

**SOUTH EASTERN EDUCATION AND LIBRARY BOARD**

**FIVE YEAR REVIEW OF EQUALITY SCHEME**

**March 2006**

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 (the Act) requires the South Eastern Education and Library Board ('the Board') in carrying out all its functions, powers and duties relating to the Act 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;
- between men and women generally;
- between persons with a disability and persons without; and
- between persons with dependants and persons without.

1.2 Section 75 also requires the Board, without prejudice to this obligation, to have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group.

1.3 In its Equality Scheme the Board set out its clear commitment to the fulfilment of its Section 75 obligations throughout the organisation. It stated *'the Board is committed to:*

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

The Board also gave a commitment to conduct a formal review of the Scheme within five years of its approval by the Equality Commission. The Equality Commission's Guide to the Statutory Duties, (February 2005) approved by the Secretary of State states: *"This review is a formal review of the scheme to evaluate its effectiveness in meeting the public authority's statutory duties"*.

1.4 This review will include both backward and forward looking elements. It will assess:

- what has been achieved;
- what remains to be done;
- how to build on our successes to date; and
- how to meet the challenges identified.

The review will also consider the workability of our Scheme.

The review has been completed in accordance with the Equality Commission's Guidance on Five Year Review of Equality Schemes issued to public authorities in October 2005.

## 2. ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

2.1 The Board was established in 1973. It is a corporate body, established under statute as the local authority for education and library services. Currently its central core activities are provision of:

- Pre-school, primary and secondary education;
- Special education;

- Youth services; and
- Library services.

throughout the geographical area encompassed by the Board.

**2.2** 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. 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.

**2.3** 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.

**2.4** 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.

**2.5** 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.

## **2.6 REVIEW OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION**

On 22 November 2005, the Education Minister announced as part of the Review of Public Administration, that there will be a single Education Authority. The Education

Authority will become the employing authority for all teaching and other staff employed in grant-aided schools. The new Education Authority will have responsibility for the functions performed currently by the:

- five Education and Library Boards;
- Council for the Curriculum Examinations and Assessment; and
- Regional Training Unit.

It will also have responsibility for the front-line support and related functions undertaken by the:

- Council for Catholic Maintained Schools;
- Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education; and
- Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta.

With regard to the Staff Commission, the creation of the new Education Authority will mean that some of its functions will be absorbed into the new Authority, while others will no longer be required.

### **3. REVIEW OF KEY ELEMENTS OF THE BOARD'S EQUALITY SCHEME.**

#### **3.1 EQUALITY SCHEME**

**3.1.1** The Board issued in April 2000 its draft Equality Scheme for consultation. It consulted all the organisations which were listed in Appendix B of its Draft Scheme. Responses were received from 45 organisations. A summary of these submissions and the Board's responses are included in Appendix 3 of the Scheme. Trade Unions were consulted through the established negotiating machinery.

**3.1.2** Following the consultation process amendments were made to the draft scheme as appropriate and it was then submitted for approval to the Equality Commission by 30 June 2000.

**3.1.3** The Equality Commission conducted an initial audit of the Board's consultation arrangements by means of a questionnaire issued for completion and return during August 2000.

**3.1.4** A more detailed desk audit of the draft Equality Scheme was conducted by the Equality Commission and issued to the Board on 17 November 2000. The Board discussed this audit with the Equality Commission on 11 December 2000 and in the light of those discussions submitted detailed amendments to the Equality Commission on 9 January 2001. The Equality Commission approved the Board's Scheme on 12 April 2001.

**3.1.5** The Board published and distributed the approved Scheme during July 2001. Copies of the Scheme are available in braille and on audiocassette and can also be made available, on request, in other alternative formats.

#### **3.2 ARRANGEMENTS FOR ASSESSING COMPLIANCE WITH SECTION 75.**

**3.2.1** Chapter 3 of the Board's Equality Scheme details its arrangements for assessing its compliance with each of the equality of opportunity promotional duties and each of the good relations duties.

- 3.2.2** The Chief Executive has a responsibility to the Board to ensure that the Board fully complies with this Scheme.
- 3.2.3** 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.
- 3.2.4** The Scheme provided for the establishment of an Equal Opportunities Promotional Unit. This was not implemented due to the development of an Inter-Board/Staff Commission Partnership paragraph 3.2.5 b) refers.

**3.2.5 What has been achieved?**

**a) Corporate approach**

To achieve a corporate approach and to work towards mainstreaming equality into the policy-making process the Board has ensured:

- objectives and targets relating to the statutory duties have been mainstreamed into the Board's Corporate and Business Plans;
- equality objectives have been built into the performance targets of relevant staff and thereafter are reflected in the annual review/appraisal process;
- Progress Reports on the implementation of the Equality Scheme are provided regularly to the General Purposes Committee and the Board;
- Equality issues are considered at meetings of the Board's Senior Management Team and the Senior Officer Group.

**Evidence:**

Corporate Plan, minutes of Board and Senior Management Team Meetings.

**b) Inter-Board/Staff Commission Partnership**

At the early stages of implementing Section 75 of the Act it became apparent that there would be considerable benefit to the Boards and the Staff Commission, consultee groups and service users if there was a collaborative approach to the implementation of our Equality Schemes. This led to the development of an inter-Board/Staff Commission Statutory Duty Co-ordinating Group. The Joint Secretaries of the Joint Negotiating Council are represented on this Group. This Group has top level involvement and clear lines of accountability. It was the establishment of this Group and the co-ordination of Section 75 work on an inter-Board basis, by the Staff Commission, that moved the Boards away from the establishment of an Equal Opportunities Promotional Unit, paragraph 3.2.4) refers.

The Statutory Duty Co-ordinating Group reports directly to the Chief Administrative Officers (CAOs) of the Boards. During the period April 2001 - to date, the CAOs have had 47 meetings at 37 of these meetings equality issues were considered. Considerable benefit has been derived from this method of working, namely:

- effective use of resources;
- avoidance of duplication;
- co-ordinated programmes of work;
- sharing of expertise and learning;
- development of good practice; and
- greater opportunity for partnership working with the community/voluntary sector.

### c) Intra-Board Co-ordination

The Chief Executive has ensured that the implementation of the Equality Scheme has been put into effective and visible practice within the Board. This has been achieved by:

- ensuring equality issues are discussed at Senior Management Team meetings;
- ensuring regular reports on progress are made to the General Purposes Committee and the Board ; and
- raising the profile of equality and diversity within the organisation, through staff meetings, training, newsletters, etc.

An Equality/TSN Group operated during the period January 2002 and December 2003. It was established to:

- co-ordinate/mainstream Equality/TSN issues throughout the Board;
- report on action taken/action required on TSN objectives in each area;
- provide local support to Managers if and when required;
- ensure a consistent approach is used in the EQIA process;
- be involved in training/coaching in relation to Equality/TSN issues; and
- review/monitor/evaluate progress on the procedures.

In June 2003 an Inclusion Steering Group was set up in the Board's Library Service to:

- advise and assist the Library Senior Management Team with planning and policy issues for social inclusion; and
- provide direction and support to library managers to ensure the mainstreaming of inclusion

### d) Annual Direct Expenditure

Outlined at Table 1 below is the annual **direct** expenditure of resources to facilitate the implementation of the Equality Scheme. It is important to emphasise that because of the collaborative working identified above and the mainstreaming of equality initiatives this summary significantly understates the true costs incurred in the promotion of equality of opportunity and good relations incurred by this Board.

**Table 1 - Annual Direct Expenditure**

Description	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	Totals
<b>1. Recurrent Expenditure</b>							
Administrative Costs	£57,470	£26,363	£39,650	£26,620	£21,748	£22,511	<b>£194,362</b>
Training/publications/ Research		£4,566	£4,970	£1,789	£955	£386	<b>£12,666</b>
<b>Sub-totals</b>	<b>£57,470</b>	<b>£30,929</b>	<b>£44,620</b>	<b>£28,409</b>	<b>£22,703</b>	<b>£22,897</b>	<b>£207,028</b>
<b>2. Capital Expenditure</b>							
Schools		£100,000	£250,000	£98,000	£900,000	£1,200,000	<b>£2,548,000</b>
Libraries				£5,000	£110,045	£243,949	<b>£358,994</b>
Youth/Administrative/HQ		£2,000	£4,000	£39,034	£28,728	£38,119	<b>£111,881</b>
Sub-totals		£102,000	£254,000	£142,034	£1,038,773	£1,482,068	<b>£3,018,875</b>
<b>Grand Totals</b>	<b>£57,470</b>	<b>£132,929</b>	<b>£298,620</b>	<b>£170,443</b>	<b>£1,061,476</b>	<b>£1,504,965</b>	<b>£3,225,903</b>

The above does not include costs for individual Board Officers to attend courses and conferences in relation to Section 75

## **Evidence:**

Minutes of Statutory Duty Co-ordinating Group, Association of Chief Administrative Officers meetings and Annual Accounts.

### **3.2.6 What remains to be done?**

- On-going programme of work needs to continue.
- Consider implications of RPA proposals.

### **3.2.7 How do we build on our success?**

- Partnership arrangements at (b) above have worked exceptionally well and this pioneering approach to consultation has made it easier for consultees to engage on the implementation of the Equality Scheme. Rather than receiving information in multiples of six a single document has been used to facilitate consultation and/or keep consultees fully engaged in the process.
- Important to retain the Boards' centralised, co-ordinated approach which has also ensured the 'local' element has been addressed.
- The Boards/Staff Commission have integrated Section 75 into corporate and business planning processes and key activities of line management. This gives practical evidence of mainstreaming. It has also avoided Section 75 work being perceived as an add on to 'normal' programmes of work; and has enabled the equality agenda to automatically work its way into the system and to cascade down to all levels.

### **3.2.8 How do we meet the challenges identified?**

- A similar group, to that referred to at (b) above, was established on a DE/NDPB basis. This group is chaired by Department of Education and has not met since September 2003.
- The Board prepared an annual statement (report) reviewing the steps it had taken during the year to implement its statutory equality duties. Generally, the Equality Commission made available its reporting template for this at an advanced stage in the process. This has presented challenges in processing such a report through the Board and its committee structures. Whilst the Board recognises that the Equality Commission has also had to develop templates, guidance etc from scratch having now been through the experience of implementation over a five year review we would hope that information in the future will be made available in a more timely manner.
- Develop a common approach across the Boards to the collection of information on the direct costs of implementing each Equality Scheme.

## **3.3 SCREENING OF POLICIES**

**3.3.1** The Board's timetable, following commencement of the Scheme, provided that in Year 1 the following actions would take place:

- The screening of all existing policies;
- A submission to the Equality Commission of a Report on the Screening Exercise.

### 3.3.2 What was achieved?

#### a) Existing Policies

In advance of approval of the Scheme the Board commenced the process of screening policies, for which it adopted a two-stage approach.

**Stage 1** of the process commenced with Board policies being specified and, where the nature of the policy was not self evident, an explanation of the policy was provided. In September 2000 a list of policies was issued to those consultees identified in the Board's Equality Scheme, inviting feedback on any policy area(s) where problems with respect to equality issues had been encountered or where, in the opinion of consultees, equality of opportunity could be improved.

Pro forma documentation was prepared to facilitate the screening of policies. An inter-Board pilot exercise was then conducted, on the Home to School Transport policy, to test the suitability of the pro forma documentation. An evaluation of this pilot exercise concluded that the pro-forma document was a useful aid to the screening process.

During January/February 2001 the Board carried out the screening of its policies and the five Boards then compared the outcomes of their screening exercises. Taking account of the feedback from consultees, they concluded that a co-ordinated joint Board approach should be maintained and it was agreed that a report of the outcome of the screening exercise would be compiled on an inter-Board basis. Initial decisions were taken on the policies to be subjected to an Equality Impact Assessment together with a proposed timetable and a priority order for impact assessments. In the prioritisation of policies for Equality Impact Assessment, account was taken of the timetable established by other relevant statutory bodies in relation to common functions. The Boards decided to seek to co-join and co-operate with the Department of Education and others on a number of equality impact assessments. This approach was universally welcomed and a definition of the terms to 'co-join' and 'to co-operate' was agreed for inclusion in the Report of the Screening Exercise. The wording agreed was as follows:

*“Co-operate means that the Boards will provide information and support to the Department on the conduct of Equality Impact Assessments. On completion of the various elements of an Equality Impact Assessment the decision-making responsibility will remain with the Department.*

*The Department of Education and the Boards will co-join, on a partnership basis, on the conduct of an Equality Impact Assessment for those policies that exist at both strategic and operational levels and where equality issues have emerged at both of these levels. On completion of the various elements of an Equality Impact Assessment the decision-making authority will rest with the Department and/or the Boards as per their area of responsibility.”*

**Stage 2** of the screening process was initiated in April 2001 with the issue of the consultation report. The availability of this report was advertised in the press and it was also circulated to all of the consultees listed in the Boards'/Commission's Equality Scheme. Consultation events were organised on a Commission/inter-

Board basis, with the Commission acting as consultation co-ordinator for all regional meetings. To facilitate more focused feedback in a number of key policy areas regional meetings were organised in partnership with:

- Age Sector Reference Group;
- Carers National Association Northern Ireland;
- Coalition on Sexual Orientation;
- Disability Action;
- Northern Ireland Council on Ethnic Minorities;
- Traveller Movement Northern Ireland;
- Women's Support Network;
- Youthnet.

A consultation meeting was also held with parents of children from the Chinese community who had indicated that they could have difficulty contributing at a public meeting. Translation and interpreter services were provided for this event. Participants were advised in advance of all the consultation meetings that requests for assistance to ensure full participation, including any communication, transport or access needs, would be considered. All requests for assistance were accommodated and these included:

- provision of transport;
- translation of information;
- information being made available in an alternative format (Braille);
- dietary requirements;
- provision of a crèche;
- interpreter service; and
- signer (BSL - British Sign Language).

The Trade Unions were invited to respond to the consultation report using the established negotiating machinery. Separate meetings were held with NIPSA and UNISON.

A total of nineteen public meetings were held at convenient locations across Northern Ireland and the starting times for these meetings were varied in an attempt to cater for the needs of the public.

In addition to the feedback received at the meetings written responses to the consultation report were received from:

- Association for Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus;
- Chinese Welfare Association;
- Disability Action;
- Hospital Road Youth Club;
- MENCAP;
- Multi Cultural Resource Centre;
- NIPPA - The Early Years Organisation;
- Northern Ireland Public Service Alliance;
- Smart Attack Child Care;
- Traveller Movement Northern Ireland.

As a result of the consultation exercise some additional policies were identified for EQIA and the initial proposed timetable for EQIAs was accelerated in a number of areas.

A final five Board report on the Screening of Policies was published and issued to consultees in December 2001.

**Evidence:**

Report on Screening of Policies, launched 14 February 2002.

**b) Proposed Policies (Year 2 - April 2002 to date)**

Since Year 2 of the implementation of Equality Schemes the Boards in collaboration with the Staff Commission have produced a Supplementary Report on the Screening of New Policies. This report identifies new policies screened, the results of the screening of such policies and any resultant proposed changes to the Commission's/Boards' co-joined approach. It was proposed that a single report be issued at the end of each financial year to all consultees for comment and all feedback considered on an inter-Board/Commission basis. Decisions taken following consideration of the issues raised in the consultation process are communicated to consultees.

**Evidence:**

Supplementary Reports on the Screening of New Policies for the periods April 2002-March 2003; April 2003- March 2004 and April 2004 - March 2005 provide details of all policies screened in the SEELB during the period of this review.

**c) Resource Allocation Plans 2005/2006**

In October 2004 the Government published a "Draft Priorities and Budget 2005-08" for consultation and comment. In responding to this document Boards were wholly supportive of the Government's vision to create a peaceful, inclusive, prosperous, stable and fair society. They also welcomed a commitment to develop a "Better Qualified and Skilled Workforce" through a new skills strategy with particular emphasis on development of the education system for 14 to 19 year olds, through the provision of a curriculum with an appropriate mix of academic, vocational and life skills based on individual needs and aspirations. However, Boards also expressed serious concerns that the levels of resources, as proposed in the draft budget statement, would fall well short of the resources needed to enable Boards to deliver the outcomes and targets as set out in the relevant Public Service Agreements (PSAs)

Each Board is legally obliged to prepare a Resource Allocation Plan which ensures that expenditure does not exceed its budget allocation. The Boards projected a budget deficit of approximately £33 million. Contingency plans were developed, generally referred to as 'five Board scenario paper', based on projected budgets. This paper included an impact assessment of the potential effects of service reduction in specific service areas and it was shared with the Department of Education. These plans helped to inform Board members in the decision making process. Financial allocations were notified by the Department of Education on 15 February 2005. Draft budgets were submitted during the last week in March 2005. Boards screened the draft Financial Plans during April/May 2005.

On 31 May 2005 the Boards issued a consultation report on their Resource Allocation Plans 2005/06. Part I of this report provided background information in respect of the Department of Education's funded part of the budget (90% of the Boards' total grant funding), the spending on schools and a summary of the current position in regard to the Boards' draft Financial Plans for the 2005/06 financial year. Part II outlined the equality considerations and set out the findings of the screening exercise on the implementation of the Boards' draft Financial Plans 2005/06.

The Boards normally consult annually on new policies screening and report on the outcome of the screening process. Given the urgency surrounding the financial planning process for 2005/06 it was decided that this separate additional report be issued detailing the findings of this particular screening exercise.

A Report on the Screening of the Boards' Resource Allocation Plans 2005/2006 was published in August 2005.

#### **Evidence:**

Consultation Paper on the Boards' Resource Allocation Plans 2005/2006, May 2005  
Report on the Screening of the Boards Resource Allocation Plans 2005/2006, August 2005.

#### **3.3.3 What remains to be done?**

- Continue screening new policies.

#### **3.3.4 How do we build on our success?**

In the early years of implementation the Boards' focus was on the development of processes which would facilitate the delivery of equality outcomes.

- The Boards' adopted a two stage approach to screening existing policies. It was generally accepted that this worked particularly well. The pro forma documents and approach to screening have been utilised by other public authorities.
- For new policies, consultation is normally built into the policy development stage but in the early stages of implementation this was not universally applied.
- Increasingly consultation and equality considerations are built in as an inherent part of the policy development process. This being the case it is unlikely that screening will identify significant implications for the promotion of equality of opportunity. Whilst Boards fully accept that a screening exercise should be conducted and consulted upon, they believe it should be possible, where appropriate to earmark certain policies for a rescreen after a period of implementation. This would ensure a fresh look is given to such policies and would allow a more robust method of screening to emerge.
- In one case whilst a public consultation exercise had taken place on a major policy decision, Section 75 groups had not been targeted as part of the process. Arrangements have been put in place to avoid a re occurrence of this.
- Training was provided to officers involved in the initial screening of policies, however, given that screening is carried out less frequently the training benefits may be less effective if not regularly applied. A screening toolkit has been designed to ensure consistency of approach and the maintenance of standards across the service.

### 3.3.5 How do we meet the challenges identified?

- There were numerous challenges, namely:
  - What is a policy?
  - How do you screen?
  - Ambiguity in the Equality Commission's guidance re consultation on screening, particularly in regard to new policies.

There were only four screening questions and some general guidance to facilitate the screening process.
- These challenges were overcome through a combination of risk management, innovative working, making assumptions/decisions based on good practice in other areas of work and consulting on the proposed way forward, namely
  - development of a screening pro forma
  - a pilot exercise to test the suitability of the document
  - issuing guidance to all Board officers involved in screening
  - training being made available to staff involved in screening
  - co-ordination of the results of screening
  - maintaining a good paper trail of the process adopted
  - publicising the results of screening for consultation
  - consultation
  - provision of feedback, publication of results of screening.
- The screening process is workable within the scheme. The process could be improved if a clearer procedure was specified. In the initial screening exercise considerable effort was put into ensuring the screening process operated effectively.
- Ambiguity remains around two key areas of this process, namely
  - what is a policy; and
  - when are you required to consult.

The Equality Commission's guidance, issued February 2005, suggests that it is sufficient to consult on the outcomes of the screening exercise and those policies identified as having significant implications for equality of opportunity must be subject to full impact assessment.
- The Board's Scheme states: *"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."* This has not worked in controversial policy areas such as Public Private Partnerships and allocation of budgets. In such cases the Board has been left in the frontline in dealing with the equality considerations which emerge from policy decisions made at another level.

In regard to the Boards' Resource Allocation Plans on which a separate screening exercise was conducted Boards were fully cognisant of their legal obligations pursuant to Section 75, however, they were also mindful that this statutory obligation could not be regarded in isolation. The Boards equally had to face the financial constraints imposed by their allocated funding and the need to meet their mandatory obligations imposed upon them by the Education Orders 1986-2005.

In the consultation around this specific screening exercise the Equality Commission whilst noting the 'swiftness and thoroughness of the screening exercise' suggested the consultation document would have benefited from a summary table which clearly indicates the initial assessments of the four screening criteria for each policy. The

Board having considered this point are not convinced it would enhance the consultation process however, it is accepted time permitting that a summary table would be beneficial and will therefore be included in future consultations. The Boards believe that unless the current proposed level of funding for Education is increased significantly the Boards, from February 2006, will again face an irreconcilable conflict between the need to take the steps necessary to remain within the budgets set by the Department of Education for 2006/07 and the need to fulfil obligations under the Section 75 statutory duties.

### **3.4 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENTS (EQIAs)**

**3.4.1** Section 7 of the Board's Equality Scheme sets out the procedures for the impact assessment of Board policies. In regard to new policies the scheme stated:

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

Electronic Libraries.”

**3.4.2** Following the Boards screening of policies, paragraph 3.3 refers, the Board proceeded to implement its EQIA programme. The Boards' EQIA programme is summarised at Appendix 1. The summary includes details of the preliminary decision, pre consultation and the final decision post consultation. It also provides a commentary on progress made on an inter-Board/Staff Commission basis.

#### **3.4.3 Department of Education led EQIAs**

In December 2001 the Department of Education and the Boards/Staff Commission published their equality impact assessment timetables. As a significant number of policies operate at both strategic and operational levels arrangements were made for the Department and the Boards to work closely together on equality impact assessments, this is reflected in the Table at Appendix 1. During the period 2003-04 the Department of Education commenced a review of its EQIA timetable.

In March 2005 the Department issued its revised policy screening and EQIA timetable for consultation. The Boards are presently awaiting the outcome of this process, after which they will revisit the decisions made in 2001 to consider the impact of the Department's decisions on the Boards' EQIA programme.

The Boards have asked the Department to keep them fully informed of developments arising from the consultation process and to share with them feedback from consultees on those policies which will require the Department and the Boards to work closely together. At the time of writing this report the Department of Education had not completed this exercise.

#### **3.4.4 What has been achieved?**

##### **a) Electronic Libraries for Northern Ireland ELFNI**

The Equality Schemes for each of the Boards indicated that, during the 12 months following the commencement of the Scheme, a new policy known as 'Electronic Libraries for Northern Ireland' would be impact assessed.

The aim of the ELFNI project is to deliver socially inclusive, cost effective, efficient and modern public library and information services to the Northern Ireland community. To deliver these services Boards will provide by way of a partnership arrangement with the private sector (PPP), PCs with access to electronic information, including the World Wide Web, for public use in all branch libraries. The Project will also provide a computerised library management system to operate in all libraries, an electronic libraries portal or gateway to a wide range of quality assured information sources and various other services, e.g. fax and photocopying, for public use.

The arrangements for preparing and consulting on the EQIA were co-ordinated, on behalf of the five Boards, by the Western Board's Head of Libraries and Information and a detailed report explaining the aims and objectives of the ELFNI policy was published on 1 June 2001. This report was advertised in the press and copies were distributed to all of the consultees listed in each Board's Equality Scheme and copies were also available at each public library in Northern Ireland. In addition, a series of consultation meetings for the general public was held at suitable venues within each Board's area.

Consultees welcomed the proposed access to electronic information that ELFNI will provide the majority of those who responded indicated that they believe the project will promote equality of opportunity in respect of library use. However the trade unions expressed concerns about the use of PPP as a means of delivering public services and in particular in respect of some 60 library staff across the five Boards who could have been affected by proposals to rationalise the existing arrangements for some library services. In response to representations on these matters the project was changed to greatly reduce the number of staff who potentially could have been affected by the centralisation of some services and this matter will only be taken further when all staffing issues are resolved. The Boards agreed to bring the objections to the use of PPP, as a means of procuring public services, to the attention of the Department of Finance and Personnel.

The final report on the outcomes of the ELFNI Impact Assessment was published in December 2001. The availability of this Report was advertised in the press and it was also posted on each Board's website.

The ELFNI EQIA, which was listed for Year 1 has been completed.

**b) To promote through the Youth Service, the Personal and Social Development of Young people.**

For the purpose of conducting this EQIA, the Department of Education co-joined with the Education and Library Boards and the Youth Council for Northern Ireland. The EQIA was completed using both quantitative and qualitative analysis and was based on the Equality Commission's 'Practical Guidance' issued in April 2001.

In conducting this EQIA it was acknowledged that at present not all the data necessary is available to fully monitor the promotion, through the Youth Service, of the personal and social development of young people. However, in conjunction with youth sector partners more effective monitoring and research systems are being developed to improve this present shortcoming. New measures include a geo-mapping initiative which began in October 2001 and which will provide new data, indicators and their graphical representation and will integrate physical and social

data to enable targeting resources to be an objective and demonstrable process, paragraph 3.5.2 c) refers.

In addition, and in order to supplement the quantitative research conducted through a consultation exercise that included:

- an initial publicity poster and letter being distributed to all groups at the launch of the Policy Review;
- the publication of an 'Initial considerations' document by mail shot and public meeting held in January 1997;
- the launch of the Youth Service Policy Review - consultation report in October 1998.

An assessment of the impact of the policy "the promotion through the Youth Service of the personal and social development of young people" was then conducted on the equality of opportunity in respect of the nine categories of persons identified in Section 75. This exercise identified that there is a lower uptake of services across the following equality categories:-

- Age - 19-25 year olds tend to opt out of youth club type activities;
- Race - youth ethnic people do not access local youth provision for fear of rejection, lack of understanding or abuse;
- Gender - lesbians, gays, bisexual and transgendered people feel marginalised and "not welcome";
- Disability - screening has identified that people with a disability are underrepresented in the main Youth Service activities;
- Dependants – many young carers feel it is difficult for them to have a social life and they feel excluded from normal teenage liaison activities.

The Department of Education, in conjunction with the main stakeholders, has commenced a range of positive measures, which they believe will act as stepping stones towards eliminating any adverse impact for the categories of persons covered by Section 75. Thus a number of pilot projects are underway involving:-

- Western Education and Library Board Youth Service working with young travellers;
- North Eastern Board Youth Service working in partnership with Mencap;
- South Eastern Board Youth Service working in partnership with Phab;
- Southern Board Youth Service looking at issues of rural isolation;
- Belfast Board Youth Service working with the Deaf Youth Association and also considering youth counselling and city centre initiatives;
- YouthNet considering issues affecting gay and lesbian young people;
- Youth Council for Northern Ireland working with ethnic minorities.

These pilot projects will provide valuable qualitative and quantitative data and the learning experience will be shared across the Youth sector.

The availability of the report, on the findings of this EQIA, was publicised in the press and was posted on the website of the Department, each Education and Library Board and the Youth Council and a series of consultation meetings were held within each Board area. Publicity material and a questionnaire inviting the public to comment were made available at Divisional Youth Offices and full-time ELB Youth Centres across Northern Ireland. Following examination of the responses the EQIA project

team deemed it necessary to embark on a further period of consultation. This began on 6 November 2003 and ran for a 10 week period.

The results of this EQIA were published on 28 May 2004.

This EQIA, which was listed for year 1, has been completed

**c) Procurement**

The Boards also agreed to co-operate in year 1 with the Department of Finance and Personnel's EQIA in respect of public procurement policy. In September 2001, the Department of Finance and Personnel issued a consultation document on proposals contained in the 'Review of Public Procurement'. A joint inter-Board commentary on the proposals was submitted to DFP in December 2001.

**d) Staff Commission's Code of Employment and Promotion Procedures and the inter-Board Internal Trawl Procedure**

In January 2001 the Staff Commission established a working group to review this Code. The working group comprised representatives of the Staff Commission, the Boards, the recognised trade unions and the Equality Commission. The working group's redraft of these procedures is titled 'Code of Procedures for Recruitment, Selection and Promotion', hereafter referred to as 'the redrafted Code'. The redrafted Code was accompanied by practical guidance on the recruitment and selection process. To pave the way for the EQIA pre-consultation took place on the redrafted Code. The redrafted Code was issued with a briefing paper and pre consultation response pro forma to 253 consultees. Sixteen written responses were received and three consultation meetings were held.

An assessment of the impact of the redrafted Code and the Internal Trawl was then conducted to promote the duty of equality of opportunity in respect of the categories of persons identified in Section 75 of the Act. This exercise identified the following issues:

- the potential barrier to the promotion of equality of opportunity of the internal trawl procedure (race; disability; gender; religion and dependants);
- the potential adverse impact on a number of Section 75 categories, namely gender, disability and dependants, of the use of a minimum service requirement when applying for promotion posts;
- the need to consider more specific guidance on job requirements, eligibility criteria and assessment arrangements.

The Commission/Boards proposed a range of positive measures which will, they believe, eliminate any adverse impact for the categories of persons covered by Section 75. These measures included:

- a significant reduction in the number of posts advertised through the Internal Trawl Procedure;
- removal of the eligibility requirement that staff with less than 6 months' continuous service in an permanent capacity cannot apply for promotion to a higher graded post;
- removal of the eligibility barrier in relation to internal trawls for staff on temporary, fixed term contracts and/or Employment Support Scheme;

- incorporation of a number of substantive changes to further develop good practice and thereby promote equality of opportunity; and
- provision of comprehensive training to panel members.

On 18 March 2003, a report of the EQIA was published for consultation. Its availability was advertised in the Belfast Telegraph, Irish News and Newsletter. It was distributed to consultees specified in the Staff Commission's/Boards' Equality Schemes.

Six regional meetings were held with groups representing five of the Section 75 categories, namely disability, dependants, ethnic minorities, sexual orientation and gender. In addition eleven written submissions were received from organisations in the voluntary, community and trade union sectors and from two individuals.

The issues raised during the consultation process related to:

- the existing internal trawl procedure used to fill specified posts;
- advertising;
- the recruitment and selection process;
- application of the Code and its associated Guidelines;
- employee/job applicant monitoring;
- industrial relations; and
- affirmative/positive action measures.

The Staff Commission and the Boards carefully considered the points raised during the consultation process and agreed the following actions:

- from June 2004 all permanent substantive vacant posts will normally publicly advertised;
- job vacancies will be advertised on each Board's website with links to the websites of CoSO, Disability Action, MENCAP and NICEM;
- a joint seminar will be organised with Disability Action/MENCAP to address issues of accessibility and reasonable adjustment in the recruitment and selection process;
- links will be developed with minority ethnic groups, including young travellers and special schools/disability groups to facilitate work placement opportunities for young people;
- an inter-Board group will be established to review qualifications, equivalencies and age criterion used in the recruitment and selection process;
- a new employment monitoring system will be piloted to collect monitoring data from employees/job applicants across all nine equality categories;
- removal of the service eligibility requirement for promotion posts; and
- removal of the eligibility barrier for temporary, fixed term and employment support contract postholders.

The final report on the outcomes of this EQIA was published in October 2003 and its availability was advertised in the press and it was also posted on the Staff Commission's website. Progress on the implementation of the results of this EQIA is detailed at Section 3.5.2(e) of this report. The redrafted Code of Procedures on Recruitment and Selection was launched in May 2004 and came into effect from June 2004.

This EQIA, which was listed for Year 2, has been completed.

**e) English as an Additional Language (EAL)**

For the purpose of conducting this EQIA, the Department of Education co-joined with the five Education and Library Boards and the Northern Ireland Council for Curriculum Examinations and Assessment. The EQIA on the policy "Provision of English Language Support within Schools for Pupils who have English as an additional Language" is ongoing. However, following informal contacts with minority ethnic groups it was agreed that there would be considerable merit in conducting a pre consultation exercise on this issue. In June 2003 a briefing paper together with a pre consultation response pro forma was issued to consultees to obtain their views on the potential equality issues on the current provision of support for EAL pupils within schools. This documentation was translated into Chinese, Urdu, Portuguese and Arabic to facilitate the consultation process. It was anticipated that this exercise would inform and assist with the assessment of impacts and identification of mitigation measures as appropriate.

This EQIA was suspended by the Department of Education in consultation with the Boards and CCEA to facilitate an independent review of EAL support.

**f) Family Friendly Policies**

Following the publication of the Staff Commission/Boards' consultation paper in 2001, on the screening of policies, several consultees raised concerns regarding the decision to 'screen out' policies related to flexible working arrangements. They suggested this decision should be reviewed and those policies titled 'flexible working arrangements' be re-classified as 'family friendly policies'. This was accepted by the Staff Commission and the Boards.

The National Joint Council for Local Government Services (the NJC), representing employer and trade union interests in local government in Great Britain, produced a Guide 'Finding the Balance - Work-life Policies in Practice'. The aim of the Guide is to raise awareness of current best practice in various local authorities and to set out ways for a positive joint approach to working arrangements which can be linked with an improvement of services.

In Northern Ireland the Joint Secretaries of the Joint Negotiating Council (the JNC) established a Joint Working Group to compare policies and procedures in existence within the Boards with those outlined in the Guide. As part of this exercise an inter-Board survey was carried out of Headquarters and Library headquarters staff to assess the uptake of flexible working arrangements currently in place. The survey identified that 15% of staff had opted for a flexible work pattern and that 'uptake across the Boards was highest amongst the lower grades of staff, namely Clerical and Senior Clerical Officer. Uptake by staff above Senior Executive Officer grade is low. However, posts above the grade of Assistant Principal Officer indicate a substantial uptake by staff in the Education Psychology Service'.

An audit of current policy and practice shows that information can be classified into three main categories as follows:

- flexible working patterns currently available in Boards which are contained in the NJC Guide;
- current provisions regarding statutory, discretionary and other leave arrangements; and

- policies and practices utilised by local authorities in GB, and referred to in the NJC guide, but which are not currently available in Boards.

The Joint Working Group then reviewed the policies at the first two categories above to establish what, if any, changes may be required to ensure they promote equality of opportunity for the persons specified under Section 75.

In addition, a separate inter-Board/Commission Working Group was appointed which includes trade union representation, to develop a policy on teleworking.

The terms of reference for the Group are:

- to prepare a policy in relation to teleworking (or home-based working) for acceptance by the Boards/Staff Commission;
- to suggest any necessary strategy and guidelines for the implementation of same; and
- to assist with the establishment and review of any pilot teleworking projects that would inform the above arrangements.

In March 2005 a consultation report was issued to consultees listed in the Boards' and Staff Commission's Equality Scheme. The report summarised the review of current policy and practice and proposed changes to the following policies:

- Job Sharing Scheme;
- Career Breaks Scheme;
- Annual Leave;
- Flexible Working Hours Scheme;
- Domestic Leave; and
- Carer Leave.

The report also outlined details of the new inter-Board/Staff Commission policy on Home-Based Working which is planned as a pilot exercise in the Southern and Western Education and Library Boards. It was distributed with a pro forma response form which was intended to help and encourage the submission of responses by the public.

Twelve written responses were received; consultation meetings with the trade unions took place through the established negotiating machinery. The results of the consultation exercise are due to be published shortly. The key findings resulted in an action plan to:

- better publicise the availability of Work-life Balance Policies;
- to amend policies and, as appropriate JNC Circulars; and
- to conduct a review of the pilot exercise on (Home-based) teleworking;

A JNC 'Guide to Work-life Balance in the Education and Library Boards' has been drafted and will be launched shortly.

## **g) Instrumental Music Services**

An EQIA of this policy commenced during the period 2003-04 and whilst an assessment of impact has been completed, it became clear that events subsequent to screening had had a profound effect on the implementation of this policy.

In 2002 the Department of Education's Education and Training Inspectorate conducted a formal survey of the Boards' Instrumental Music Services. This survey addressed the issue of ownership, access and equality of opportunity in order to inform further progress. A Programme of Work was underway aimed at improving pupils' equality of access and to cater for a wider range of pupils with musical interests. The range of measures being implemented were those normally associated with proposed equality mitigation and for this reason it was intended to propose that the EQIA be discontinued, that the new measures be monitored closely to establish if they are achieving the desired outcomes and that the policy be re-screened during the period 2006-07.

However, given the current financial constraints the Boards are not, within the financial year 2005-06 in a position to fully implement this programme of work. The consultation paper on the Boards' Resource Allocation Plans 2005-06, issued May 2005, provides more information on this decision.

#### **h) Criteria for Making Statutory Assessment of Special Educational Needs**

A project team and management board was appointed in March 2004 to take this EQIA forward. It was agreed that an inter-Board pilot exercise would be undertaken, applying the new and current criteria and identifying what, if any, changes emerged. It was felt that this process would help inform the EQIA. A common format was agreed for data collection during the pilot exercise to aid analysis and inform findings at the end of this phase in the process. In addition, a briefing paper and a consultation questionnaire were issued. A series of consultation meetings were held with organisations such as Disability Action, MENCAP, the Children's Commissioner and parents of children with special educational needs from the Chinese community.

Given the sensitive environment surrounding Special Education, including the implementation of SENDO from September 2005 and the potential impact of this upon the demands from schools and parents for SEN support, it was agreed to suspend the EQIA until the full impact of SENDO and the appropriateness of the criteria was reviewed.

#### **i) Job Evaluation**

This EQIA, listed for EQIA in Year IV (April 2004 - March 2005) is being conducted jointly by the five Boards/Commission. A project team has been appointed, EQIA training for the team was provided on 22 March 2005. The EQIA is at Stage 1 of the process.

#### **j) Grant Aid Scheme for Assistance to Youth Organisations**

This EQIA, initially listed for Year 2 was deferred pending the completion of the overarching EQIA "Promotion, through the Youth Service, of the personal and social development of young people". This was completed in May 2004. During the period 2005-06 a project team was appointed, training is scheduled for this team and the EQIA will commence during February/March 2006.

## **k) Statutory Curriculum and Assessment - Framework for Achievement**

The Boards undertook to co-operate with the Department of Education and the Northern Ireland Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) in carrying out the EQIA: 'Maintenance of a Statutory Northern Ireland Curriculum'. To co-operate means that the Boards will provide information and support to the Department and the CCEA. The project team appointed to conduct the EQIA included representatives from each of the Boards.

## **l) Inter-Board/Staff Commission equality reviews**

A number of policy reviews were conducted aimed at ensuring that employment policies had been equality proofed:

- redrafted Equal Opportunities Policy issued as Joint Negotiating Council Circular 102;
- redrafted Policy and Code of Practice on the Employment of People with Disabilities issued as JNC Circular 103;
- review and re-issue of JNC Circular No. 77 'A Statement of Policy and Code of Practice on Measures to Combat Harassment in the Workplace for Non-teaching Staff in Controlled Schools and Non-teaching Staff in Maintained Schools (Revised)' and JNC Circular No. 78 'A Statement of Policy and Code of Practice on Measures to Combat Harassment in the Workplace for Staff in Board Locations other than Schools (Revised)';
- review and re-issue of JNC Council Circulars:
  - No. 117 - Maternity Leave Provisions;
  - No. 118 - Paternity Leave;
  - No. 119 - Leave for Adoptive Parents; and
  - No. 120 - Parental Leave.

## **m) Best Value Fundamental Reviews**

The Education and Libraries (NI) Order 2003 placed a legal obligation on Education and Library Boards to demonstrate Best Value in the delivery of their services. Prior to 2003, the Boards had voluntarily established a Fundamental Review programme for services on a five-Board basis. The programme was carried out by the Central Management Support Unit for Education and Library Boards (CMSU) under the auspices of a Project Board. The reviews were completed using the 4Cs' methodology of Consulting, Challenging, Comparing and demonstrating Competitiveness. As part of the review process, key stakeholders are identified for each service. These stakeholders are then consulted about relevant matters, employing a combination of methods from meetings and focus groups to surveys and questionnaires.

As a key component of 4Cs' methodology, CMSU has undertaken extensive consultation and equality considerations have been built into the review process. During the five-year period reviews have been carried out in relation to:

- Special Education;
- School Catering;
- Youth Service;
- Curriculum Advisory and Support Service.

Through the review process a number of conclusions were reached and subsequent recommendations made, some of those are of particular interest from an equality perspective. They are:

### **Special Educational Needs**

Conclusions:

- Variations in policies and procedures e.g. allocation of classroom assistance;
- Provision and resources; increases in number and complexity of needs;
- Professional development e.g. special needs training for teachers;
- Parental involvement; increased engagement and sharing of information;
- Partnerships; greater co-operation between all stakeholders.

Recommendations included:

- DE to progress EQIA on regional criteria for identification and assessment of special educational needs;
- Review of statutory assessment documentation;
- Further develop lines of communication and involvement;
- Promote links and develop arrangements with voluntary organisations;
- Review existing training practices for those involved with children with special educational needs;
- Review arrangements for delivery of services to children with special educational needs;
- Incorporate Disabled Person's Act into transition planning process.

### **School Catering**

Conclusions arrived at included:

- Children have developed a taste for convenient and fast food;
- Greater choice e.g. sandwich and salad bars would be appreciated;
- The cost of meals is prohibitive to many parents;
- It is important that lessons in the classroom promoting healthy eating are supported by the experience in the dining room;
- A welcoming environment is crucial to attracting children into the dining room;
- Suitable access is important for children with special educational needs.

The report made a number of recommendations that have been reflected in similar developments across UK. These recommendations related to:

- Promoting a whole school approach;
- Multi-agency approach to promoting a healthier lifestyle for children;
- Access to free meals for all school children;
- Improving dining facilities and the environment;
- Increasing choice and quality of food available.

### **Curriculum Advisory and Support Service**

Conclusions reached during the review included:

- There is an ethos of equality running through the service;
- Need to support human rights and equality curriculum matters for all teachers;
- Need of support for religious education that encompasses minority faiths;
- Support required in relation to counselling and bullying policies;
- Equality of opportunity of access to CASS support needed for all teachers.

Recommendations incorporated:

- Take full account of equality obligations under relevant legislation;
- Develop formal relations with minority groups as a means of raising awareness and sharing good practice;
- Promote CASS within schools to raise the profile of the service and increase awareness of the support available.

## **Youth Service**

Generic equality matters:

- Participation by minority groups;
- Reaching out to all sections of the community;
- Involvement in equality matters by the service;
- Development of good practice e.g. bullying policy;
- Role models from minority groups and staff recruitment;
- Relations with representative umbrella groups;
- Cost and practicalities of complying with equality legislation;
- Establishment of current baselines of participation.

Disability issues:

- Levels of uptake;
- Access;
- Partnerships;
- Representation;
- Personal care and health and safety;
- Resources;
- Project working.

Ethnicity:

- Cultural differences;
- Provision of a safe environment;
- Awareness and training;
- Language barriers;
- Promotion of harmony;

Sexual orientation:

- Equality-proofed funding;
- Pro-active approach;
- Staff awareness and training;
- Partnership approach;
- Youth club policies.

The report came to a number of conclusions relating to:

- Advances in improving levels of inclusion in the service by young people;
- Low participation by ethnic minority groups;
- Insufficient consultation held with key stakeholders;
- Need for greater innovation in reaching out to young people;
- Further development of partnerships with voluntary organisations.

Recommendations included:

- Promote and support increased levels of inclusion and participation through the efficient and effective use of resources;
- Identify and agree roles and responsibilities for all stakeholders from the statutory and voluntary sectors;
- Develop a NI-wide marketing and PR strategy;
- Establish a communications plan.

#### **What remains to be done?**

- Appendix 1 provides a snap shot of progress made on an inter-Board/ Staff Commission basis.
- Of the EQIAs scheduled to be completed on an intra, inter-Board/Staff Commission basis, five have been completed, two are on-going, two have been suspended and one remains deferred. Four Best Value Reviews have been concluded all of which had an equality component. Seven policy reviews have also been completed resulting in the issue of revised policies and/or Joint Negotiating Council circulars.
- Of the EQIAs scheduled to be completed on a Department of Education/inter-Board co-joined basis two have been completed. Considerable progress had been made on another EQIA which was suspended by the Department pending an external review.

#### **3.4.5 How do we build on success?**

- The first EQIA conducted by the Boards was on the new policy 'Electronic Libraries for Northern Ireland'. Following the completion of this review an evaluation exercise was conducted to review the process adopted and identify any learning points for future impact assessments. An outcome from this was the publication of a workbook 'A Recommended Approach to Conducting Equality Impact Assessments' it aims to complement the guidance issued by the Equality Commission. The workbook has been prepared as an aide-memoire to those involved in carrying out an EQIA and is not intended as a substitute for formal training in the process. The workbook has proven to be a useful resource in ensuring that project teams adopt a consistent approach to the completion of EQIAs and all critical areas of the process are addressed.

#### **3.4.6 How do we meet the challenges presented by this process?**

- At the stage of setting the EQIA timetable there was no experience of conducting such a review – the Boards were over ambitious in the number of EQIA's and Equality Reviews listed, given that there was an on-going programme of Best Value Reviews. A commitment was given that Best Value Reviews would include an equality component, this was achieved. There was a failure by the Boards to fully quantify the work which would be required to implement the findings of the EQIA. In all EQIAs completed to date substantial programmes of work have emerged. The Boards have put considerable resources into ensuring that the EQIAs are completed to a high standard and that follow-up work is undertaken in accordance with action plans set, report on progress is documented in each year's annual report of the implementation of the Equality Scheme.

- In some cases the spirit of the legislation and guidance were followed but the process was enhanced by adopting a more pragmatic and/or innovative approach. For example, a full blown EQIA was not conducted in regard to Work Life Balance policies however meaningful consultation took place throughout the process and mitigation measures were clearly specified and consulted upon. In the EQIA of the Code, paragraph d) above refers, the Equality Commission's Guidance was further developed to provide a more coherent approach to the EQIA process.
- Feedback from consultees on the EQIAs, Best Value and Equality Reviews on both the content of the reports and methodology adopted has been positive overall. In regard to EQIAs consultees have warmly welcomed the fact that there was evidence that their views expressed at pre consultation stages had actually informed the process.
- In December 2001 the Department of Education issued, following consultation, a revised EQIA timetable. At the same time the Boards published their EQIA timetable. A significant number of policies identified by the Department of Education and the Boards operated at both strategic and operational levels and for this reason arrangements were put in place to co-ordinate the impact assessments. The Department of Education commenced a further review in September 2003. The findings of which are due to be published shortly. The Boards, following the completion of the Department's re screening and consultation process, will revisit their decisions made in 2001 and consider the impact of any changes on their programme of work. The co-joining of policies on an inter-Board/Staff Commission basis has proven more beneficial than the DE/inter-Board approach. Where a DE/NDPB approach is being developed it could be argued greater clarity is required on the mechanisms for working, leadership of the EQIA, involvement of project team members at each stage of the process etc.

## **3.5 MONITORING**

**3.5.1** The Board's timetable, following commencement of the Scheme, provided that, a review of monitoring arrangements would be initiated in Year 1. Chapter 6 of the Scheme specified that the Board "will assess the extent of existing monitoring and the scope for extending it to meet the new obligations imposed by the Act". The Board had anticipated that guidance would be published by the Equality Commission in this regard. In July 2002 the Equality Commission published its draft consultation document "Equality Monitoring". The Boards/Staff Commission met with the Equality Commission to provide feedback on the document and submitted a written response. In our submission, whilst we welcomed the development of draft guidance in this complex and sensitive area, we suggested that greater clarity should be provided on the legal obligation to monitor and the status of the guidance. It was also suggested that the guidance should not be prescriptive; instead it should be comprehensive in outlining the options available and recognise that different systems/techniques may be required depending on particular circumstances. It was suggested that the use of pilot programmes should be explored and fully evaluated to test their suitability and possible scope for use in other monitoring situations. It is noteworthy that the Equality Commission and OFMDFM, commenced a research project in 2004/05, aimed at informing the development of monitoring guidance. The Boards/Staff Commission have contributed to this research which in addition to assessing the extent of Section 75 monitoring is considering a number of case-studies, to

effectively inform the development of guidance for public authorities and others in relation to Section 75 monitoring.

The Boards/Staff Commission have emphasised in their representations to the Equality Commission on this matter that the scope for a holistic public service approach to Section 75 monitoring needs to be explored.

At Chapter 6.5 of its Equality Scheme the Board indicated that it would use a range of data sources in conducting monitoring. In conducting screening and EQIAs the Board has used current internal and external data sources, these are documented in screening and/or EQIA reports. This quantitative data has in many cases been supplemented with qualitative data available from consultation events, research etc.

### **3.5.2 What has been achieved?**

#### **a) Employment Monitoring**

The employment monitoring data collected by the Boards did not cover all of the categories specified at Section 75 of the Act. Initially there was a lack of clarity as to whether it was appropriate to extend employment monitoring to cover all of the groups of people specified at Section 75.

In October 2001, an inter-Board/Staff Commission Working Group was established to review the collection of monitoring data to facilitate the review and/or EQIA of employment policies. The five Boards/Staff Commission currently collect data relating to gender, community background, age and disability for non-teaching staff and data relating to gender, community background, marital status, race and disability for applicants for non-teaching posts. The Boards collect similar data for applicants for teaching posts with the exception of community background.

The Working Group concluded that a more comprehensive and uniform approach should be adopted to employment monitoring.

This recommendation was accepted by the Association of Chief Administrative Officers and work was undertaken on an inter-Board/Staff Commission basis on the development of a revised monitoring form. Given the Boards commitment to develop a system which sought to collect quantitative data across all of the nine equality categories specified in Section 75. It was agreed that the form should cover all of these grounds. Advice was sought from the Equality Commission and a number of other groups on the sensitivities around the extension of data collection to cover grounds such as political opinion and sexual orientation.

The BELB agreed to act as the lead Board in piloting the new employment monitoring system.

In 2003 BELB issued a monitoring questionnaire to 5,615 non-teaching staff of which 4,450 were returned, representing a 79% response rate. This exercise has provided valuable information on equality categories not previously monitored.

An inter-Board/Staff Commission review was carried out on the outcome of the pilot employment monitoring exercise conducted in the Belfast Board in 2003. As part of this review a meeting was held with the Equality Commission to review the approach

adopted by BELB, the responses of staff to the employment monitoring questionnaire and to consider how best to move the initiative forward. The Equality Commission acknowledged that the overall response rate at 79% was excellent and, whilst the collection of data in some of the equality groups was problematic in the short-term, the adoption of such an approach would be beneficial in the longer term. It is accepted by the Boards that the adoption of an employment monitoring system which covers all of the nine equality categories specified under Section 75 will assist in the mainstreaming of equality by:

- collecting important data that will help inform EQIAs; and
- facilitate the measurement of the promotion of equality of opportunity in employment across the Boards.

The wording of the questions at two of the equality categories, namely disability and dependants was reviewed. The Equality Commission has been invited to provide feedback on the revised form. Following completion of the questionnaire the employment monitoring system will be extended to all nine categories in conjunction with the introduction of the new Human Resources/Payroll system.

The Boards' existing payroll system is some 20 years old, and although operationally robust, it is effectively obsolete when judged against modern standards in terms of user-interfaces, functionality and reporting capabilities. The Boards have contracted to introduce a new Human Resources/Payroll system over a three year period commencing in April 2004 that includes the following modules: Recruitment, Payroll, Human Resources, Equal Opportunities, Training, Management of Attendance, and Travel and Subsistence. The system will be required to produce the Fair Employment Annual Monitoring Returns and the Triennial Article 55 Reviews, both of which are submitted to the Equality Commission.

#### **Evidence:**

Evaluation Report of the Pilot Monitoring Exercise, June 2004.

#### **b) Schools Data**

The annual school census operation by the Department of Education gathers data on religion, gender, age, ethnicity and on pupils with special education needs including the type of disability or other need that such pupils may have. The data collected was refined on a number of occasions to provide a more comprehensive data source.

The 2002/03 census was extended to collect much more detailed information on religion than previously was the case for primary schools, in terms of identifying the number of non-Christian religious and specific Christian denominations. Previously such information was collected only for post primary schools.

The 2003/04 census sought, for the first time, information on the religious belief of pupils attending special schools. Also, the 'religion table' included on the primary and pre-school census forms were simplified to obviate the need for schools and pre-school centres to record the various Protestant denominations separately.

During 2004/05 the Department of Education commenced a review of its school statistics in consultation with the producers of the statistics (primarily the Boards), a selection of users and potential users inside and outside the Department, a selection

of schools as providers of the data and as potential users and Classroom 2000. The report on the review, which was published on 11 August 2005, can be accessed from the Department's website at [www.deni.uk/facts/index.htm](http://www.deni.uk/facts/index.htm)

The information from the school census was used by the Boards to inform EQIAs and Best Value Fundamental Reviews.

### **c) Geographical Information Systems (GIS)**

GIS is a means of displaying youth service data on a geographical basis rather than presenting statistical summaries. The Boards provide the Youth Council with statistical data related to various characteristics of both voluntary registered and controlled youth groups. This data is geographically analysed to identify gaps in youth service provision so that necessary resources can be allocated more effectively and also to assist in the development and planning of such services. During 2002/03 GIS was conducted on a pilot basis. A full analysis was carried out on the data and a draft report was submitted to the Department. The analysis revealed significant inconsistencies within the data coupled with a lack of standardisation among the Youth Service 1 (YS1) forms which all registered youth groups are obliged to complete annually. YS1 data pertains to the number of young people attending each youth group, their age gender, ethnicity, disability, perceived religious affiliation as well as the number of workers/volunteers, paid/voluntary hours worked and staff qualifications.

Each Board has assisted in the process of data collection and validation with the aim of ensuring the data is accurate and complete. A detailed analysis of the 2004 data cycle was carried out which showed that generally, the data was of an improved standard from that collected in 2003. Reports are being prepared for each Board and also for the Department of Education. This year, the management group will discuss how to collect comparable data on other forms of provision (eg. streetwork, residential centres, counselling, projects etc) with a view to collecting this data from 2005.

The data from the survey of 4,000 young people has been analysed and reported upon, the results showing that a majority of young people attending Controlled and Voluntary youth groups come from deprived areas.

The YS1 data for 2004 has been prepared on a Board by Board basis and also on a Northern Ireland basis. The YS1 data for 2005 has shown an overall improvement although inconsistencies remain and some returns are yet to be collected.

A geographical survey of the Girl Guide organisation has been completed, covering three main study catchment areas. GIS revealed the socio-economic profile of the Guide membership, catchments for individual units and gaps in current provision using geo demographic indices.

A further study of Youth provision in the areas of West Belfast has also been completed in order to show catchments based on distance travelled, analyse overlapping catchments and the socio-economic composition of the membership.

**Evidence:**

Written report material available from Youth Council for Northern Ireland or the Education and Library Boards

**d) Monitoring the Implementation of Actions as a result of the EQIA “Electronic Libraries for Northern Ireland”**

The monitoring systems in place include:

- the establishment of an Intelligent Customer Unit. This Unit is responsible for developing and operating systems and procedures to monitor impact and to recommend service improvements.
- an ELFNI Benefits Realisation Plan which includes a section on equality and sets out the benefits of the project and how and when these will be measured; and
- the inclusion of questions on equality issues in the national annual Public Library Users Survey.

Information on the implementation of these actions, including the Benefits Review model, is published in the Board’s Annual Report to the Equality Commission.

**e) Monitoring the Implementation of Actions as a result of the EQIA “Code of Procedures for Recruitment, Selection and Promotion and Internal Trawl Procedure”**

The Staff Commission and the Boards have put in place an action plan to ensure the implementation of the results of the EQIA.

The monitoring systems in place include:

- redrafted Code will be kept under review by the Staff Commission with a substantive review following a period of three years;
- a training plan will be developed to ensure training is available to all panel members;
- a pilot employment monitoring exercise will be conducted;
- advertisement sources will be tracked for the first 12 months, evaluation will be conducted on the benefit of an internal notification procedure;
- as part of the five yearly review of the Equality Schemes, a review will be conducted of completed EQIAs;
- positive/affirmative action measures contained in the redrafted Code and accompanying Guidelines will be monitored and reviewed.

Information on the implementation of these actions is published in the Staff Commission’s and Boards’ Annual Reports to the Equality Commission.

**Evidence:**

Annual Reports to the Equality Commission

**3.5.3 What remains to be done?**

- A comprehensive monitoring strategy needs to be developed in the context of an holistic public service approach to Section 75 monitoring.

### **3.5.4 How do we build on our success?**

- The development of an employment monitoring system which facilitates the collection of information on all of the grounds specified in Section 75 is being rolled out on an inter-Board basis in conjunction with the instalment of a new Human Resources/Payroll system. The experience of the pilot exercise, the development and review of templates has helped inform our overall approach to monitoring. There is now considerable interest from other public authorities in the approach adopted and the documentation developed.
- The annual school census operated by the Department of Education has been reviewed and developed over the five year period. The refinement of this database has provided useful information of impact assessments and best value review.
- The Geographical Information System was piloted in 2002/03 and following increased standardisation is now producing more accurate and complete information. By integrating this youth service data with data derived from 2001 Northern Ireland Census, meaningful data will be produced to assist with the strategic planning and management of youth provision across Northern Ireland. This is a good example of joined-up working whereby the Boards provide the statistical data, the Youth Council input, validate and analyse it and the Department of Education funds the project.
- Monitoring the actions as a result of EQIAs has ensured that the benefits of the EQIA are not dwindled at the implementation stage.

### **3.5.5 How do we meet the challenges identified?**

- The main challenge has been the lack of guidance in this area and the significant costs of establishing systems which may prove to be inadequate. This has been overcome through the piloting of each project.

## **3.6 CONSULTATION**

The Boards would acknowledge that prior to the requirement to consult introduced under Section 75 the approach was often ad hoc and reactive rather than proactive. Paragraph 4 of the Board's Equality Scheme details the Board's commitment to consultation in a meaningful and inclusive nature.

### **3.6.1 What was achieved?**

#### **a) Consultation Strategy**

The Boards and the Staff Commission as a first step agreed a consultation strategy to facilitate individuals and groups affected by existing or proposed policies to engage in the decision-making process. Consultees have warmly welcomed this approach and the strategy provides for:

- the circulation of consultation documents together with response pro formas to facilitate written feedback;
- the publication of consultation documents on websites;
- the organisation, as appropriate, of meetings with staggered start times to maximise attendance by the public;
- the organisation of regional meetings in partnership with key interest groups.

The Board publishes details of all public and regional events and the individuals/groups who participated.

Consultees are advised in advance of all regional meetings that requests for assistance to optimise participation will be considered, including any communication, transport or access needs. All requests for assistance under this Scheme were met and included:

- provision of transport;
- translation of information;
- interpreter service;
- information made available in alternative formats (Braille, tape);
- dietary requirements; and
- crèche facilities.

In addition the Boards/Staff Commission have developed a Travel Assistance Scheme - all claims were met.

All feedback, written and verbal, at local and/or regional levels was shared and taken into account by each Board and the Staff Commission.

Feedback was provided to consultees on decisions made by the Boards/Staff Commission at the conclusion of each consultation process.

## **b) Joint Consultative Forum (JCF)**

Using the experience gained of managing and co-ordinating consultation events and an action planning outcome from the EU transnational project 'Anti Discrimination and Diversity' section - refers, the Boards and Staff Commission in partnership with NICEM considered ways to improve and better mainstream our consultation methods.

Contacts within the community and voluntary sectors and other public authorities in the education sector confirmed that there was widespread support for the establishment of a Joint Consultative Forum. As a first step focus group meetings were held involving the Department of Education, the Education and Library Boards, Council for Catholic Maintained Schools, Youth Council and Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education and with the community and voluntary sector. These meetings were used to discuss experiences of consultation to date and to establish the level of support for a Consultative Forum. They were also used to consider the terms of reference and the expectations for such a forum, how to ensure the forum would be representative, how best to communicate with groups who did not attend meetings and to explore how to develop and implement a programme of work.

As a result of this preliminary work, it was agreed that a preliminary meeting of the Forum should be used to gain a better understanding of respective roles and an insight into the issues which consultees believe should form part of the 'mainstreaming' agenda. It should also be used to establish structures for the Forum and to identify agenda items for future meetings.

A preliminary meeting of the JCF was held on 1 April 2004 at the offices of the Belfast Board and an information pack was prepared to facilitate the participation of those invited to attend the meeting. 19 consultee groups were represented, involving 25

consultees and 14 representatives of public authorities. In the course of the meeting a number of issues emerged including:

- Bullying/harassment of children/pupils/young people;
- Curriculum development/teacher training/classroom support;
- Library Service - IT system 'bar' i.e. library users unable to gain access to internet sites about Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transsexual (LGBT) issues on computers available for public use; and
- Scope for more inter-generational work, particularly at school level.

The officers attending undertook to clarify current policy/practice in these areas and report back with a paper titled 'Agenda Setting' at the inaugural meeting of the Forum. This inaugural meeting was held on 30 September 2004 when 15 consultee groups were represented and there were 41 participants at the meeting. The terms of reference agreed for the JCF were:

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

The officers of the Forum were appointed. They are:

Joint Chairpersons: Ms Tansy Hutchinson, Policy Officer, NICEM  
Mr John Curran, Inter-Board Services Manager, Education and Library Boards Central Management Support Unit

Secretary: Ms Deidre Vaughn, Senior Principal Officer, Equality, Staff Commission for Education and Library Boards

At the meeting it was agreed that the next important milestone was to appoint a Steering Group. Members of the forum were agreed that a balance needed to be struck between being inclusive and being able to function effectively. It was agreed that if the Steering Group was too large, it may be less effective, therefore a small group with rotational membership and an effective feedback mechanism should be established. It was decided that the Officers would consult on the establishment and operation of the Steering Group. The Group also determined that a user-friendly leaflet should be issued after each meeting to consult/update members and their constituents on on-going programmes of work. The first meeting of the Steering Group was held on 26 January 2005. The current membership is:

### **Community & Voluntary Sector**

David McConnell	Age Concern
Helen Ferguson	Carers Northern Ireland
James Knox	CoSO
Anne-Marie O'Kane	Disability Action/Children with Disabilities Strategic Alliance
Norman Richardson	Inter-Faith Forum

Tansy Hutchinson*	NICEM (Joint Chair)
David Simpson	Save the Children
Patricia Haren*	Women's Support Network
Mary Field	Youthnet

### **Public Authorities**

Helen Leith	Council for Catholic Maintained Schools
Ann Perry	Council for Curriculum, Examinations and Assessments
Sharon Lawlor	Department of Education
John Curran	Education & Library Boards (Joint Chair)
Terry Heron	Southern Education & Library Board (representing the 5 Boards)
Deirdre Vaughn	Staff Commission for Education & Library Boards (Secretary)
David Guilfoyle	Youth Council for Northern Ireland

### **Trade Unions**

Mike Graves	Northern Ireland Teachers' Council
Alison Millar	Trade Union Side of the Joint Negotiating Council

### **Equality Authorities**

Peter O'Neill	NI Human Rights Commission
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It is intended that membership of the Steering Group will rotate within each sector on an annual basis after each autumn meeting of the JCF.

All minutes and documentation of the work of the Forum are available on the Staff Commission's website at [www.staffcom.org.uk](http://www.staffcom.org.uk)

Since the establishment of the Forum there have been:  
 3 meetings of the JCF;  
 5 meetings of the Steering Group;  
 6 update leaflets issued to Forum members;  
 There are 157<sup>1</sup> individuals/organisations on the Forum's mailing list.

### **Evidence:**

Minutes, leaflets, dedicated section of Staff Commission's website

### **c) Consultation Exercises**

#### **i) Draft Equality Scheme published for consultation, April 2000;**

The Board widely publicised its wish to consult on its draft Scheme with a broad range of interested bodies, through:

- public advertisement;

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\* To consult their constituent members and other interest groups in the Sector regarding membership of the Steering Group

<sup>1</sup> This figure is exclusive of multiple copies emailed to public authority representatives.

- direct mail shot to consultees listed in the draft scheme;
- follow up correspondence to consultees identified in the Scheme offering the option of face to face meetings or contact by telephone as an alternative to written responses; and
- follow up telephone contact to the consultees identified in the Scheme (in co-operation with the other Education and Library Boards).

As a result of this consultation process the Board received comments from 45 organisations.

#### **Evidence:**

A summary of the submissions and the Board's response is contained in Appendix C of its Equality Scheme.

## **ii) Screening of Existing Policies**

### **Stage 1 -**

In September 2000, a list of all policies together with pro forma documentation to facilitate feedback was issued to consultees on each Board's Equality Scheme. The pro forma included a question on which method of consultation was preferred i.e. face to face meetings, public meetings, shared interest forum, question and answer sessions, postal/e-mail questionnaire or telephone surveys. Questions were also included to identify the most suitable times for holding meetings. This information was used to plan the consultation arrangements for Stage 2 of the process.

Screening of Policies Consultation, Partnership initiative between: Belfast City Council, Northern Ireland Housing Executive, Health Board/Trusts (Belfast Area); Belfast Education and Library Board and the Staff Commission was held on 7 January 2001 at Waterfront Hall, Belfast.

Workshops were organised on a sectoral basis, consultees attended on a rota basis. The Education workshop was facilitated by Hazel Gordon and the rapporteur was Tim Cunningham, both were from the community/voluntary sector. 146 groups were invited to the event of these 90 attended. An evaluation report was compiled by Marie Quiry.

### **Stage 2 -**

- Screening conducted during February/March 2001. The Boards compared the outcomes of their screening exercises. Taking account of the feedback from consultees, they concluded that a co-ordinated joint Board approach should be maintained. An inter-Board report on the outcome of the screening exercise was compiled; it was published in May 2001.
- Consultation events were organised on an inter-Board/Staff Commission basis, leaflets targeting sectors were prepared to encourage constituent groups of umbrella organisations to attend these events.
- Written responses were received from 10 organisations.

- **Regional Meetings:**

12 regional meetings were held, with 52 groups represented and 97 participants attending.

- **Public Meetings**

A total of 19 public meetings were held at convenient locations across Northern Ireland and the starting times for these meetings were varied in an attempt to cater for the needs of the public. Accordingly two meetings were held in the morning, six in the early or mid afternoon, nine in the late afternoon and two in the evening.

**Evidence:**

- Screening of Policies Consultation, Waterfront Hall, an Evaluation Report by Marie Quiery.
- Minutes of consultation events agreed with umbrella groups.
- Report on Screening of Policies, launched February 2002. Issued to consultees on Boards'/Commission's Equality Scheme list and any other individuals/groups who participated in the consultation exercise.

**iii) Screening of New Policies**

Annual Report issued each year from April 2002 to all consultees on mailing list on the outcomes of the screening exercises. Feedback was provided, as appropriate. Final decisions on screening were publicised.

**iv) Resource Allocation Plans (RAPs) 2005/2006**

The five Boards consult annually on new policies screened and report on the outcome of the screening process. Given the urgency of this matter a separate additional report was issued detailing the findings of this particular screening exercise. The process involved:

- sharing of information and briefings/dialogue with the trade unions, JCF and its Steering Group;
- Special meeting of JCF convened March 2005;
- consultation paper on the screening of the Boards' Resource Allocation Plans 2005/06, issued May 2005;
- 21 regional/local consultation meetings;
- 33 written submissions;
- publication of the Report on the Screening exercise, issued August 2005.

In addition to the Boards consultation on the RAPs there has been a vigorous campaign to obtain additional funding for the Boards. This included:

- representations to the Minister by Boards, schools, trade unions and political representatives;
- industrial action by members of NIPSA, UNISON and the Amalgamated Transport and General Workers Union in protest against the cutbacks in services as a result of under-funding;
- the withdrawal by some 32 district councillors from Boards over the level of cuts required;
- the organisation of a special conference of educationalists on the financial crisis in schools held in West Belfast on 20 June 2005;
- a special one hour edition of BBC Newline on Monday 13 June 2005 to highlight the impact of the cuts; and

- other media campaigns, lobbying by the community and voluntary sector and a negative public reaction to the proposed cuts.

## v) **Equality Impact Assessments**

### **Code of Employment and Promotion Procedures and Internal Trawl Procedure (Staff Commission/inter-Board)**

- January 2001, Working Group established comprised of representatives of the Staff Commission, the Boards, the recognised trade unions and the Equality Commission to review the existing Code of Employment.
- Pre-consultation exercise conducted, June 2002, on the redrafted Code of Procedures. Briefing paper pre-consultation response pro forma issued to 253 consultees. Sixteen written responses were received and three consultations meetings held.
- EQIA consultation report issued 13 March 2003, 500 copies were printed and either distributed directly to consultees or made readily available to the general public.
- Advertisements were placed in the three main regional newspapers.
- Placed on Staff Commission's website.
- Series of consultation events were organised:
  - six regional meetings, with representatives of nineteen organisations;
  - three other meetings;
  - consultation meetings with recognised trade unions' under established negotiating machinery;

An agreed record of each meeting was prepared.  
Thirteen written responses were received.

#### **Evidence:**

EQIA results published October 2003 (available at [www.staffcom.org.uk](http://www.staffcom.org.uk))

### **Finding the Balance - Work-life Policies in Practice**

- Industrial Relations Symposium.
- Survey conducted to assess uptake of flexible working arrangements in Board and Library Headquarters, autumn 2002.
- Joint (Trade Union/Management Side) Working Group appointed to compare best practice in Great Britain with that available in Boards. Working Group reported March 2003.
- Audit of current policy and practice undertaken to ensure Joint Negotiating Council circulars and Board policies/practices are compliant with Section 75 of the Act.
- Consultation Report issued, March 2005.
- Trade unions contributed through established negotiating machinery.
- Eleven written submissions received.
- Two informal meetings held.

## **Evidence:**

Results of a consultation exercise on the Work-life Balance Policies are due to be published shortly.

Guide to Work-life Balance in the Education and Library Boards will be launched at the next Joint Negotiating Council meeting.

## **Electronic Libraries for Northern Ireland (inter-Board/DCAL)**

- EQIA consultation document published, June 2001;
- advertised in three main regional newspapers;
- consultation report available in all public libraries;
- on the web or from WELB, Library Headquarters;
- press release prepared and distributed to local papers across Northern Ireland;
- 1,800 copies of the report were printed and distributed to consultees on the Boards' Equality Schemes or to the general public e.g. via branch or mobile libraries, posters were displayed in all libraries drawing attention to the report.
- Series of consultation events were organised:
  - 19 public meetings
  - 7 regional meetings with over 50 people representing 44 organisations;
  - follow up meetings were held with a number of constituent groups.

## **Evidence:**

EQIA results published November 2001. (available at [www.welbni.org](http://www.welbni.org))

## **To promote through the Youth Service, the Personal and Social Development of Young People (Department of Education, five Education and Library Boards, Youth Council)**

- EQIA consultation report published, November 2002.
- Advertisements were placed in the three main regional newspapers.
- Placed on Department of Education, each Education and Library Board and Youth Council's website.
- 3,000 copies of the consultation report were printed and issued to consultees on each of the education authority's Equality Scheme.
- A total of ten public meetings were held in Belfast, Omagh, Newry, Moygashel, Coleraine, Newtownards, Templepatrick, Craigavon and Derry.
- Other meetings took place:
  - SEELB met with Physically Handicapped and Able Bodied (Phab);
  - NEELB met with MENCAP;
  - SELB met with a Focus Group of thirty young people and four youth leaders;
  - The Boards/Department of Education met with the Women's Support Network;
  - Youth Council met with minority ethnic groups and regional voluntary headquarters organisations.
- Twenty five written submissions were received.

## **Evidence:**

EQIA results published May 2004.

### **English as an Additional Language (Department of Education/inter-Board/Council for Curriculum, Examinations and Assessments**

Pre Consultation Briefing Paper and response pro forma prepared, this documentation was translated into Chinese, Urdu, Portuguese and Arabic to facilitate the consultation process. Issued to consultees in June 2003.

## **vi) Best Value Fundamental Reviews**

### **Special Educational Needs**

The review of Special Education involved a wide range of organisations that support and facilitate people with special needs. These organisations included:

- Association for Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus;
- British Diabetic Association;
- British Epilepsy Association;
- Cystic Fibrosis Trust;
- Muscular Dystrophy Campaign;
- NI Dyslexia Association;
- National Deaf Children's Society;
- Royal National Institute for the Blind; and
- Royal National Institute for the Deaf.

In Special Education, efforts have been made to capture qualitative data on the experiences of various groups of people with regard to special educational needs. These include:

- meetings with voluntary sector organisations e.g. Cedar Foundation and Down's Syndrome Association;
- Focus group meetings organised under the auspices of Cedar Foundation, with children aged 12 - 17 years. The Children, who were representative of schools across the Boards, gave their views on a range of different aspects of their education including the use of classroom assistants, home to school transport, choice of subjects and access to buildings for children with disabilities;
- Focus group meetings with parents facilitated through voluntary organisations and/or school principals.

### **School Catering**

The review of catering took place at a timely moment just prior to the increased profile of school meals through the media and celebrity chefs. The review addressed issues such as free school meals, nutritional values, accessibility, the environment, additional services e.g. breakfast and the school approach to learning and experiencing healthy eating.

Pupils, trades unions, Disability Action, minority ethnic groups, Chest, Heart and Stroke Association, Health Action Zones, Dairy Council, Food Standards Agency and Health Promotion Agency were consulted.

## **Youth Service**

The fundamental review of the Youth Service considered equality issues as part of a wide-ranging process. CMSU consulted with Ballymena Ethnic Minority Project, Coalition on Sexual Orientation, Extern West, Health and Social Services Boards, Office of the Children's Commissioner, NI Council for Ethnic Minorities, Policy Implementation Panel and the Rainbow Project.

## **Curriculum Advisory and Support Service**

The Curriculum Advisory and Support Service (CASS) provides advice and support to teachers and promotes the development of schools. CMSU consulted widely as part of the review and met with organisations such as Barnardos, Health Trusts, Health Promotion Agency, NI Council for Ethnic Minorities, NIPPA, the early years organisation, Health Action Zones and Mencap.

## **Details of Fundamental Reviews**

Reports of fundamental reviews are available on the Southern Education and Library Board's website at [www.selb.org](http://www.selb.org).

### **vii) Equality Consultation Guidelines for Board/Staff Commission Officers**

Group Chair: Stanton Sloan - Senior Education Officer (Curriculum)

Workshop: 12 June 2001, Clandeboye Lodge Hotel, to inform the development of the guidelines. The workshop had four elements:

1. Barriers to communication, consultation and participation
2. Information needs
3. Mechanisms for Communication/Consultation/Participation
4. Action Planning

Seventy people participated in the workshop including representatives of Equality Commission, Department of Education and Council for Catholic Maintained Schools. A number of workshops were chaired by School Principals. Workshop booklet prepared to ensure feedback captured in a consistent manner.

#### **Feedback:**

Four written responses.  
Informal meetings held with Disability Action, MENCAP and NICEM.

#### **Evidence:**

Equality Consultation Guidelines for Education and Library Boards/Staff Commission officers

### **3.6.2 What remains to be done?**

- The Boards are of the view that a consultation strategy of itself will not ensure effective consultation. However, if it is combined with a willingness to engage in an open and transparent manner positive relationships will emerge which will facilitate sharing of information and experiences. Over the five year

implementation period Boards have sought to achieve the development of good relationships with consultee groups.

- More needs to be done to maintain the relationships developed and explore more innovative approaches to consultation which will facilitate relationship building with those people who for whatever reason cannot easily engage in the process.

### **3.6.3 How do we build on our success?**

- A commitment was given by the Chief Administrative Officers of Boards, who have operational responsibility for the Equality Schemes to actively engage in the consultation process. This has been demonstrated by their involvement in consultation events over the five year period.
- We recognised that we had a lot to give but we also had a lot to learn, we approached the organisation of consultation events with the attitude “How can we make it easier for you to engage with us?” Our slogan inviting consultees to participate was “It’s good to listen”, this approach has allowed us to grow and develop with consultee groups. Through regular evaluation of consultation events we ensured that consultation was not just inclusive but that it was also meaningful.
- In the Equality Commission’s Report on the Implementation of the Section 75 Statutory Duties 1 April 2002 - 31 March 2003, Section 6 ‘A Voluntary & Community Sector Perspective, paragraph 6.46 states that we (Staff Commission/Boards) ‘displayed an excellent approach towards partnership. They were prepared to devote the necessary time to organise effective consultation meetings (not just involving umbrella groups), they actively engaged in listening and discussion and involved decision makers in meetings’.
- A major breakthrough in the implementation of our consultation strategy has been the establishment of the Joint Consultative Forum and its Steering Group. Whilst this is in its early stages of development because of the groundwork already done it has proven to be a very good mechanism for communication and consultation.
- Co-ordination of consultation events, where meetings were being convened we tried, where practical, to cover more than one issue.

### **3.6.4 How do we meet the challenges identified?**

- The Equality Schemes require that the availability of specific reports e.g. EQIA consultation documents be publicly advertised. This commitment has been adhered to. Our experience overall is that the advertisement and organisation of public meetings has had limited success. However when such a meeting is organised on a controversial policy decision(s) it is generally well attended. We believe it is important that the consultation strategy is sufficiently flexible to allow it to be tailored to suit individual circumstances. We have met the challenges identified by evaluating ‘what works’ and ‘what doesn’t work’ and considering whether participation is limited to a number of individuals/groups. By monitoring and reviewing our strategy we are able to introduce and test out new approaches to consultation. In this context see the comments at paragraph 3.8.4 of this report.

### 3.7 TRAINING

3.7.1 The Board's timetable, following commencement of the Scheme, provided that in Year 1 a training programme would commence and be on-going for the duration of the Scheme. In 2001/02 the Board published its training strategy. It provided for the provision of a copy of the Equality Scheme to all staff and awareness training to ensure that they fully understood their role in implementing the Scheme. It recognised the need for staff in management roles and other specialist staff to receive more focussed training and the need for equality awareness training for new staff.

**Table 4 - Training of Staff re: Section 75 Equality Duties**

<b>Type of Training</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Participants</b>	<b>Provider</b>
Statutory Duty Awareness	18 November 1999 24 November 1999	Inter-Board/Staff Commission	Equality Commission & Jones & Cassidy Solicitors
Equality Awareness Section 75 Pilot exercises	22 October 2001 30 October 2001	2 sessions- 70 Board staff 2 sessions – 80 Board staff	John Kremer
Equality Awareness Section 75  SEELB	April 2001 to date  February – March 2002	2,986 Board Staff  14 sessions – 470 staff to include Board Members/ SMT/ Managers/HQ & Library Staff	In-house  Harry McConnell
Equality Awareness Recruitment and Selection  SEELB	February 2004 - April 2004	24 sessions – 785 Panel Members  7 sessions – 186 Panel Members	Staff Commission  Staff Commission
Recruitment and Selection Training to include Equality Awareness	September/October 2005	Board Members 25	Alison Patrick Staff Commission
Screening of Policies	6 November 2000 7 November 2000 8 December 2000 15 December 2000	Inter Board/Staff Commission - 50 Inter Board/Staff Commission - 41 Inter Board/Staff Commission - 48 Staff Commission - 7	Jones & Cassidy/ Staff Commission Jones & Cassidy/ Staff Commission Jones & Cassidy/ Staff Commission In-house

<b>Type of Training</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Participants</b>	<b>Provider</b>
EQIA	16 Training Courses	Department of Education/ NDPBs <sup>2</sup>	OFMDFM Call-off contract for training
	5 Training Courses	Staff Commission/ inter-Board	J Kremer/ Staff Commission
Consultation Skills	8 May 2001	Inter-Board/ Staff Commission/ DCAL	In-house
	19 June 2002	Inter-Board/ Staff Commission	Disability Action/ Staff Commission
	5 May 2004	Inter-Board/ Staff Commission	Disability Action/ Staff Commission
	19 May 2004	Inter-Board/ Staff Commission	Disability Action/ Staff Commission
SEELB Us & Them Too (Exploring Equity & Diversity in NI)	June 2003	SEELB Officers - 10	WEA
Social Inclusion for Library Staff		SEELB Library Staff -40	Creative Change
SENDO	September – October 2005	8 sessions – 209 SEELB Officers  This training is now being rolled out to school principals & SENCO's	In-house

### 3.7.2 What has been achieved?

#### a) Equality Awareness

In July 2001 an inter-Board/Staff Commission Working Group was appointed to design, pilot and produce materials to facilitate the implementation of equality awareness training to all staff and to Board members. Dr John Kremer, Reader in Psychology, Queens University and an Equality Consultant was commissioned to facilitate the pilot training and to provide expert opinion and advice on the process. The training has been reviewed and up-dated on an annual basis. Given the pivotal role of the Joint Negotiating Council in the formulation and review of employment policies, the Staff Commission organised equality awareness training for its members. As a result of the training, the JNC developed an Equality Action Plan and made the implementation of the Boards'/Staff Commission's Equality Schemes a standard item of business for all Executive Committee and JNC meetings. On an inter-Board/Staff Commission basis a leaflet and poster were developed, designed and issued during March 2003 to all Controlled and Maintained schools. The purpose of this leaflet and poster is to raise awareness of Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and its implications for school based staff, both teaching and non-teaching.

<sup>2</sup> Commission staff participated in two of these courses.

**Evidence:**

Training materials and evaluation reports; leaflet and poster.

**b) Equality Awareness - Good Practice as it relates to Recruitment and Selection**

The redrafted Code of Procedures on Recruitment and Selection specifies that *“All board members/officers involved in recruitment and selection must be provided with training and guidance on the provisions of the code, the board’s policy and the legislative provisions related to the promotion of equality of opportunity, equality awareness and good practice as it relates to recruitment and selection”*.

The Staff Commission developed a training programme, the purpose of which was to provide an introduction to the redrafted Code. The objectives of the programme were to:

- ensure Panel members are aware of the changes in the Code;
- facilitate the application of the Code;
- provide Equality Awareness Training (either initial or refresher training);
- provide an opportunity to discuss implementation issues.

The training was provided to both Board members and officers involved in the recruitment and selection process with specialist sessions for human resource staff who had additional responsibilities under the procedures.

From February to April 2004 24 half day sessions were conducted on an inter and intra Board basis, attended by some 785 participants.

**Evidence:**

Training materials and evaluation report.

**c) Screening of Policies**

A series of inter-Board/Staff Commission Workshops aimed at providing practical guidance on the screening of policies was designed. Pro forma documentation to facilitate the screening of policies was tested during the practical training sessions and through an inter-Board/Staff Commission pilot exercise. Training was provided to staff involved in the screening exercise 2001-2002. Training was provided thereafter as required. An evaluation of this pilot exercise concluded that the pro forma document was a useful aid to the screening process and it is now in standard use across the five Boards. A screening toolkit has also been developed as a result of this training and building on our experience of screening policies.

**Evidence:**

Training materials, screening pro forma, evaluation reports and screening toolkit.

**d) Equality Impact Assessment**

All Board staff involved directly/indirectly in EQIAs were provided with training.

The Statutory Duty Unit of OFMDFM made arrangements with the Government Purchasing Agency for a call-off contract for consultants to provide training in respect of a range of equality training including Equality Impact Assessments. Given the Department of Education's/NDPBs' decision to co-join or co-operate, as appropriate in conducting EQIAs, it was agreed that training linked to each EQIA be conducted on an integrated basis under the auspices of the Department of Education. The Staff Commission assisted the Boards/Department of Education in the design and organisation of this training. By Year II (2002-2003), nine training courses had taken place, the Commission in conjunction with the Department of Education/Boards conducted an evaluation of the EQIA training.

Valuable lessons were learned in terms of preparing the participants for future training. The five Boards/Staff Commission agreed that when their officers are nominated to a project team to assist in the completion of an EQIA; a meeting should be convened to brief such officers on:

- the screening process;
- the Boards'/Staff Commission's decisions on the policy e.g. to co-join with the Department of Education;
- outline their role in the EQIA process;
- discuss the EQIA process and the inter-Board/Staff Commission workbook; and
- agree how progress on the EQIA should be fed back to the Board/Staff Commission.

By providing officers with some preliminary advice in advance of the EQIA it is hoped they will obtain greater benefit from the actual training experience.

The Staff Commission and Boards took the view that training of project teams appointed to conduct specific EQIA would facilitate an awareness of the process and allow the project team to gel and thereby develop a team work approach.

#### **e) Consultation Skills Training**

The Staff Commission/Boards, in partnership with Focus Consultancy Service (Disability Action), developed a training package on "Effective Consultation". The package was developed to complement the guidelines on consultation already developed on an inter-Board/Staff Commission basis.

The training was piloted in June 2002 and the package was launched on 10 April 2003 by the Chief Executives of Disability Action, the five Boards and the Staff Commission. Board staff involved in public consultation exercises have participated in the programme.

#### **Evidence:**

Training package, evaluation reports.

#### **f) Positive Action Measures for People with Disabilities in the Recruitment and Selection Process**

The EQIA of the Code of Employment and Promotion Procedures, paragraph 3.4.4 d) refers, identified an under-representation of people with disabilities in employment with the Boards. This under-representation is greatest at senior levels and in the category of people with learning disabilities. As part of the EQIA process, a series of

consultation exercises were conducted and these consultations, together with the findings of the EQIA resulted in:

- the redrafting of the Policy and Code of Practice on the Employment of People with Disabilities; and
- a heightened emphasis being placed through the Code of Procedures on Recruitment and Selection on the statutory requirement of the Staff Commission/Boards to make reasonable adjustments throughout the recruitment and selection process.

In an effort to ensure that policies are translated into effective and visible practice, a working group was established by the Staff Commission that included representatives from the Boards, Disability Action, Mencap, RNIB, Action Mental Health and the Equality Commission.

The result was a workshop with the aim *“to review and further development good practice around reasonable adjustments for people with disabilities in the recruitment and selection process”*.

The workshop was attended by Staff Commission staff, Boards’ Chief Administrative Officers, Human Resource Managers and other staff (a total of 47 participants).

The Staff Commission has shared these materials with other public authorities, for example at the Equality Commission’s Disability Workshop in September 2004, speaking on the theme *“Developing and Managing a Disability Employment Strategy”*.

**Evidence:**

A copy of the materials developed and the evaluation report.

**g) Dealing with Complaints of Harassment on the Grounds of Sexual Orientation**

In August 2005, the Coalition on Sexual Orientation (CoSO) approached the Staff Commission and the Association of Northern Ireland Colleges (ANIC) and asked for their support in the organisation of an event to mark Anti Homophobia Northern Ireland 2004.

An initial meeting was held to explore ideas. At this meeting it was agreed to consider, in conjunction with the Boards and Further Education Colleges, the possibility of a workshop designed to focus on dealing with complaints of harassment on the grounds of sexual orientation. The proposal was endorsed by the Staff Commission and the Boards’ Association of Chief Administrative Officers. The materials for use in the workshop, a workbook and facilitator’s notes were developed on a partnership basis. Two workshops were held; the first on 6 December for staff from Further Education Colleges, the second on 8 December was for Boards’/Staff Commission’s human resource and equality officers. An evaluation was conducted of the training provided.

**Evidence:**

Training materials and/or evaluation report.  
Redrafted JNC Circulars No 77 and No 78.

## h) CEJI/NICEM<sup>3</sup>

On 14 January 2002 NICEM provided a presentation to the DE/NDPB Group on the above European transnational pilot programme.

The overarching aim of this anti-discrimination training project is to help create organisational cultures within public authorities that tackle discrimination and promote diversity and to:

*“Mainstream equality and diversity into policy and practice through positive community relations and participation with the aim of assisting public authorities to eliminate discrimination and provide culturally sensitive, equitable, caring and quality services.”*

*Vision Statement, October 2001*

The training programme was piloted in two European cities -Belfast (education sector public authorities) and Berlin (education and health sector public authorities). The trainers (six per city) were selected to deliver the training programme. In Northern Ireland there were four trainers from the community/voluntary sector and two from the public sector, namely Ms Deirdre Vaugh (Commission) and Mrs Linda McGowan (BELB). The training of trainers took place on 15-22 January 2003 in Belfast. A Steering Group representative of participating public authorities and NICEM was established.

The Commission played a key role in the:

- Training needs analysis;
- Development of the participant workbook;
- Delivery and evaluation of the training.

The Staff Commission’s and Belfast Board’s officers co-facilitated all of the 8 three-day training programmes. One of the training sessions was for staff of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs). The final phase of the project which operated over a two-year period included an evaluation of the entire process, the training delivered and the outcomes achieved. This report was submitted to the European Commission.

A number of lessons was drawn from the experience of undertaking the project. They are:

- to build a successful partnership between NGOs and public authorities requires mutual trust, goodwill on both sides and commitment to a common cause;
- the readiness to adopt education programmes and policies for countering discrimination and encouraging diversity varies markedly between different parts of the EU;
- the state of implementation of the Equality Directives in different countries affects the ease or difficulty of implementing the project;
- a trans-national project must be global in its thinking but local in its actions;
- a long term approach is key to getting public authorities to incorporate equality considerations as a central element in their policies and activities;

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<sup>3</sup> Centre European J'uif D'Information/Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities

- working to alter individual attitudes and behaviour can create momentum for bringing about organisational change;
- the international exchange of good practice is a valuable and efficient way of bringing about social change.

In the Northern Ireland context partnership arrangements were successful and much was gained from the involvement of:

- Coalition on Sexual Orientation
- Disability Action
- Age Concern
- West Belfast Economic Forum
- Women's Support Network
- Education and Library Boards
- Department of Education
- Council for Catholic Maintained Schools
- Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education
- Youth Council for Northern Ireland
- Staff Commission for Education and Library Boards

Participants in the training were senior and middle management and represented a cross section of departments within each of the identified public authorities as follows.

#### **Evidence:**

Evaluation report lodged with the European Commission.

Participant Workbook and Information Pack launched 11 January 2004.

#### **3.7.3 What remains to be done?**

- Continue with equality awareness programmes and focused training for staff in management and roles associated with the implementation of the Schemes.

#### **3.7.4 How do we build on our success?**

- All training programmes were evaluated, see Section 3.7 and modified and/or further developed as required. Where training programmes have achieved their objectives they have still been reviewed to ensure the materials remained current.
- Equality Awareness training materials have been developed in-house using resources from a range of sources, including the community and voluntary sector. These were piloted and co-facilitated with an external trainer (John Kremer) to enable a more objective assessment to be made of the materials and to provide expert opinion and advice on the process.
- Screening and impact assessment training has generally been facilitated by external consultants, (Jones & Cassidy and John Kremer). The EQIA training was critically reviewed, Annual Report (2002 - 03) and changes were made to ensure a better linkage with the impact assessment process.
- All other training programmes were developed and delivered on a partnership basis. This has been hugely beneficial not only from the shared learning but also much more was gained than the development and implementation of the training materials. Policies and practices were also reviewed and the Joint

Consultative Forum was established primarily as a result of one training partnership.

### **How do we meet the challenges identified?**

- A major challenge was to raise awareness amongst school based staff. For the most part it was not practical to remove teaching and non-teaching staff from schools. To overcome this equality awareness materials were developed and issued to all schools.

## **3.8 PUBLIC ACCESS TO INFORMATION AND SERVICES**

**3.8.1** The Board's timetable, following commencement of the Scheme, provided that in Year 1 a review of arrangements for providing information to the public would take place. The Board at paragraph 5.3 gave a commitment as part of this review that "Consideration will also be given to how best to communicate information to young people and those with learning difficulties."

### **3.8.2 What has been achieved?**

#### **a) Equality Consultation Guidelines for Board/Commission staff**

In February 2001 an inter-Board/Commission Working Group was established to prepare guidance in this area. The purpose of the Group is to ensure that those who are affected by policy decisions and/or the delivery of services can contribute effectively to the decision making process.

As an initial step and to assist in developing the guidance, a range of professionals working with various groups were invited to a conference on 12 June 2001 at which they submitted their views on how to engage specific individuals and groups in consultation exercises and on how information should be available to individuals and groups. As a result of this the Working Group has identified and addressed communication, consultation and participation needs for:

- pupils in mainstream education and their parents;
- people who are deaf or have a hearing impairment; and
- people who are blind or have a visual impairment;
- those who have a:
  - moderate learning difficulty;
  - severe learning difficulty;
  - physical/medical condition;
  - communication difficulty;
  - specific learning difficulty e.g. Dyslexia;
- those who have:
  - emotional/behavioural difficulty and may require education otherwise than at school (EOTAS);
  - mental ill health difficulties;
  - dependants; and
  - particular needs because of their racial or ethnic origin.

The Guidelines provide practical advice for all staff on how they should engage in consultation and/or make information available to members of the public. The guidance points out that people with disabilities are traditionally described according to the name of their impairment. Whilst recognising that such descriptions are

stereotypical and cannot be a substitute for direct and focussed contact with the individual, the Guidance has been developed to give a broad indication to staff of some of the issues which need to be considered when consulting with specific groups.

The draft Guidelines were issued for public consultation on 25 July 2002. The comprehensive nature of the guidelines was welcomed by consultees. Written responses were received from:

- Irish Congress of Trade Unions;
- Invest Northern Ireland;
- Northern Ireland Council on Ethnic Minorities;
- The British Council;
- Equality 2000; and
- Disability Action.

As a result of the written responses and informal feedback received from a number of groups, the Guidelines were further refined.

The Guidelines were launched by the Chief Executives of the Boards/Commission on 10 April 2003 at Disability Action. An associated training package was developed in partnership with Disability Action, paragraph 3.7 e) refers.

#### **Evidence:**

Equality Consultation Guidelines for Education and Library Boards/Staff Commission officers

- b) In addition to the steps taken at Section 3.8 above, the Board in Year II of the implementation of its Scheme conducted a review of the mechanisms available to ensure that information/services are accessible. The following arrangements are in place:

- the provision of information on computer disc;
- the provision of information in Braille;
- the provision of information on audio cassette (an inter-Board/Staff Commission agreement was reached in August 2002 with Armagh Talking Newspapers for the provision of a reader service - this was renewed for a further two years during Year IV); and
- typetalk facility is available for those with a hearing impairment;
- the provision of translation services: and
- the provision of interpreter services to deaf parents

In August 2005 a new initiative was launched by the Health and Safety Executive in Northern Ireland (HSENI) in partnership with the Boards. An information pack will be available in every library and mobile library allowing the public to access an extensive range of health and safety booklets and the recently launched Info 4U disk containing health and safety information in a variety of formats. It is recognised that providing information to people in their local areas in this way helps to reach a wide cross section of people, be they employers, employees, union representatives, students or members of the public. With more than 7 million visits to libraries across Northern Ireland each year the 'libraries signpost safety' allows health and safety information to be made available to everyone.

### **c) Disability Access Audit**

An inter-Board review of the Boards' estates commenced during 2001/2002 to establish a baseline position on the accessibility of premises. The Board carried out a disability audit of its Headquarters, Library Headquarters and branch libraries. The Education and Library Boards then made application for funding to the Department of Education for the provision of improved disabled access to Board premises.

The Board commenced physical works to its buildings to improve disabled access, and installed such enhancements as internal ramps, improved toilet facilities and stair lifts. External measures such as car parking facilities and entrance ramps were also installed. Buildings were prioritised in accordance with their condition. The Board also plans to install external lifts in high schools where the school buildings do not facilitate the installation of internal lifts.

The Board also conducted an assessment of disabled access within its Headquarters Building. Areas where access is difficult have been identified and as a consequence the Board plans to improve access to its canteen, update the current lift facilities and improve access between the different levels of each floor within the building.

Completed works have embraced all sectors of the Board's estate. This includes not only primary, secondary and special schools but also library buildings and youth centres.

Capital Expenditure on Disabled Access during the five year review period is detailed in paragraph 3.2.5(d) of this report.

The Board is keen to comply fully with its obligations under the Disability Discrimination Act which came into force in November 2004 and will continue to build on the good practice already achieved.

#### **3.8.3 What remains to be done?**

- Identify more innovative ways to communicate with consultees and thereby enable them to play a greater role in the policy-making process. Continue to identify and remove barriers to participation and/or services available.

#### **3.8.4 How do we build on our success?**

- Carefully consider and respond to 'access to information' issues which are raised.
- Consider the establishment, in co-operation with other education authorities and the community and voluntary sector a consultation forum for young people. As a first step it could consider 'access' issues and explore with young people of various ages how a representative group of the equality categories, could participate more in the policy and/or decision making process.

#### **3.8.5 How do we meet the challenges identified?**

- The Northern Ireland Youth Forum asked that the Boards consultation paper on the Resource Allocation Plans 2005/06 'be rewritten in a more young people

friendly manner' or consider resourcing the Forum to do so. Whilst it was not practical to implement this suggestion in the context of this exercise the Boards wish to fully explore how we can better communicate and consult with children and young people.

### **3.9 COMPLAINTS**

The Board is committed to listening to the views of its customers about the services it provides and with this objective in mind has a formal comments/complaints policy. The policy may be used to register complaints related to the statutory equality duties.

During the period of this review two complaints were received regarding (a) transport assistance and (b) access to Annual Review (Statement of Educational Needs) information. Both these issues were resolved internally.

### **3.10 GOOD RELATIONS**

A variety of initiatives in support of the promotion of good relations between people of different racial, religious and political opinion have been developed through the Board's youth, library and curriculum services. These initiatives include:

- YESIP (Youth Education Social Inclusion Partnership)
- JEDI (Joined in Equity, Diversity and Interdependence)
- Partnership with PHAB
- Schools Community Relations Programmes
- Youth Exchange Programmes
- All Smiles are Equal
- Girls Across Communities
- Beyond Words Festival
- Chinese Language Books
- Silver Surfers
- Local Libraries E Weeks
- Developing Citizenship
- Music Service
- Inter Agency Projects

More information on these initiatives can be found in the Board's Annuals Reports to the Equality Commission and the Staff Commission's/5 Board Annual Equality Update. The Board will continue to build on these initiatives.

#### **a) Draft Good Relations Policy**

The Board's commitment to the promotion of good relations is integrated with its commitment to the promotion of equality of opportunity, as appropriate, throughout the Equality Scheme.

During 2005/06 the Southern Education and Library Board took the lead in the development of a Good Relations Policy which incorporated three important elements:

- Racial Equality
- Community Relations
- Social Inclusion

This draft policy emerged from the Good Relations duty encompassed in Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act, it was further developed by the 'Shared Future' document published in March 2005 and substantially enhanced by the 'Race Equality Strategy for Northern Ireland' published in July 2005.

The initial draft strategy prepared by the Southern Board is currently being developed on an inter-Board/Staff Commission basis. On 29 November 2005 an inter-Board/Staff Commission workshop was organised with participants from a range of functional areas, namely:

- Libraries
- Curriculum Advisory and Support Services, staff working in EAL support, with Irish Travels and curriculum support
- Human Resource
- Equality and Human Rights
- Youth Service

Mr Billy Gamble, Head of Community Relations, OFMDFM the key note speaker at the workshop commended the work undertaken by the Southern Board, indicating it was the first document he had viewed that addressed all six of the shared aims. The objective is to have an inter-Board/Staff Commission Good Relations Policy operational by April 2006.

#### **b) Joined in Equity, Diversity and Interdependence (JEDI)**

The JEDI Initiative aims to develop a coherent strategy for community relations, youth work and education for citizenship within Northern Ireland youth services. It aims to embed the principles of Equity (fairness), Diversity (acceptance and positive celebration of difference) and Interdependence (living and working in relationships with others) into youth work services.

The organisations involved in embedding EDI into their policies and operations include the Boards, YouthNet, YCNI, YouthLink, Catholic Guides of Ireland, Mencap, the Boy's Brigade, PHAB, Playboard, Chinese Welfare Association and Raleigh International.

For organisations involved in the pilot phase, the outworking of the EDI policy development process has included research into the needs of young people from minority ethnic communities, GLBT young people and the needs of young people with disabilities. Drawing on the Section 75 groups, more representative committee structures have been evolving within organisations. Youth council and/or youth advocacy groups have been strengthened and programmes with or for excluded young people are being piloted in a range of areas. Many of the issues being tackled are sensitive – the approaches being tried are new but evolving and the work is complex, yet pioneering.

An essential element of this work is the JEDI training programmes. 2002 witnessed the piloting of the Introduction to CR/EDI training programme within the Boards, YouthAction and YouthLink. Over eighty candidates were registered to achieve accreditation at this level, with progression to the advanced route underway.

Two further programmes have also been developed. An advanced EDI/CR programme for practitioners and a policy based one for managers and policy makers entitled EDI Strategic Planning. These programmes were reviewed during the autumn period (2002) and at this point efforts began to compile resources to support the rollout of the work.

## **External Evaluation**

Deloitte and Touche were appointed external evaluators to the JEDI initiative in the spring 2003. They were asked to examine the work developed between summer 1998 and 2003 in terms of its achievement towards the following twin aims:

- To develop a coherent strategy for community relations youth work and education for citizenship within the Northern Ireland Youth Sector; and
- To imbed the interrelated principles of Equity, Diversity and Interdependence (EDI) into the ethos, policies and programmes of the organisations which make up the youth sector.

Deloitte and Touche were also asked to address the following issues;

- The extent to which the aims of JEDI have been met;
- The factors that have contributed to the success of JEDI;
- The factors that have hindered the success of JEDI;
- What has been learnt as a result of JEDI; and
- What remains to be done in the future?

Their work involved interviewing the various working groups, key cohorts of individuals in policy or practice development and key partners. In addition, Deloitte and Touche also conducted a survey across the youth sector to test for awareness of JEDI, and understanding of the EDI principles. Recommendations from this work include:

**The Future Direction of JEDI:** That the way forward should ensure the work and value of JEDI is retained and built upon in a way that will aim to strengthen the partnership.

**Developing a Strategy:** That JEDI should produce and publish a strategy by the end of March 2004. The strategy should clearly articulate the overarching vision and aims for JEDI and should include an operational plan that identifies key roles for youth service partner organisations.

**Monitoring and Measuring:** That JEDI develop a general monitoring system that builds on the work arising out of the JEDI Audit and sets in place a system for capturing cultural and policy changes within organisations.

**Defining Relationships between EDI, Community Relations and Citizenship:** That the role of community relations and citizenship with JEDI be debated and a definitive policy stance on how EDI sits with community relations and citizenship be agreed and implemented as part of the production of a strategy.

'These recommendations were incorporated into the JEDI 2004-2006 Operational Plan and have informed the following outcomes:

1. Five further youth organisations were supported to begin the process of embedding the principles of EDI into their policies and operations. Much of this work is detailed with the Policy edition of Voices. The support provided to those leading up this change process within each organisation has been developed into a training programme for policy makers and managers within the youth service to be endorsed by Institute of Leadership Management.
2. Two youth service conferences and a number of high quality seminars were delivered during 2004 and into 2005 to address the themes of change management (December 2003), the implications of embedding the EDI principles into an organisation (Jan 2004), auditing organisations (April 2004), strategic planning (June 2004) and a major practice based two day event to examine the needs and issues faced by young people from each of the Section 75 groups (Jan 2005). Significantly this latter event also examined the needs and issues faced by young people from the refugee and asylum seekers community.
3. The Department of Education has adopted the need to review their current community relations strategy as documented within the Youth Work Strategy. Work on the youth service community relations strategy is expected to be carried forward by the JEDI Steering Group in 2006.
4. The JEDI Steering Group has developed a proposal on how to monitor and quality assure the embedding of EDI. This proposal is due to be discussed with key sectoral partners with a view to agreeing operational protocol in 2006.
5. The identification of the need for equality and good relations induction training for all personal operating within youth agencies as measure to promote the embedding of the EDI principles has been identified and a recent staff appointment made to address this need.

#### **Evidence:**

Step by Step Guide and Reflection in Practice – November 2002, Windows on Practice – September 2003, JEDI Strategic Plan – February 2004, Voices Policy Edition – Jan 2005 and Youth Work Strategy.

#### **What remains to be done?**

- Produce and publish an inter-Board/Staff Commission Good Relations Strategy.

#### **How do we build on our successes?**

- The JEDI initiative is cited as an example of good practice, not only as a framework for diversity management, but also because of its partnership approach between the community/voluntary and public sectors. This experience is helping to inform the development of our overarching good relations strategy.
- An important aspect of the good relations strategy being developed is an audit across the Boards/Staff Commission of good relations project work to establish the extent to which good relations promotional duty is embedded in the organisation and our service delivery strategy.

## **How do we meet the challenges?**

- The Community Relations Council's publications 'A Good Relations Framework' and the OFMDFM documents 'A Shared Future - Policy and Strategic Framework for Good Relations in Northern Ireland, March 2005' and 'A Racial Equality Strategy for Northern Ireland 2005-10', together with our own experience of work to promote good relations in Youth, Education and Library services has provided a good platform upon which we can build the framework for good relations strategy. Work on this is at an advanced stage with further consultations planned for spring 2005.

### **3.11 IMPACTS AND OUTCOMES**

#### **3.11.1 Cultural Change**

If the culture of an organisation is not conducive to mainstreaming equality it hinders progress being made. To take forward this agenda we believe strong leadership, commitment and drive is required. It is our experience that:

- Senior level commitment to the implementation and management of the equality schemes has led to the development of effective internal systems within the Boards;
- the development of equality expertise, particularly at senior managerial levels, within the Boards/Staff Commission has also increased our effectiveness in mainstreaming equality, Section 3.3 refers.
- Equality is firmly on the agenda not only at senior management but also at Board levels, paragraph 3.2.5. refers.

#### **3.11.2 Reflections**

These outcomes have been achieved as a result of training, good communication of what is being done and why and increased partnership working with the community and voluntary sector. Equality thinking is now commonplace, for example, it is not unusual for Board members to ask if new policies have been 'screened' or to question why a particular EQIA has not been progressed. In the Boards' recent debate around the Resource Allocation Plans (2005/06) Board members were very mindful of the need to take account of Section 75 requirements and the need to consult. This is not to say that communication should not be improved further. Partnership working has also provided opportunities to directly address the good relations duty by practical measures that support better integration in our increasingly diverse community.

#### **3.11.3 Processes and Procedures**

The development of processes and procedures, whilst time consuming in the early stages of implementation was seen as an essential requirement to mainstreaming. In regard to the screening process:

- a. all existing policies summarised and issued to consultees inviting comments on the screening criteria specified;
- b. screening conducted, collaboration between the Boards/Staff Commission on the setting of the EQIA timetable;
- c. consultation;

- d. final decisions on EQIA timetable and issues raised during consultation process; and
- e. feedback provided to consultees on decisions made.

All new policies have been screened on a rolling basis. Since 2002 consultation has taken place annually on the outcome of the screening exercise. Feedback has been provided to consultees via the Annual Report Boards'/Staff Commission's Annual Equality Update. An outcome from this process has been the development of:

- Screening pro forma document and toolkit which is used extensively by other public authorities.

Following the first equality impact assessment the Boards/Staff Commission evaluated the process followed and concluded that a workbook should be developed to facilitate a consistent approach to this process and to complement the Equality Commission Guidance. The result of this was the publication of:

- a workbook 'A Recommended Approach to Conducting an EQIA';

Positive benefits have been achieved for all nine equality categories in the EQIAs completed to date. For example,

#### **a) Electronic Libraries for Northern Ireland**

Equality Impact Assessment of the Boards' new policy known as 'Electronic Libraries for Northern Ireland'. This was the first policy in the education sector to be subjected to an equality impact assessment. This EQIA, whilst led by the Boards, was undertaken in co-operation with the Department for Culture, Arts and Leisure.

#### **Evidence of changes**

- Concern was expressed about employment issues arising from the PPP/PFI approach. The scope of the policy was altered to take account of this.
- Commitment that all library staff would be trained to European Computer Driving Licence level. Boards also to provide disability awareness training to staff and training in the use of adaptive technology.
- Taster sessions and specific marketing to encourage older people to use ELFNI.
- Adaptive technology rolled out in all Boards and the service provider required to carry out annual technology reviews which include a review of adaptive technology.

#### **Positive benefits for all equality categories**

- Particular benefits for people with disabilities; older people, carers and for those whose first language is not English. For example, as a result of the ELFNI EQIA process, specific training programmes were introduced to develop the IT skills of older people to address concerns raised during consultation. As a result many older people now express approval for this training which enables them to make effective use of the modern library service and facilitates a greater level of inclusion in the wider community/world.
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## **b) Equality Impact Assessment of the Code of Employment and Promotion Procedures and the Internal Trawl Procedures –**

More information on outcomes is contained at paragraph 3.4.4.a) of this report. In summary:

### **Positive experience of partnership working**

- Staff Commission and the five Boards co-joined to conduct the EQIA;
- The Staff Commission/Boards worked closely with the trade unions and the community and voluntary sectors e.g. the trade unions were members of the Working Group that redrafted the Code. Community/voluntary sector representatives were consulted at pre-consultation and formal consultation stage of the EQIA. Consultation meetings were organised in partnership with community/voluntary sector groups.
- A workshop was organised in partnership with community/voluntary sectors to consider “Positive Action Measures for People with Disabilities in the Recruitment and Selection Process”.

### **Evidence of changes**

- Removal of the internal trawl procedure
- A revised Policy and Code of Practice on the Employment of People with Disabilities, including a positive action programme;
- A revised Equal Opportunities Policy; and
- The development of a training strategy to ensure that panel members are fully aware of the revised Code and developments in terms of the equality agenda.

## **c) Equality Review of Work-life Balance Policies**

### **Positive experience of partnership working**

- The Staff Commission and the five Boards worked in partnership with the JNC to conduct a staff survey and audit of policies and procedures to inform the review;
- Review conducted in consultation with Section 75 groups.

### **Evidence of changes**

- Job Sharing Scheme extended to provide that it can also be used to “allow current employees with short-term and long-term illnesses, or who develop disabilities, to keep working and provide employment opportunities for disabled people generally”.
- Agreements extended to give recognition to the rights of people in same sex partnerships.
- Increased flexibility to work alternative work patterns;
- Pilot exercise on Teleworking.

### **Positive benefits for all equality categories**

- Particular benefits for people with disabilities; people who are gay or lesbian, people who are carers.

## **Reflections**

The development of clear procedures ensured that a consistent approach was achieved. It also enabled more staff in the organisation to become involved in the process. This has encouraged all staff to think about the promotional duties in terms of what they do rather than perceive equality as being the responsibility of a designated officer. By having standardised processes and procedures the actions taken are more transparent and a back-up paper trail exists in the event of a query/complaint and to provide an opportunity to learn from and improve the operation of these procedures. As the Boards/Staff Commission moved into the final phases of implementing current Equality Schemes there has been a greater emphasis on outcomes rather than processes.

### **3.11.4 Participation and Consultation**

As a first step a consultations strategy was developed and through partnership working the consultations process has evolved. The following outcomes are noteworthy:

- Development of a consultation strategy, paragraph 3.6.1.a) refers.
- Organisation of regional and local consultation events in partnership with the community, voluntary and trade union sectors, paragraph 3.6.1.c) refers.
- Establishment of a Joint Consultative Forum in 2003/04, paragraph 3.6.1.b) refers.
- Provision of information in alternative formats and use of interpreters, as required.

## **Reflections**

The Boards/Staff Commission had limited experience of consulting with the community and voluntary sector prior to the implementation of our Equality Schemes, initially this was perceived as a challenge. Over the five year implementation period we believe through engagement and co-operation we have learnt and grown together at both a regional and local level. Relationships have been forged which are based on mutual respect and trust. For the Boards this has been an important milestone in the implementation process. The Boards/Staff Commission can also demonstrate that policy decisions have changed as a result of this dialogue, for example some policies initially 'screened out' were 'screened in', mitigation measures proposed in EQIAs were enhanced and policies were substantially reviewed. The Boards/Staff Commission recognise that there is room for improvement and are keen to develop a strategy which will enhance our ability to consult and communicate with children and young people, paragraph 3.8.4) refers.

### **3.11.5 Partnership Working**

Working in partnership with the community, voluntary and trade union sectors covered a range of areas. The Boards/Staff Commission were pleased to have the opportunity to work with community/voluntary sector organisations in the development and delivery of training packages. These included the following:

- 'Effective Consultation', partner Disability Action;
- 'Positive Action Measures for People with Disabilities in the Recruitment and Selection Process', partners - MENCAP, RNIB, Disability Action, Action Mental Health and the Equality Commission.

- 'Dealing with Complaints on the Grounds of Sexual Orientation', partners - Association of Northern Ireland Colleges and Coalition on Sexual Orientation;
- 'Anti Discrimination and Diversity', partner - NICEM/Centre European J'uif D'Information.
- Organisation of consultation events.

SEELB Local Initiatives included:

- Youth Sport South East - the principal objective is to create situations throughout the Board's area for every young person aged 8-16 years of age to have an opportunity to take part in various sports irrespective of their ability, religion, gender, disability, age or economic circumstances. Key partners include School Sport Co-ordinators, Councils, Coaches and external funders;
- Down/Lisburn Trust – the Board and the Trust work closely together recognising the links between health and education in the current climate of 'joined –up' thinking and working. The main aim is to work together for the benefit of the community by integrated planning and delivery of services. Projects include ICAN Early Years, Looked after Children and Parenting and Healthy Schools;
- IMPACT – this is a partnership approach to focus on the problems relating to car crime in the Greater West Belfast area. Partners include Probation Board NI, North & West Belfast HSSTrust, Down/Lisburn HSS Trust, SEELB, BEELB, Whitfield House Juvenile Justice and the PSNI;
- DELTA – this programme is a parenting support project which encourages parents to take an active role in their children's education. The partnership includes the child, the parent, the school and Board officers in Developing Early Learning and Thinking Abilities (DELTA).

## Reflections

The development and joint delivery of training provides not only a valuable opportunity for shared learning but sends out a very clear signal to all staff that the community and voluntary sector can and should have a greater role in the delivery of the Equality agenda. The Boards/Staff Commission wish to pay tribute to the commitment and dedication of the staff and their organisations who worked with us on these partnership projects. To be able to build in the actual experiences of those to whom we provide services into such programmes has increased awareness and is more likely to have a greater and more profound impact on all of us.

### 3.12 REFLECTIONS ON THE 'WORKABILITY' OF OUR SCHEMES

The purpose of this review has been to evaluate the effectiveness of the Boards'/Staff Commission's Equality Schemes in meeting our equality duties under Section 75. In this context it is important to reflect on the 'workability' of the Schemes. Overall, it is our experience that the Schemes have served us well. The challenges faced in areas such as screening arose not because of the commitments in the Scheme but often from a lack of clarity around definitions and processes.

The Equality Scheme places considerable emphasis on processes and procedures, whilst these are a critical part of the implementation process it is important that they do not become the end in itself.

In implementing the Scheme we have tried to get a balance between the development of processes and procedures and outcomes through new and

innovative methods of working. This can only be achieved by open and transparent methods of working and good communications with those individuals/organisations who have a legitimate interest in our work.

Furthermore, too much emphasis on procedures may in the longer term hinder the ultimate goal of mainstreaming equality into all aspects of our business. The more successful we are in mainstreaming equality at the policy formulation stage and then through the screening processes which are both likely to include consultation the more seamless the approach becomes.

The wording of the Scheme takes a greater significance if a complaint is made of a failure to comply. The challenge is to maintain a Scheme and ensure its outworking is based on good practice matched with a degree of flexibility. We also need to ensure that it is based around good working relationships which allow freedom to develop programmes of work that are taken forward in good faith and are not solely reliant on a strictly procedural approach.

## **4. WAY FORWARD**

### **4.1. Equality Scheme**

The evaluation of our existing Equality Schemes has not identified any significant workability issues. It is the Board's/Staff Commissions view that the current schemes should continue until the establishment of the single Education Authority.

In this interim period the on-going programme of work should continue. The Boards/Staff Commission will also consider and consult on what actions emerging from this effectiveness review can be addressed in the interim period and those which would be better addressed by the single Education Authority.

### **4.2. Review of Public Administration**

The Education Minister announced in November 2005 that there will be a single Education Authority, paragraph 2.6) refers. The collaborative approach adopted by the Boards/Staff Commission will make it easier to transfer equality scheme knowledge to the single Education Authority. However, given the scale of this change it would be important that the following issues are addressed:

- (i) The need to ensure that equality considerations are used to inform decisions around new structures, service delivery locations etc.
- (ii) The importance of a seamless transition from the existing education authorities to the single Education Authority. Given the number of authorities involved, work would need to commence to consider how the best practice developed across the sector could inform the development of the new Equality Scheme and its associated programme of work.
- (iii) The need to ensure that mainstreaming equality remains an integral part of the Corporate and Business planning process and is built into the operations of the new body at every level, in particular at the senior management level. It is important that in implementing a change management strategy that equality is part of that change process so that the culture which emerges is one which facilitates mainstreaming. In this context adequate resources need to be made available to deliver equality outcomes which may emerge from the programmes of work pertaining to the implementation of the Equality Scheme.

**EQIA TIMETABLE**

<b>Policy</b>	<b>Preliminary Decision</b>	<b>Final Decision</b>	<b>Timetable Year</b>	<b>Progress on an inter-Board/Staff Commission basis</b>
1. Pre School Education	Impact Assess	Co-join with DE on EQIA	2	EQIA was to commence in the first quarter of Year 2
2. Primary Education	Policies related to this function have been subsumed within other functions			
3. Secondary Education	Policies related to this function have been subsumed within other functions			
4. Special Educational Needs <i>Promotion of inclusion of children with special educational needs in mainstream schools and classes</i>	Co-join with DE's EQIA	No change	1	An inter-Board Best Value review <sup>4</sup> in special education, which incorporated an assessment of equality impacts has been completed, paragraph 3.4.4(m) refers
<i>Maximising learning opportunities for children with learning difficulties/special educational needs</i>	Co-join with DE's EQIA	No change	2	New inter-Board policy screened, Criteria for making Statutory Assessment of Special Educational Needs, was screened in for EQIA, paragraph 3.4.4 h) refers
5. Youth Service <i>Promotion of personal and social development of young people through leisure activities</i>	Co-join with DE's EQIA	Scope of EQIA extended	1	This EQIA has been completed, paragraph 3.4.4 b) refers. Best value review which included an assessment of equality impacts completed, paragraph 3.4.4 m) refers.
<i>Grant Aid Scheme for Assistance to Youth Organisations</i>	No impact Assessment	Impact Assess	2	
6. School Attendance	Inter-Board Review <sup>T</sup>	No change		Education and Training Inspectorate Survey conducted.
7. Suspension & Expulsion of Pupils <i>Promotion of inclusion for pupil groups in danger of educational under-achievement</i>	Co-join with DE's EQIA	No change	2	

<sup>4</sup> The Labour Government, as part of its commitment to modernise Local Government, introduced a Bill "The Local Government Act 1999", more commonly known as "Best Value" which came into effect on 1 April 2000 in England and Wales. A Best Value review centres around a culture of continuous improvement with a major focus on customers and quality.

<sup>T</sup> Review must include consideration of equality impacts

<b>Policy</b>	<b>Preliminary Decision</b>	<b>Final Decision</b>	<b>Timetable Year</b>	<b>Progress on an inter-Board/Staff Commission basis</b>
8. Student Support <i>Free School Meals</i>	Co-operate with DE's EQIA	No change	3	-
<i>Discretionary Awards</i>	Co-operate with DEL's EQIA	-	1	-
9. Home to School Transport	Co-join with DE's EQIA	No change	2	This EQIA was to commence in the first quarter of Year 2
10. School Meals Provision	Co-operate with DE's EQIA	No change	3	Best Value review completed, paragraph 3.4.4 m) refers
11. Employment <i>Code of Employment and Promotion Procedures (non-teaching staff) and Internal Trawl</i>	Impact Assess	No change	2	This EQIA has been completed, paragraph 3.4.4 d) refers
<i>Recruitment and Selection Procedures (teaching staff)</i>	Review	Impact Assess	2	EQIA deferred
<i>Family Friendly Policies</i>	Review	Impact Assess	3	This process has been completed, paragraph 3.4.4 f) refers
<i>Job Evaluation</i>	No Impact Assessment	Impact Assess	4	EQIA on an inter-Board/Staff Commission on-going
12. Library Service <i>Electronic Libraries</i>	Impact Assess	No change	1	EQIA has been completed, paragraph 3.4.4 a) refers

<b>Policy</b>	<b>Preliminary Decision</b>	<b>Final Decision</b>	<b>Timetable Year</b>	<b>Progress on an inter-Board/Staff Commission basis</b>
13. Curriculum Support <i>Maintenance of Statutory Northern Ireland Curriculum</i>	Co-operate with DE's EQIA	No change	2	EQIA 'Framework for Achievement' completed, see paragraph 3.4.4 k) refers  Originally screened out by DE  EQIA suspended, paragraph 3.4.4 g) refers
<i>Raising standards of literacy/ numeracy strategy</i>	Co-operate with DE's EQIA	No change	2	
<i>Support for low and under-achieving schools</i>	Co-operate with DE's EQIA	No change	2	
<i>Continuing Professional Development of Teachers</i>	-	Co-join with DE's EQIA	3	
<i>Music Policy</i>	Impact Assess	No change	3	
14. Open Enrolment & Transfer <i>Open Enrolment</i>	Co-operate with DE's EQIA	No change	3	
<i>Transfer</i>	Co-operate with DE's EQIA	No change	1	
15. Finance of Controlled & Maintained Schools	Co-operate with DE's EQIA	No change	1	
16. Governor Training	Inter-Board Review	No change	To be scheduled	
17. Exceptional Provision <i>English as an additional language</i>	No Impact Assessment	Impact Assess	2	EQIA pre consultation undertaken, process, paragraph 3.4.4 e) refers. EQIA suspended by DE.
18. Procurement	Co-operate with DFP's EQIA	No change	1	Contribution made to the process, paragraph 3.4.4 c) refers
19. Maintenance of Boards' Estates	Best Value/inter-Board Review	No change	1	Best Value Review completed
20. Finance	No Impact Assessment	Inter-Board Review	2	

**DE** Department of Education; **DEL** Department for Employment and Learning **DCAL** Department of Culture, Arts & Leisure **DFP** Department of Finance & Personnel

## NEW POLICIES

The following policies have been added to the EQIA timetable:

Period: 1 April 2002 to 31 March 2003

Policy: **Child Protection Policy and Procedure - Library Service (inter-Board)**  
Seek to co-join with EQIA of the Promotion of Child Protection Policies and Procedures in Schools.

Period:

Policy: **Criteria for Making Statutory Assessment of Special Educational Needs (inter-Board)**  
EQIA commenced

Period:

Policy: **PPP Programme for six Belfast Schools (BELB only)**  
EQIA report published for consultation in 2004.

Period: 1 April 2004 - 31 March 2005

Policy: **An Alternative Model of Library Provision in Sion Mills (WELB only)**  
EQIA report published and issued for consultation in March 2005.

## EQUALITY COMMISSION FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

### Public Authority Five Year Review Report

This report template includes a number of self assessment questions under the twelve key elements of an equality scheme. Please enter information at the relevant part of each Section in the template and ensure that it is submitted to the Commission electronically (by completing this template) **and** in writing, with a signed cover letter from the Chief Executive or, in his/her absence, the Deputy Chief Executive (or equivalent).

Name of public authority (Enter details below)

South Eastern Education and Library Board

Equality Officer name and contact details (Enter details below)

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### Executive Summary

Please provide some main conclusions in terms of:

a) To what extent has your public authority's approved scheme provided a workable basis for mainstreaming the need to promote equality of opportunity and good relations into policy-making over the past five years?

**(Enter text below)**

Overall the Scheme has provided a very workable basis for mainstreaming equality of opportunity and good relations both into the policy making process and other aspects of the organization such as its promotion of diversity. The commitments within the scheme have been easy to communicate in terms of awareness training and have also provided a form of performance indicators by which to monitor progress on mainstreaming equality awareness among staff, developing processes and expertise in screening and EQIAs as well as developing effective approaches to consultation, the main driver of the process.

- b) What key lessons have been learnt over the past five years in terms of effectively implementing the approved equality scheme?

Co-operation on a five Board basis with sponsoring departments and other agencies in the Educational sector has facilitated shared learning. Building relationships with the voluntary sector has enhanced both the quality of the consultation process and also the development of informed policies and responsive services that address the articulated needs of marginalized groups.

Increased partnership working with other authorities and Section 75 groups has been an additional outcome of the relationship building process.

- c) What more needs to be done to achieve outcomes for individuals from the nine equality categories?

Building on the foundations of co-operation, relationship and partnership initiatives should be possible to develop outcome related initiatives and programmes which should address the outstanding work required over the next few years prior to the of the outworking of the Review of Public Administration.

**(Enter text below)**

(This section to be completed)

**1. A general introductory statement specifying the purpose of the scheme and the public authority's commitment to the statutory duties.**

1a) To what extent were senior management involved in ensuring scheme compliance over the 5 year period and what further steps could be undertaken to ensure effective internal arrangements?

*Prompts – Identify any changes to arrangements for managing scheme implementation, and what were the lessons learnt in terms of enablers and impediments to monitoring scheme implementation?*

The comments below must be considered in conjunction with the information provided at Section 3.2 of this Report.

Senior Management has been fully involved in the strategic management of the implementation of this Scheme. This is demonstrated by the following examples of their involvement:

- Operational responsibility for the implementation of the Equality Scheme rests with the Chief Administrative Officers. The Chief Administrative Officers meet each month to consider strategic and operational issues on an inter-Board basis.
- There is a formal link between the inter-Board/Staff Commission Statutory Duty Group and the Association of Chief Administrative Officers (hereafter

referred to as ‘the Association’) in that monthly reports are considered on the implementation of the Scheme.

- A member of the Association regularly attends the Statutory Duty Group meetings, 73% of meetings attended.
- At least one member of the Association has facilitated and/or participated in all consultation events;
- All draft reports e.g. screening, impact assessments, publications e.g. equality awareness materials are considered and approved by the Association.
- A member of the Association is a Joint Chair of the Joint Consultative Forum and its associated Steering Group, Section 3.6 b) refers.
- Members of the Association have participated in all of the training events referred to at Section 3.7 of the Report.
- Another important enabler to monitoring the implementation of the Scheme has been the continuity of management and staff engaged in driving the process. This has been a significant factor in enhancing our ability to deliver on commitments and develop and maintain positive relationships. Other public authorities do not appear to have had this continuity of approach.
- Multi disciplinary project teams comprising of senior/middle management staff have been appointed to conduct EQIAs with clear reporting links to senior management groups, as appropriate.
- Over the five years we have learnt that implementation through commitment makes a significant difference. However, in the final years of implementation a major impediment has been the constraint on financial resources due to funding reductions from the Department of Education.

1b) Outline annual **direct** expenditure of resources to ensure that the statutory duties were complied with, in terms of staff and money over the past 5 years, and comment on the extent that all necessary resources were allocated.

*Prompts – Identify costs related to equality unit staff, use of consultants, allocation of budgets to training/publications/ research, extent of in-year bids and/or reallocation of resources. What were the lessons learnt in terms of enablers and impediments to monitoring resourcing? What could the public authority do in future to ensure effective allocation and monitoring of necessary resources?*

**(Enter text below)**

The information on annual direct expenditure is provided at paragraph 3.2.5. d) of this report.

Having “screened in” the PPP Project for equality impact assessment the Strategic Investment Board indicated to the Board that in order to ensure the bankability of the project it would be useful to engage consultants. The Board agreed to this approach based on terms of reference which specified that the equality impact assessment be conducted in accordance with the Equality Commissions “Practical Guidance on Equality Impact Assessments” and the

Boards/Staff Commission's workbook "A Recommended Approach to Conducting an EQIA".

The terms of reference also specified that the Board had overall responsibility for all decisions associated with the EQIA and the Board's equality unit would lead and support the appointed consultant(s).

Consultants were used to assist in the development and/or facilitation of training. The Boards/Staff Commission wish to acknowledge and pay tribute to Jones & Cassidy John Kremer, Reader in Psychology at Queens University, Belfast and Equality Consultant for the assistance provided in the development of training materials for use in training on the screening and EQIA process. Their knowledge and skills enhanced the process and encouraged us to adopt a more innovative approach. The total cost of consultancy input over the five years was £5,195.92. This was largely met by the Staff Commission who have within their function a requirement to assist with training and development initiatives across the five Boards.

## **2. An outline of how the public authority intends to assess its compliance with the Section 75 duties and for consulting on matters to which a duty under that section is likely to be relevant.**

2a) Outline impacts and outcomes (for the public authority and/or individuals from the nine equality categories) over the past five years and what further steps could be undertaken to build on these or address underreporting?

*Prompt – Were outcomes delivered for all of the nine equality categories? Were annual progress reports critically reviewed before or after submission to the Commission? What examples of good practice from other public authorities could be adopted?*

**(Enter text below)**

Yes, paragraph 3.11 summarises the outcomes delivered for all nine equality categories. The full report, however, needs to be considered in its entirety to obtain a sense of the overall achievements in terms of impacts and outcomes.

Annual Reports were compiled initially on a collaborative inter Board basis which reflected our approach to implementation of the Schemes. This phase of the process was carried out by the inter-Board/Staff Commission Statutory Duty Group in consultation with the Chief Administrative Officers. Each Board then further developed the draft report to reflect work it had separately undertaken to promote equality of opportunity and good relations. In addition to regular reporting to the Board, the Annual Reports were considered by:

- the Senior Management Team;
- the General Purposes Committee; and
- approved the Board.

The transparency of Section 75 makes it relatively easy to reflect an emerging practice and this has been used as a constant reference for the development of our own practices. The Boards/Staff Commission are pleased that many organisations have seen fit to use the models we have developed as examples to follow.

2b) Outline the number of equality scheme related consultation exercises undertaken by your authority over the past five years. Set out the number and percentage related to screening exercises and to EQIAs and indicate the extent that your scheme helped you to engage with external stakeholders.

*Prompt – Identify your authority’s most and least successful means of consultation in relation to s75 categories. Why were some means of consultation more or less successful in relation to particular equality categories?*

**(Enter text below)**

Section 3.6.1c) specifies the numbers and range of consultation events specifically related to the implementation of the Boards/Staff Commission Equality Schemes. It also describes the nature of the consultation exercises conducted and the extent to which the community and voluntary and trade union sectors engaged in the process. However, as Section 75 has started to permeate within the Boards/Staff Commission and mainstreaming has become more common place, the number and range of consultations has increased. Such consultation events are not all captured in this report, e.g. consultations around the implementation of projects such as Joined in Equity, Diversity and Interdependence (JEDI), Youth Education Social Inclusion Partnership (YESIP), the utilization of the Joint Consultative Forum (JCF) and its Steering Group which has considered a broad spectrum of issues.

The most successful consultation exercises in terms of measuring meaningful consultation through engagement and face to face contact has been those events organised in partnership with community and voluntary sector groups. A very high level of engagement has also been achieved where a policy decision(s) are controversial. Examples of such circumstances are:

- consultation on the Boards’ Resource Allocation Plans 2005/06;
- PPP Programme;
- Library Provision

The least successful method has been the public advertisement and organisation of public meetings. Whilst these can be beneficial in specific circumstances in general they did not facilitate meaningful consultation. The consultation methods used were successful in relation to all of the equality categories. It is however accepted that there is scope for improvement in the consultation process at the policy development stage in respect of two categories of persons, people with disabilities and children and young people.

2c) Indicate if your list of consultees was amended during the 5 year period and what further steps could be taken to develop your level of engagement and consultation?

*Prompt - Outline the extent your authority did or did not move away from formal consultation and on what criteria was any such consultation targeted? To what extent were requests to be included and/or objections from those not included in the consultation process received and how were these addressed?*

**(Enter text below)**

The consultee list has been supplemented over the five year period, a small number of organisations have asked to be removed from the list. No organisation has been removed at the Boards' instigation. The list has been expanded to facilitate those organizations that have asked to be included in the consultation process. A list of community and voluntary and trade union groups has been developed for the JCF. All public authorities in the Education Sector were automatically included. Again, this list has been supplemented by requests from individuals/groups asking for the opportunity to participate.

2d) To what extent did your authority consult directly with directly affected individuals as well as with representative groups, particularly in relation to young people and those with learning disabilities, and was this sufficient?

*Prompt – How effective was your authority at providing feedback to consultees as a result of consultation exercises? What were the lessons learnt in terms of enablers and impediments to consulting directly with affected individuals? What could your authority do in future to provide effective consultee feedback?*

**(Enter text below)**

See comments at 2 d) above. Consultation has taken place with people with disabilities on the initial screening of policies, on impact assessments and Best Value reviews. Children with learning disabilities were consulted as part of the Best Value Review of Special Educational Needs. Children and Young People were consulted on the Best Value Reviews on:

- Special Educational Needs;
- School Meals Service; and
- Youth Service

and as part of the EQIA, 'To promote through the Youth Service, the Personal and Social Development of Young People'. They were also consulted during policy formulation e.g. 'Bill of Rights in Schools, a Resource for Post-primary Schools'.

Feedback forms an important part of the consultation process. Formally agreed processes for recording the outcomes of consultation exercises are normally agreed with the relevant equality consultees. Feedback on decisions is generally in the form of a written report.

### 3. The authority's arrangements for assessing and consulting on the impact of policies adopted or proposed to be adopted on the promotion of equality of opportunity.

3a) Outline and discuss the number of policies your authority subject to screening over the past five years, setting out the number and percentage of 'policies screened in' on the basis of equality considerations and the percentage 'screened in' on the basis of the good relations duty.

*Prompt - What were the lessons learnt in terms of enablers and impediments to screening in terms of, screening criteria and priority factors? Are there any other criteria which could usefully be included? What lessons are there regarding responsibility for screening at regional level and subsequent screening of local policy? What could your authority do in future to ensure effective screening arrangements? Set out in an appendix a list of all policies screened out during scheme implementation.*

**(Enter text below)**

For full details of existing policies screened in Year 1 see Appendix 4 of the Boards'/Staff Commission's 'Report on Screening of Policies', paragraph 3.3.2. a) refers. The position is summarised below:-

Year 1 April 2001 - March 2002	Consultation		Screened		Decisions changed
	Pre Screening	Post Screening	'in'	'out'	
Existing Board Policies	✓	✓	19	9	7

Five policies initially screened out were earmarked for EQIA as a result of consultation, these are listed below:-

- Grant Aid Scheme for Assistance to Youth Organisations.
- Recruitment and Selection Procedures (teaching staff).
- Family Friendly Policies re: titled Work life Balance Policies.
- Job Evaluation.
- English as an Additional Language.

The two remaining policies were to be subject to an equality review.

Proposed policies screened, are summarised below, full details are available in the reports specified at paragraph 3.3.2.b)

#### INTER BOARD

Year 2 April 2002 - March 2003	Consultation				Screened		Comments
	Pre Screening		Post Screening		'in'	'out'	
Electronic Libraries for N I	Yes	No	Yes ✓	No	✓	-	-
Publication Scheme (Freedom of Information Act 2000)		✓	✓			✓	
Child Protection Policy & Procedures – Library Services			✓		✓		Boards proposed that this EQIA co-join with that listed by the DE/Boards

### INTER BOARD

Year 3 April 2003 - March 2004	Consultation				Screened		Comments
	Pre Screening		Post Screening		'in'	'out'	
Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations (NI) 2002 – Discretionary Policy Statement *	Yes ✓	No	Yes ✓	No		✓	
Internet and Email Usage	✓		✓			✓	
Educational Visits	✓		✓			✓	
Criteria for Making Statutory Assessment of Special Educational Needs		✓	✓		✓		
C2k Project			✓			✓	

\* Trade Unions

### INTER BOARD

Year 4 April 2004 - March 2005	Consultation				Screened		Comments
	Pre Screening		Post Screening		'in'	'out'	
DE/NDPB - Child Protection Guidance and Procedures for staff employed in an E&LB	Yes	No	Yes ✓	No		✓	
Inter-Board/CCMS - Teachers' Performance and Staff Development Scheme	✓		✓			✓	

### INTER BOARD

Year 5 April 2005 - March 2006	Consultation				Screened		Comments
	Pre Screening		Post Screening		'in'	'out'	
Resource Allocation Plans 2005/06	Yes ✓	No	Yes ✓	No		✓	

With regard to the Resource Allocation Plan 2005/06 consultees felt that 18 out of the 34 screening decisions made should be subjected to an EQIA. The response of the Boards to the representations made is detailed in the Report on the Screening of the Boards' Resource Allocation Plans 2005/06, paragraph 3.3.2 c).

3b) To what extent did your authority's consideration of the screening criteria **not** identify equal opportunity implications on any of s75 categories, but for which consultees then highlighted problems?

*Prompt – Identify the extent the collection of quantitative and qualitative data informed screening processes. Outline the extent consultations with representative groups produced data to inform the screening process which was not otherwise available to your authority. Outline any difficulties in identifying policies and equality implications using the definition of policy set out in the Guide to the Statutory Duties.*

**(Enter text below)**

See information provided above and that provided at 3.3.2 of the report. There has been a lower level of engagement on new policies screened; each year only a few responses were received, the exception to this has been the screening of the Boards' Resource Allocation Plans. It is clear the more controversial and/or the policy decision the higher the level of engagement in the process.

3c) Outline over the past five years how many EQIAs your authority commenced as a result of i) initial screening and ii) as a result of screening new/revised policies subsequently, and discuss the extent that your authority has become more effective at identifying equality of opportunity dimensions in its policies.

*Prompt – Were changes made to the screening process? Outline any examples of any changes made to policies to better promote equality of opportunity and/or good relations, rather than to address any perceived differential impact, as a result of screening policies that were 'screened out'?*

**(Enter text below)**

**Intra Board, inter Board/Staff Commission EQIAs completed**

- Electronic Libraries for Northern Ireland (new policy)
- Code of Employment and Promotion Procedures and Internal Trawl Procedure
- Family Friendly Policies retitled Work-life Balance
- Public Private Partnerships (BELB, new policy)
- An Alternative Model of Library Provision in Sion Mills (WELB, new policy)

**On-going**

- Job Evaluation
- Grant Aid Scheme for Assistance to Youth Organisations

**Suspended**

- Instrumental Music Service
- Criteria for making Statutory Assessment of Special Educational Needs (new policy)

**Deferred**

- Recruitment and Selection Procedures (teaching staff)

**Department of Education/NDPB EQIAs completed**

- To promote through the Youth Service, the Personal and Social Development of Young People
- Statutory Curriculum and Assessment - Framework for Achievement

The information provided above confirms that the Boards screening of existing and new policies has been effective in the identification of equality of opportunity dimensions in its policies.

3d) Outline over the past five year period the percentage of your authority's initial EQIA timetable that reached i) stage 6 of the EQIA process i.e. decision making, and ii) stage 7 of the EQIA process i.e. annual monitoring & publication of results, and indicate the extent that your authority has become more effective at progressing EQIAs.

*Prompt – Explain any slippage that occurred and what was done to rectify it. To what extent did you notify representative groups of this slippage and what was their reaction? What were the lessons learnt in terms of enablers and impediments to monitoring EQIAs?*

**(Enter text below)**

See Paragraph 3.4 and Appendix 1 to this Report.

### **Intra-Board and inter-Board/Staff Commission EQIAs**

Ten policies were listed for EQIA on an intra, inter-Board/Staff Commission basis: of which, four were new policies; two are now at Stage 6; three are at Stage 7. The Boards/Staff Commission are of the view that given that four Best Value Reviews have also been conducted that they have been reasonably effective in progressing EQIAs.

### **DE led EQIAs**

Sixteen policies were listed for EQIA on a DE/inter-Board (NDPB) basis: of which, two have been completed and are at Stage 7 of the process. The position on DE led EQIAs is detailed at paragraph 3.4.3 of this report.

## **4. The authority's arrangements for monitoring any adverse impact of policies adopted by the authority on the promotion of equality of opportunity.**

4a) To what extent were sufficient arrangements put in place to collect data relating to the nine equality categories to monitor the impact of policies and what could your authority do in future to develop monitoring arrangements?

*Prompt - What were the lessons learnt in terms of enablers and impediments to monitoring and developing new/additional quantitative data over the past five years? Did your authority consult its own employees or collaborate with other authorities to collect data? Did your authority engage with representative groups to develop monitoring arrangements?*

**(Enter text below)**

See information at Section 3.5 of this report.

## **5. The authority's arrangements for publishing the results of equality impact assessments and of monitoring any adverse impact of policies adopted by the authority on the promotion of equality of opportunity.**

5a) Indicate the number of reports published outlining the results of EQIAs and monitoring over the past five years, and outline what your authority could do in future in relation to improving the publication of EQIA results and monitoring.

*Prompt – Identify the number of reports that were provided in alternative formats. What were the lessons learnt in terms of enablers and impediments to publishing the results of EQIAs and monitoring?*

**(Enter text below)**

As stated earlier three EQIAs conducted on an intra/inter-Board/Staff Commission basis have been completed this includes the publication of the results of the EQIA. The results of another EQIA are due to be published in the coming weeks. Of these Reports only one was requested in an alternative format. In regard to DE led EQIAs the results of one has been published, paragraph 3.4.4. b) refers.

A monitoring report of completed EQIAs is provided in each Annual Report. A summary is also included in the Annual Equality Update from September 2003 onwards. See also section 3.5

**6. A commitment that in making any decision with respect to a policy adopted or proposed to be adopted by it, that the public authority shall take into account any equality impact assessment and consultation carried out in relation to the policy.**

6a) In terms of the number of EQIAs that reached stage 6 i.e. decision making to what extent were mitigation measures and alternative policies adopted?

*Prompt - Outline the extent to which your authority produced EQIAs that did **not** identify adverse impact on any of s75 categories, but which consultees then gave an indication of adverse impact of s75 category and/or proposed mitigation measures or alternative policies.*

**(Enter text below)**

All of the EQIAs completed to date, see paragraph 3.4.4 of this report and 3 c) above identified adverse impact and mitigation measures were proposed.

In all cases mitigation measures and/or alternative policies were adopted.

6b) To what extent did consideration of EQIAs and consultations contribute to a change in policy, as opposed to policy decisions which would probably have been made in any event by your authority?

*Prompt - Set out any key examples. What were the lessons learnt in terms of enablers and impediments to making a decision and taking into account an EQIA and consultation? What could your authority do in future to ensure decision making effectively takes these issues into account?*

**(Enter text below)**

Paragraph 3.4.4 and Section 10 refers.

## **7. The authority's arrangements for training staff on issues relevant to the duties.**

7a) To what extent were sufficient arrangements put in place to develop and deliver a training programme in accordance with scheme commitments?

*Prompt - Was the training programme focused on the initial period of scheme implementation or did it effectively cover all five years? To what extent were outside trainers from representative groups used in designing or delivering training? Was focused training for staff in management and roles associated with aspects of scheme implementation provided on an ongoing basis?*

**(Enter text below)**

A training strategy was developed in accordance with the commitments made in our Equality Schemes. This provided for training to be conducted over the life of the Scheme. Section 3.7 details the extent to which outside trainers were involved. Equality awareness sessions were developed and conducted in-house. Training packages in the following areas were developed and delivered on a partnership basis with the community and voluntary sector:

- Disability Awareness;
- Consultation Skills;
- Positive Action Measures for People with Disabilities in the Recruitment and Selection Process;
- Dealing with Complaints of Harassment on the Grounds of Sexual Orientation;
- Anti Discrimination and Diversity.

7b) Have all staff received awareness training and what could your authority do in future to deliver an effective training programme?

*Prompt – Does the authority have evidence that over the past five years staff understood their role in implementing the scheme? What were the lessons learnt in terms of enablers and impediments to communication and training?*

**(Enter text below)**

Considerable progress has been made in raising awareness of Section 75. This included the design and publication of information leaflets and posters to school based staff. A series of half day training sessions were delivered to nearly 3,000 staff across the five Boards. Details of SEELB staff trained are included in

Section 3.7 of the report. When the redrafted Code of Procedures on Recruitment and Selection was reissued a further 785 staff eligible to participate in recruitment and selection exercises participated in further equality awareness training sessions. As a result of these programmes of training staff are more aware of the importance of the promotion of equality of opportunity and good relations. This is demonstrated by their involvement in screening, impact assessments, consultations and their ability to 'think equality' in the formulation of policy.

## **8. The authority's arrangements for ensuring and assessing public access to information and to services provided by the authority.**

8a) To what extent were sufficient arrangements put in place to ensure and assess public access to information and to services provided by the authority?

*Prompt - Was an audit of information provision undertaken? To what extent did you provide accessible formats without specific requests? What were the lessons learnt in terms of enablers and impediments to ensuring and assessing public access to information and to services? What could your authority do in future to ensure equality of opportunity in public access to information and to services?*

**(Enter text below)**

In Year 1 of implementing the Equality Schemes a review was conducted and consideration was given to how best to communicate information to young people and people with learning disabilities, paragraph 3.8 refers. All documentation published in relation to the Equality Scheme has a clear statement that it is available in alternative formats. A relatively small number of requests have been made for information in alternative formats. For example, the English as an Additional Language(EAL) pre consultation briefing papers, were translated into Chinese, Urdu, Portuguese and Arabic to facilitate the consultation process. Statements of a child's Special Educational Needs have also been translated to facilitate parents in contributing to this process. Interpreters have been provided at a number of consultation events.

In addition the Board employs two Home/School Liaison Officers specifically for the Chinese and Bangladeshi communities

## **9. The authority's timetable for measures proposed in the scheme.**

9a) Outline the extent to which measures set out in the original timetable have been implemented. Any detailed information should be included as an appendix to the report.

*Prompt – Update any progress previously reported as underway or delayed. Has a mechanism been developed to report by exception i.e. on specific issues that have not been progressed?*

**(Enter text below)**

With the exception of a number of inter-Board/Staff Commission EQIAs all work specified under the Equality Scheme has been progressed. It is noteworthy that the original programme of EQIAs has been supplemented by new policies 'screened in'. The Boards/Staff Commission have invested considerable resources in the completion of EQIAs to a high standard by multi disciplinary managerial teams we note however, that many EQIAs that we have sight of are much less comprehensive and do not appear to have been conducted in a similar manner. If the Boards/Staff Commission adopted a similar approach more EQIAs could be completed.

9b) If your authority was to be reconstituted in the next five years what would be the main scheme actions/equality considerations that an incoming authority should address? Any detailed information should be included as an appendix to the report.

*Prompt – Outline what arrangements could be put in place to transfer equality scheme knowledge.*

**(Enter text below)**

See Section 4 of this Report

## **10. Details of how the scheme will be published.**

10a) Were scheme commitments in this section delivered and what evidence supports this view?

**(Enter text below)**

Yes, paragraph 3.1 of this report refers.

## **11. The authority's arrangements for dealing with complaints arising from a failure to comply with the scheme.**

11a) Outline the number and nature of complaints received by your authority, and what your authority could do in future to develop its complaints handling process and learn from complaints.

*Prompt – Outline the nature of complaints and scheme elements e.g. screening, consultation. What effect did complaints have on the operation of your scheme?*

**(Enter text below)**

Details of complaints received by the Board are included in section 3.9 of the report.

## **12. A commitment to conducting a review of the scheme within five years of its submission to the Equality Commission and to forwarding a report of this review to the Equality Commission.**

12a) What has been your authority's experience of conducting this review? To what extent has the Commission's guidance been useful in undertaking the review?

**(Enter text below)**

The Equality Commission guidance was received at a very late stage. This was not particularly helpful and hindered our ability to engage with consultees on the five year review. In completing the Template there is duplication and it did not easily facilitate us in addressing the guidance at paragraph 2.6. For this reason we have completed it as an appendix to our main report.

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## Education & Library Boards – Equality Scheme: Publication List

Electronic Libraries for Northern Ireland – An Equality Impact Assessment – *June 2001*

Electronic Libraries for Northern Ireland – Results of an Equality Impact Assessment – *November 2001*

Report on Screening of Policies – *December 2001*

Recommended Approach to Conducting an Equality Impact Assessment – *June 2002*

Code of Procedures for Recruitment, Selection and Promotion and Internal Trawl Procedure – An Equality Impact Assessment – *February 2003*

Code of Procedures for Recruitment, Selection and Promotion and Internal Trawl Procedure - Results of an Equality Impact Assessment – *October 2003*

Code of Procedures for Recruitment and Selection & Associated Guidelines for Panel Members - *June 2004*

Leaflet and Poster developed to facilitate awareness of the N I Act 1998 amongst school based staff – *March 2003*

Supplementary Report on the Screening of New Policies (*September 2003, September 2004 and September 2005*)

Equality Consultation Guidelines for Education and Library Boards/Staff Commission – *April 2003*

Annual Equality Update – *September 2003, September 2004 & October 2005*

European Roundtable for Public Authorities – Report on ‘Action Through Partnership’ – *June 2004*

Work-life Balance – Consultation Report issued March 2005

Work-life Balance – Results of Consultation Report issued January 2006

Consultation on the Five Education & Library Boards’ Draft Financial Plans for the period April 2005 – March 2006 (*May 2005*)

PPP project – Eleven Belfast Schools and a Public Library – An Equality Impact Assessment – (*July 2004*)

Report on the Screening of the Education & Library Boards’ Resource Allocation Plans 2005/06 – (*August 2005*)

Alternative Model of Library Provision in Sion Mills - An Equality Impact Assessment - (*March 2005*)

Alternative Model of Library Provision in Sion Mills - Results of an Equality Impact Assessment - (*November 2005*)

## Training Materials Developed

Equality Awareness Training Pack – *December 2001*

Recommended Approach to Conducting an Equality Impact Assessment – *June 2002*

Effective Consultation Training – developed in partnership with Focus Consultancy Service (Disability Action) – *April 2003*

Diversity and Anti-Discrimination in Action “Training Together for Change” Participant Workbook – *June 2003*

Awareness Training on the Redrafted Code of Procedures on Recruitment and Selection & Associated Guidelines for Panel Members (*Board Members & Board Officers*) – *February 2004*

Screening of Policies Toolkit – *March 2004*

Workshop on Reasonable Adjustments for People with Disabilities in the Recruitment and Selection Process:-

- Facilitator’s Notes and Participant’s Workbook ) *February 2004*
- Report of the Workshop ) *April 2004*

Awareness Training on Code of Procedures on Recruitment and Selection & Associated Guidelines for New Panel Members – *September 2004*

Workshop on Dealing with Complaints of Harassment on the Grounds of Sexual Orientation:-

- Facilitator’s Notes and Participant’s Workbook) *December 2004*
- Report of the Workshop ) *December 2004*

Mainstreaming Equality – Information Pack for Education and Library Board Members – *October 2005*

## GLOSSARY OF KEY TERMS

### **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.

### **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.

### **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.

### **Good Relations**

Although not defined in the legislation, the Equality 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.'

### **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.

### **Consultation**

In the context of Section 75, consultation is the process of asking those affected by a policy (i.e. service users, staff, the general public) for their views on how the policy could be implemented more effectively to ensure equality of opportunity across the 9 groups. Different circumstances will call for different types of consultation. Consultations could, for example, include meetings, focus groups, surveys and questionnaires.

### **Screening**

The procedure for identifying which policies will be subject to a full equality impact assessment, and how these impact assessments will be prioritised. The purpose of screening is to identify the policies which are likely to have a significant 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.

### **Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA)**

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 groups. EQIAs require the analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data.