
- there is reason to believe that the policy (or proposed policy), if left unaltered, may lead to significant inequalities of opportunity.

7.15.3 The consideration of alternative options and the conclusions arrived at in the course of that consideration will be documented.

7.16 Consideration

In making any decision on a current or proposed policy, the Board will take into account any relevant impact assessment and the outcome of the associated consultation. This is a statutory requirement under paragraph 9(2) of Schedule 9.

7.17 Publicity

7.17.1 The results of every impact assessment will be published and the availability of such reports will be publicised in local print media and the Board's website. Each such report will contain the following information:

- 1 the aims of the relevant policy (or proposed policy)
- 2 details of any consideration given by the Board to mitigation
- 3 details of any consideration given by the Board to alternative policies.

7.17.2 The information detailed above will also be available on request in alternative formats.

7.18 Monitoring

The Board is committed to monitoring the impact of all proposed and existing policies in order to find out the effects on the relevant group(s). The availability of this monitoring information will be publicised. If the monitoring and evaluation shows that the policy results in greater adverse impact than predicted, or if opportunities arise which would allow for greater equality of opportunity to be promoted, the Board will ensure that the policy is subsequently revised.

8.0 TRAINING

- 8.1 Paragraph 4(2)(e) of Schedule 9 of the Act requires the Board to state in its Scheme its arrangements for training. That statement is contained in this Chapter.
- 8.2 Training will play a major part in the implementation of this Scheme. In particular:
- 1 such training will emphasise the Board's commitment to the effective implementation of the Scheme
 - 2 such training will contribute to an understanding by officers of their personal responsibility (in the context of the carrying out of the duties of their particular post) to assist in the effective implementation of this Scheme
 - 3 training for those engaged in consultation exercises will be developed in consultation with the affected groups.
- 8.3 Training will be provided both for Board members and for Officers.
- 8.4 Training on this Scheme will be integrated within the general training programme of the Board.
- 8.5 Although the contents and methods of each course will obviously vary in the light of the particular roles and functions of each set of course participants, the over-riding objective will be the same. That objective is to ensure that the Board fully and effectively implements this Scheme and that Board Officers are fully aware of their responsibilities in that context.
- 8.6 Following the receipt of further guidance on training, the Board will be drawing up a planned programme of its delivery as per the Equality Commission's published Guidelines and advice.

The key objectives of this training will be:-

- (i) To prepare a detailed training plan for all of the Board's staff over the 5 year period to which the Equality Scheme refers to achieve the objectives outlined below
- (ii) 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 1988. This should include an explanation of the duties and their implications for all employees
- (iii) To provide these employees involved in the screening of policies with the necessary skills and knowledge to do this work effectively
- (iv) To provide those employees involved in the equality impact assessment of policies with the necessary skills and knowledge to do this work effectively
- (v) To provide those employees who deal with complaints in relation to the implementation of the Board's Scheme, with the necessary skills and knowledge to investigate and monitor complaints effectively
- (vi) To provide those employees involved in the consultation processes with the necessary skills and knowledge to do this work effectively
- (vii) To provide those employees involved in the implementation and monitoring of the effective implementation of the Board's Equality Scheme to do this work effectively
- (viii) To provide more focused training for staff in management roles, and other specialist staff, such as trainers, lawyers and staff involved in research and data collection, policy development, service design, monitoring and evaluation
- (ix) 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.

8.7 A copy of this Scheme will be provided to all staff.

9.0 COMPLAINTS

- 9.1 Paragraph 10 of Schedule 9 of the Act provides that the Board's Scheme must state the Board's arrangements for dealing with complaints arising from a failure to comply with the Scheme. That statement is contained in this Chapter.
- 9.2 When a person believes that he/she has been directly affected by a failure of the Board to comply with this Scheme, he/she should in the first instance bring his/her complaint to the attention of the Board's Chief Executive, Mr Jackie Fitzsimons, The South Eastern Education and Library Board, Grahamsbridge Road, Dundonald Belfast BT16 2HS. Telephone 0289056 6200, fax 028 9056 6266/7, e-mail martin.graham@seelb.org.uk.
- 9.3 The Board will investigate the complaint or give the complainant reasons for not investigating it. Where the Board investigates the complaint it will seek to provide a substantive response to a complaint normally within one month from its receipt of the complaint.
- 9.4 Where a complainant claims to have been directly affected by the failure of the Board to comply with this Scheme, the complainant will be informed of his right to refer the matter to the Equality Commission.
- 9.5 The Board will monitor complaints that it has not complied with this Scheme.

10.0 SUMMARY ACTION AND TIMETABLE

Paragraph 4(3)(b) of Schedule 9 of the Act provides that the Board's Scheme must state the Board's timetable for measures proposed in the Scheme. That timetable is set out in this Chapter.

The following timetable summarises the measures which the Board proposes to take during the five years following the commencement of the Equality Scheme.

Year 1 June 2000 – June 2001		Awareness Seminars for Staff
		Inter-Board Statutory Duty Co-ordinating Group formed
		Preparation of Draft Equality Scheme
		Advertisements placed in newspapers with invitation to consult. Consultation on Draft Equality Scheme.
		Responses to consultation considered. Scheme amended and submitted to Equality Commission.
		Scheme published. Training programme commences and is ongoing. Policy Unit established. Screening of all existing Policies. Submission to Equality Commission of Report on Screening Exercise. Review of monitoring arrangements. Review of arrangements for providing information to the public.
Year 2		Implementation of Scheme continues. Submission of Annual Report to Equality Commission.

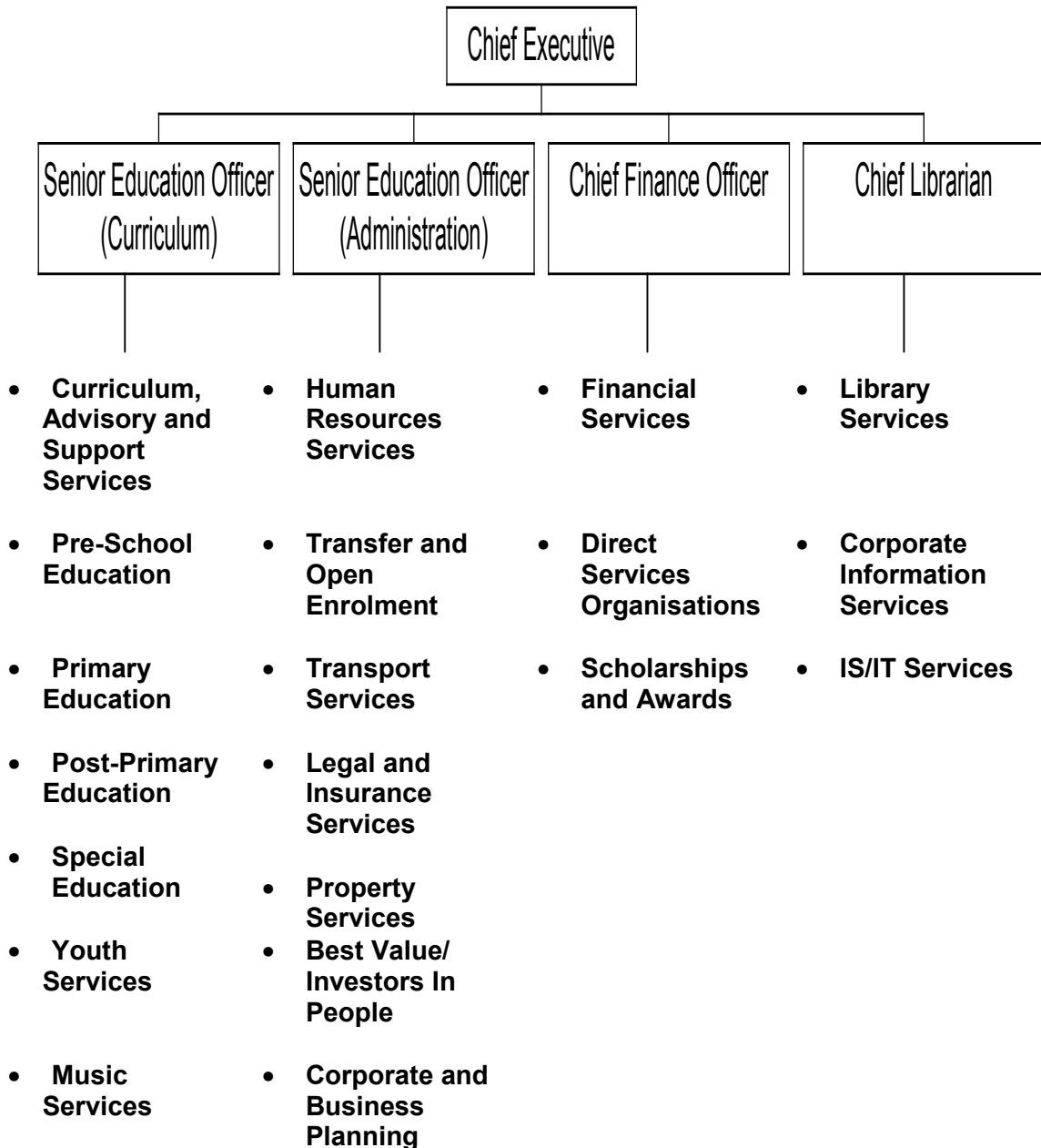
Year 3		Implementation of Scheme continues. Submission of Annual Report to Equality Commission.
Year 4		Implementation of Scheme continues. Submission of Annual Report to Equality Commission.
Year 5	June - May	Implementation of Scheme continues. Submission of five-yearly review to Equality Commission.

11.0 FIVE YEARLY REVIEWS

The Board is committed to conducting a formal review of the Scheme within five years of its approval by the Equality Commission. A report of the review will be forwarded to the Equality Commission.

SOUTH EASTERN EDUCATION AND LIBRARY BOARD

EXECUTIVE STRUCTURE



APPENDIX B

CONSULTEES

The following is a list of those public authorities, voluntary community groups, trades unions and other groups which the Board considers may have any interest in its work of the Board. The Board has sought to identify as many groups as possible but recognises that the list is not exhaustive and may be amended in the light of experience.

RELIGION AND POLITICS

CHURCHES

Baptist Union of Ireland
Church of Ireland
Congregational Union of Ireland
Elim Pentecostal
Free Presbyterian Church of Ulster
Methodist Church in Ireland
Presbyterian Church in Ireland
Roman Catholic Church

POLITICAL PARTIES

Alliance Party
Democratic Unionist Party
Northern Ireland Unionist Party
Northern Ireland Women's Coalition
Progressive Unionist Part
Sinn Fein
Social Democratic Labour Party
Ulster Democratic Party
Ulster Unionist Assembly Party
Ulster Unionist Party
United Kingdom Unionist Party

UNIONS

Counteract
Northern Ireland Public Service Alliance (NIPSA)
UNISON
National Association of School Teachers & Union of Women Teachers (NASUWT)
Irish National Teachers Organisation (INTO)
National Association of Head Teachers
Association of Teachers & Lecturers
Ulster Teachers Union (UTU)
GMB

A T & G W U

Union of Construction, Allied Trades & Technicians (UCATT)
Amalgamated Electrical & Engineering Union (AEEU)
Manufacturing, Science & Finance (MSF)

RACE

Bahai Community of Belfast
Italian Society
Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities (NICEM)
North West Chinese Community Association
Oi Kwan Chinese Women Group (Belfast Base)
Oi Yin Chinese Women Group (Bangor Base)
Multi-Cultural Resource Centre
Barnardos Tuar Ceatha Project
Belfast Islamic Centre
Belfast Travellers Education & Development Group
Belfast Traveller's Site Project
Chinese Welfare Association
Chinese Chamber of Commerce
Indian Community Centre
Multicultural Group - Windsor Women's Centre
Northern Ireland African Cultural Centre
Traveller Movement Northern Ireland
Belfast Hebrew Congregation
Northern Ireland Filipino Association
Northern Ireland Filipino Community in Action
Southern Travellers Early Years Partnership
Wah Hip Chinese Community Association

AGE

OLDER PEOPLE

Help the Aged, Northern Ireland
Age Concern Northern Ireland

AGE

CHILDREN

Children's Law Centre
NSPCC
Save the Children
Barnardos
Child Care Northern Ireland
NIPPA
Putting Children First
Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education

Northern Ireland Governing Bodies Association
National Association of Educational Inspectors, Advisers & Consultants
Association of Educational Psychologists
Library Association
National Association of Social Workers in Education

YOUTH

Youth Exchange Centre
Youth Link Northern Ireland
Youth Action Northern Ireland
Youthnet
Northern Ireland Youth Forum
Northern Ireland Association of Youth Service Officers

DISABILITY

ASBAH (NI Region)
Disability Action
IPSEA
MENCAP (Royal Society for Mentally Handicapped Children and Adults)
PHAB (NI) Ltd
Royal National Institute for Deaf People (NI)
Royal National Institute for the Blind (NI)
The Cedar Foundation (formerly NICOD)

Disability Action has submitted the names of the following groups for consultation. The Board will ascertain which of the groups operate in its area and consult as appropriate.

174 Trust
Action for Dysphasic Adults
Age Concern (East Belfast and Castlereagh)
Age Concern (NI)
AIDS Helpline (NI)
Alzheimers Disease Society (NI Regional Office)
Arthritis Care (Bangor and District)
Arthritis Care (Belfast South)
Arthritis Care (Belfast West)
Arthritis Care (East Belfast)
Arthritis Care (Lis Br)
Arthritis Care (NI)
Arts and Disability Forum
Association for Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus (Belfast and District)
Association of Independent Advice Centres
Barnardo's
Belfast Charitable Society
BIH Housing Association
Board of Social Witness
British Deaf Association
British Epilepsy Association

British Red Cross Society
Bryson House
CACDP
Carmen Trust
Carers National Association
Challenge
Children's Law Centre Group
Clanmill Housing Association
Council for the Homeless (NI)
Crossroads Caring for Carers (NI) Ltd
Cystic Fibrosis Research Trust
Disability Resource Centre (Down Lisburn Trust)
Disabled Christian Fellowship (Bangor)
Disabled Christian Fellowship (Bel)
Disabled Christian Fellowship (Lisb Br)
Disabled Drivers Association
Disabled in Community Action
Down Advocacy Movement
Down's Syndrome Association
Drumcoo Centre
Dyslexia and Dyspraxia Support
East Belfast Access Group
East Belfast Disabled Christians' Fellowship
Edgumbe TRC Parents and Friends Group
Extra Care for Elderly People Ltd
Families in Contact
Fibromyalgia Support NI
Fold Housing Association
Friendly Care Group, Termonmaguirc
Friends of Mertoun Park Group
Friends of Millview
Friends of Mitchell House
Garden Reach
Glenluce Quality Caring Centre
Habinteg Housing Association (Ulster) Ltd
Haemophilia Society (NI Group)
Headway Belfast
Huntington Disease Association NI
Ileostomy Association (IA Northern Ireland)
Jordanstown Schools
Kilcreggan Homes
Kildress Parents and Friends of the Handicapped (Kildress KARE)
Leonard Cheshire
Lisburn Access Group
Lisburn and District Society for Mentally Handicapped Children and Adults
Lisburn Carers Group
Lisburn Disabled Association
Merchant Navy Association of NI
Multiple Sclerosis Society
Muscular Dystrophy (Banbridge)
Muscular Dystrophy (South Armagh and South Down Branch)

Muscular Dystrophy Campaign
National Deaf Children's Society (Belfast and District)
National Schizophrenia Fellowship
Newry and Mourne Carers Association
NI Association of Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus
NI Brittle Bones Society
NI Chest, Heart and Stroke Association
NI Deaf Youth Association
NI Disabled Ex Service Branch Royal British Legion
NI Disabled Ex-Servicemen
NI Friedreich's Ataxia Group
NI Group for Art as Therapy
NI Institute for the Disabled
NI Kidney Research Fund
NI Lupus Group
NI ME Association
NI Music Therapy Trust
NI Paraplegic Association
North East Forum on Disability
Northern Ireland Hospice
Not Forgotten Association
Oaklee Housing Association
Open Arts
Parents and Professionals and Autism (PAPA)
Parkanaur College
Praxi Mental Health
Presbyterian Housing Association
REMAP
Riding for the Disabled Association
Ruby House (NI) Ltd
Save the Children (NI)
SENSE
Seymour Street Craft Workshop Ltd
Share Holiday Village
Shopmobility Bangor Access Group
St John's Handicapped Club
Sympathetic Hearing Support Group (NI)
Syringomyelia Self-Help Group (ANTS (NI))
The Blind Centre for Northern Ireland
The Currie Community
The Guide Dogs for the Blind Association
The Orchardville Society
Threshold
Training and Employment Agency
Triangle Housing Association
Ulster Supported Employment Ltd
VOICE
VSB
Welcome Trust Ltd
Willowbank Limited

MARTIAL STATUS AND DEPENDANTS

Parents Advice Centre
Relate
Gingerbread Northern Ireland
Northern Ireland Mediation Service
Help the Aged, Northern Ireland
Age Concern Northern Ireland

SEXUAL ORIENTATION

Carafriend
Coalition on Sexual Orientation (COSO)
NIGRA (Northern Ireland Gay Rights Association)

GENDER

Women's Support Network
Women's Resource and Development Agency (WRDA)
Northern Ireland Women's Aid Federation
Northern Ireland Women's European Platform (NIWEP)
Women's Forum Northern Ireland

GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC SECTOR BODIES

Equality Commission
The Community Relations Council
Department of Education
Department of Higher & Further Education Training & Employment
Department of Culture Arts & Leisure
Youth Council for Northern Ireland
Council for Catholic Maintained Schools
Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities (NICEM)
Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission (NIHRC)
Ards Borough Council
Castlereagh Borough Council
Down District Council
Lisburn Borough Council
North Down Borough Council

APPENDIX C

ANALYSIS OF RESPONDENTS' COMMENTS AND BOARD'S RESPONSE

Issue	Comment (References are to paragraphs in the Board's Draft Scheme)	Response (References are to paragraphs in this Scheme)
1	In the Foreword the phrase "appropriate resources" should be replaced by "necessary resources".	The Scheme has been amended accordingly.
2	Commitment of resources should be explained in greater detail.	Details of resources required are not fully known at this time. The Scheme does indicate some of the specific resources that will be necessary eg Equal Opportunities Promotional Unit.
3	Para 1.1.1 - Request that mention be made of Irish medium education in this paragraph.	The Board has varying responsibilities to grant-aided schools depending on their employing authority which includes those Irish medium schools which are grant-aided. All such schools are included within this paragraph.
4	Paras 1.3 and 1.4. - Request for additional categories to be included to those already listed.	The Scheme has listed all categories required under Section 75 of the Act.

5	The Board should make a commitment regarding the distinct needs of children and persons with learning difficulties.	Children and persons with learning difficulties are included in the 9 categories of Para 1.6 of the Scheme. Specific attention has been paid to them by identifying them as risk groups (Para 5.2 amended) and there is a commitment given to assess the arrangements of providing information for them in Para 5.3.
6	Paras 1.5.2 - Procurement and employment should be included as functional areas.	The Scheme states in Para 1.10 that procurement and recruitment of staff are included within the concept of "functions".
7	The provisions of the Fair Employment and Treatment Order 1998 should be included in the Scheme.	Whereas the Board would seek to abide by all legal obligations in relation to employment it does not agree that it is appropriate to include the provisions of this Order in the Scheme.
8	Appendix B – Requests for additional organisations and groups to be added.	The names of all additional organisations and groups which so requested have been added to Appendix B.
9	Paras 3.2 and 3.3 – Request that the phrase – "as far as practical" be removed.	This phrase has been removed from both paragraphs in the Scheme.
10	Paras 3.4 and 3.5 – Request for more detail on the structure of the Unit and its relationship to the rest of the Board.	There is a commitment in the Scheme to the development of a Unit and this is being progressed but the detail requested is not yet available.
11	There should be a commitment to ensuring that internal arrangements are adequate to meet the duty.	The details described in Paras 3.2, 3.3, 3.4 and 3.5 should ensure this throughout the organisation.

12	Para 3.6 – Screening should apply to all existing policies.	The Board is committed to screening all existing policies as expressed in Para 7.3 of the Scheme.
13	Para 3.9 – Request that quarterly progress reports be made public.	The reports will be presented to a Board meeting and thereafter will be in the public domain. The Scheme has been amended to include the phrase “such documents then become a matter of public record”.
14	Para 3.11 – Request that outline sanctions to be applied to staff who fail to meet the obligations of equality duty be stated in the Scheme.	Staff are bound by a code of conduct and, where necessary, the disciplinary procedure can be invoked.
15	Para 3.11 – Request that teaching staff and governors receive training in equality matters.	The Board understands that schools are not, as yet, listed within the terms of the Act. Should this situation change a review will be undertaken in relation to the training needs of staff and governors.
16	Para 4.5 – Request that any reduction in time-scale of consultation process be reported as part of the monitoring process.	The Scheme has been amended to include this comment.

17	Para 4.5 – Concern expressed that organisations may not be given time to consult amongst themselves.	The Scheme has been amended to take into account this concern.
18	Para 4.6 – Criticism that the Scheme does not adequately demonstrate a commitment to consult with children and young people and that methods of consultation listed are not appropriate to all young people.	Para 4.9 has been added to take into account the Youth Council for Northern Ireland’s guidance on consulting with young people, making use of schools, the youth service, and projects engaging young people being educated other than at school.
19	Para 4.7 – Request that accessibility of venue be included.	The Scheme has been amended to include accessibility of venues.
20	Request that assurance will be given that consultation will be meaningful.	The Scheme commits the Board to meaningful consultation as stated in Para 4.8.
21	Concern that persons not fluent in English will not be able to be part of the consultation process.	The Scheme has been amended by the addition of Para 4.10 which embraces this concern.
22	Requests for information should not be restricted to those in writing.	The Scheme has been amended by adding Para 4.10 where requests are not restricted to those in writing.
23	Para 5.2 – Request that children and young people should be included as a risk area.	The Scheme has been amended to include this additional risk area.

24	Para 5.3 – Information should be made available in languages other than English.	A commitment has been made to research the matter in the context of Paras 5.2 and 5.3.
25	Lack of information on how communication and provision of information will be carried out with people with learning difficulties.	The Board has made a commitment to address these problems in Para 5.3 of the Scheme.
26	Para 5.6 - does not indicate that all staff will be provided with a copy of the Scheme.	This matter is addressed in Para 8.8 of the Scheme.
27	Commitment to identify gaps in data to be better informed about particular groups.	This is covered by the use of the sources listed in Para 6.5.
28	Para 6.6 – request that no charge be made for Board documents.	The Scheme has been amended so that references to any charges have been deleted.
29	Para 7.1 – Concern expressed about “ownership” of policies coming from another public authority.	The Scheme has been amended to acknowledge that policies which entail overlap with another public body should be dealt with through a partnership agreement.
30	Policies to be addressed should include informal ones	Para 7.1 of the Scheme includes these policies.

31	Para 7.3 – Consultation should be part of the screening process.	The Scheme has included consultation as described in Para 7.7 when organisations will have an opportunity to make comment on the screening of policies.
32	Policies have not been screened.	A commitment is made in Para 7.3 of the Scheme to the screening of all existing policies.
33	Para 7.4 – Concern at how ‘significant risk’ will be assessed.	This will require consideration on an individual basis. It is not possible to be more specific within the terms of the Scheme.
34	Para 7.4 – There should be a systematic review of all existing policies.	The Scheme states that this will take place.
35	Para 7.6 – Request that children and young people be included in the consultation process.	See Issue 14.
36	Para 7.6 – Suggestion made that the Board should consult with representative groups on the best way to consult with their clientele.	The Scheme has been amended at Para 4.5 to take this suggestion into account.
37	Para 7.9.1 – “the process <i>may</i> include” should be made more definite.	This suggestion has been considered and the Scheme amended at Para 7.11.

38	Para 7.13.3 – Criticism that this Para was unduly negative.	The suggestion has been considered and it is felt that the Scheme already contains positive references to its commitment.
39	Para – 7.17.1 – Alternative methods of dissemination should be considered including suitable ways of communicating with children and young people.	This suggestion has already been addressed by the amendment to Para 5.2 (see also Para 5.3).
40	Para 8.3 – Training should include staff and governors in schools.	See Issue 11.
41	The Board should undertake the training of all staff.	The Board has made this commitment in Para 8.6 of the Scheme.
42	Suggestion that staff involved on consultation exercises should be trained in appropriate methods.	This aspect of training is included in Paras 8.6. and 8.7 of the Scheme.
43	Para 9.2 – The Board should not restrict itself to dealing only with written complaints.	References to written complaints in this Scheme have been deleted.
44	Para 9.2 – Concern that persons who find it difficult to converse in English will not have an opportunity to voice complaints.	The matter will be considered through Para 5.3.
45	There should be a named person responsible for dealing with complaints.	The Scheme has been amended in Para 9.2 to include this concern.