



Northern
Ireland
Office

CONSULTATION PAPER

Draft Departmental Equality Scheme

January 2012

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Introduction

1. The Northern Ireland Office exists to support the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland in taking forward Government policy in and for Northern Ireland. The promotion of equality is at the very heart of the Good Friday Agreement.

2. As a public authority, the Northern Ireland Office is fully committed to the fulfilment of its equality duties as set out in the Northern Ireland Act 1998. This Equality Scheme sets out how the Department proposes to fulfil these obligations with regard to its current structure, role, functions and duties.

3. Since the publication of the last Equality Scheme, the devolution of policing and justice functions to the Northern Ireland Executive has brought about considerable changes to the size, structure and role of the Department. This draft Equality Scheme reflects these changes.

4. Public authorities that operate in Northern Ireland are required to submit revised Equality Schemes to the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland.

The Department is keen to hear views from interested parties in relation to this draft Scheme and would very much welcome constructive feedback during the 12-week public consultation period which will conclude on 18 April.

Responding to this Consultation

5. Responses may be submitted using any of the following methods: -
- Email responses should be sent to: equality.scheme@nio.x.gsi.gov.uk.
 - Faxed responses should be sent to 0207 210 6550;
 - By post to:

Head of Corporate Governance
Northern Ireland Office
11 Millbank
LONDON
SW1P 4PN

6. Should you wish to discuss any aspect of the draft Scheme, or this consultation process, please do not hesitate to use any of the communication methods set out above. Also you may call 020 7210 0811 for queries in relation to this consultation.

7. The Northern Ireland Office text-phone number is 028 9016 3426.

8. This consultation document is available on the NIO website: www.nio.gov.uk under Public Consultation. Printed copies of this consultation document may also be obtained free of charge from the above address. You may make additional copies of this document without seeking permission. This document can also be made available on request in different formats, for individuals with particular needs.

9. Equally, if you consider it might be helpful to have a meeting to discuss this consultation please let us know and we will seek to make the necessary arrangements.

Confidentiality and Disclaimer

10. If you are responding on behalf of a group or organisation please make this clear. The NIO is committed to publishing a list of those organisations that comment on these proposals and to making available, to anyone who asks for it, a copy of the comments and our response to them. **If you do not wish your comments to be published in this way, you must make this clear in your response.**

11. The information you send us may be passed to colleagues within the Northern Ireland Office, the Government or related agencies. **Individual responses may also be published on the internet at www.nio.gov.uk unless a respondent has requested otherwise.** Information provided in response to this consultation, including personal information, may be published or disclosed in accordance with the access to information regimes. These are primarily: the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA), and the Data Protection Act 1998 (DPA).

12. If you want the information that you provide to be treated as confidential, please be aware that, under the FOIA, there is a statutory Code of Practice, with which public authorities must comply, and which deals with, amongst other things, obligations regarding confidence. In view of this, it would be helpful if you could explain why you regard the information you have provided as confidential. If we receive a request for disclosure of the information we will take full account of your explanation, but we cannot give an assurance that confidentiality can be maintained in all circumstances.

13. Please ensure that your response is marked clearly if you wish your response to be kept anonymous. An automatic confidentiality disclaimer generated by your IT system will not, of itself, be regarded as binding on the Department. Confidential responses, included in any statistical summary of numbers of comments received and views expressed, will be anonymised. The Department will process your personal data strictly in accordance with the

Data Protection Act 1998. In most circumstances this will mean that your personal data will not be disclosed to third parties.

NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE DRAFT EQUALITY SCHEME

PART 1: Structures, Polices, Functions, Powers and Duties

Introduction

1. The Northern Ireland Office exists to support the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland in taking forward Government policy in and for Northern Ireland. The Department is fully committed to the discharge of its obligations under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 in all parts of the organisation and will commit the necessary available resources in terms of people, time and money to ensure that the Equality Scheme is implemented effectively.

Equality Legislation

2. Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 requires the Department in the carrying out of all its functions and duties relating to Northern Ireland, to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity:

- between persons of different religious beliefs, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status or sexual orientation;
- between men and women generally;
- between persons with disability and without; and
- between persons with dependants and persons without.

3. In addition, and without prejudice to its obligations above, the Department shall, in the carrying out of all its functions, powers and duties relating to Northern Ireland, give due regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group wherever possible.

4. Schedule 9 to the Act requires the Department to set out in an Equality Scheme how it proposes to fulfil the duties imposed by Section 75. This

document is intended to fulfil that statutory requirement and demonstrate the Northern Ireland Office's commitment to equality. Furthermore, the Department reaffirms its commitment to liaise with the Equality Commission so as to ensure that progress on implementing the Equality Scheme is maintained.

5. As a UK Government Department the Northern Ireland Office is covered by the Equality Act 2010. The general duties of the Act require public authorities to seek to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

6. These are sometimes referred to as the three aims or arms of the general equality duty. The Act sets out that having due regard for advancing equality involves:

- removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics;
- taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people; and
- encouraging people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.

7. The protected characteristics are as follows

- age
- disability
- sexual orientation
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- race

- religion or belief
- gender
- sexual orientation

8. The Act states that meeting different needs involves taking steps to take account of people with disabilities. It describes fostering good relations as tackling prejudice and promoting understanding between people from different groups. It states that compliance with the duty may involve treating some people more favourably than others.

9. The Equality Act 2010 also sets out additional specific duties; to publish information on equality and to prepare and publish equality objectives. However, this is only required of organisations with more than 150 employees. The Northern Ireland Office directly employs 84 members of staff¹. The Department is therefore exempt from the specific duties detailed under the Act. However, the Northern Ireland Office will do everything possible to ensure it remains compliant with the general duties as required under the Equality Act 2010.

10. The Northern Ireland Office is required, under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995: to take reasonable measures to ensure neither direct nor indirect discrimination takes place against people with disabilities, as they are defined under the Act. The Department is also required to make reasonable adjustments to its policies and premises where appropriate.

About the Northern Ireland Office

11. The Northern Ireland Office's role focuses on overseeing the Northern Ireland devolution settlement and representing Northern Ireland interests at UK Government level and UK Government interests in Northern Ireland. The Department also retains responsibility for a range of excepted and reserved issues. Excepted matters are those that central government retains the ability

¹ As at December 2011

to legislate on; such as national security policy in Northern Ireland. Reserved matters are those that the Northern Ireland Administration are able to legislate on but only if they have can secure consent from the Secretary of State; such as telecommunications.

12. Following the devolution of policing and justice powers to the Northern Ireland Department of Justice in 2010, the Northern Ireland Office is no longer as engaged in the delivery of frontline services as it has been in previous years.

13. The Department is organised around three core areas:

- the Constitutional and Political Group (CPG)
- the Security and Legacy Group (SLG)
- the Business Delivery Group (BDG)

14. CPG seeks to ensure effective interaction between the Northern Ireland Executive and Whitehall Departments. It also supports the Secretary of State on economic issues. It sponsors the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission, the Boundary Commission for Northern Ireland, the Parades Commission and the Electoral Office for Northern Ireland. It is also responsible for arranging and supporting VIP visits. The British-Irish Intergovernmental Secretariat is also part of this Group.

15. SLG is responsible for national security policy and strategy in Northern Ireland. It leads on implementing the Government's approach to national security in Northern Ireland, and handles the Department's responsibility for the Home Protection Scheme and other security-related matters, such as national security-related firearms appeals and maintaining the crisis response arrangements. SLG also leads on Northern Ireland counter-terrorism legislation, and sponsors the Independent Commission for the Location of Victims Remains. In addition, the Group deals with legacy issues, including developing policy on the past and sponsorship of the Finucane review.

16. BDG provides overarching support services for the day to day work of the Department including both the Private Office and Press Office functions. The Group is responsible for managing the Department's financial responsibilities and for providing a HR support function. BDG also manages key contracts for IT and corporate services and manages the Departmental estate, including Hillsborough Castle and Stormont House in Northern Ireland. BDG also manages all corporate governance issues within the Department including business planning and risk management processes, supporting the Board and Audit Committee and governance arrangements for Arms Length Bodies. BDG has a sponsoring role in respect of the Civil Service Commissioners for Northern Ireland.

Arms Length Bodies

17. In addition to the core Department, there are a range of matters which are dealt with through a network of associated bodies. These bodies differ considerably from each other in terms of their formal status, intended purpose, statutory or other responsibilities, the degree of independence from Government and their size. These associated bodies are:

- Non-Departmental Public Bodies (NDPBs)
 - o Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission
 - o Parades Commission for Northern Ireland
 - o Boundary Commission for Northern Ireland
- Independent Statutory Bodies
 - o Electoral Office for Northern Ireland
 - o Civil Service Commissioners for Northern Ireland
 - o Sentence Review Commissioners

18. These bodies are individually responsible for complying with their statutory equality duties.

Part 2: Arrangements for Assessing Compliance with Section 75 Duties.

19. The NIO is fully committed to the fulfilment of its Section 75 obligations in all aspects of activity.

Responsibilities and reporting

20. The Deputy Director, Business Delivery Group is accountable to the Departmental Management Board for the development, implementation, maintenance and review of the Equality Scheme in accordance with Section 75 and Schedule 9 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, including any good practice or guidance that has been or may be issued by the Equality Commission. Day to day responsibility for effective implementation of this responsibility rests with the Corporate Governance Unit, which reports to the Deputy Director, Business Delivery Group.

21. If you have any questions or comments regarding this Equality Scheme, please contact the Corporate Governance Unit in the first instance at the address given below and the Department will respond to you as soon as possible:

Corporate Governance Unit
11 Millbank
London
SW1P 4PN

equality.scheme@nio.x.gsi.gov.uk

Or by calling 020 7210 0811; or alternatively by textphone: 028 9016 3426.

Complaints

22. The Department will address any complaints alleging that it has not fulfilled its statutory equality obligations and will seek to resolve such complaints bilaterally. It will aim to give a substantive response to complaints within 28 working days. In the response, the Department will tell the complainant how to pursue the complaint further with the Equality Commission of Northern Ireland. The Department will cooperate fully in any subsequent investigation, providing access to relevant information, when required to so do. Complaints should be addressed to the Head of the Corporate Governance Unit, at the address given above.

Assessing compliance

23. Compliance with the statutory duties will be implemented through an inclusive and interactive process of screening policies, consultation with members of affected groups, and, where appropriate, through equality impact assessments, as detailed in Part 3. Where appropriate an equality impact assessment will include an annex on the promotion of good relations. The appropriate organisations listed in Annex A will be consulted in relation to these equality impact assessments. The following organisations will also be consulted in relation to any consultation that deals with the promotion of good relations:

- Equality Commission
- Northern Ireland Political Parties

Reporting on compliance

24. The Department will prepare an annual report on progress in implementing the actions set out in this Equality Scheme. The Section 75 annual progress report will be sent to the Equality Commission by 31 August each year and will follow any guidance on annual reporting issued by the

Equality Commission. Copies will also be published on the Department's website. Where practicable, the Department will make copies available in alternative formats upon request.

25. Objectives and targets relating to the statutory duties will be integrated into the Department's strategic and operational business plans and, where relevant, into individual personal objectives. The Department will review progress against the Equality Action Measures (see Annex C) every year to make sure it keeps abreast of changes in the law and good practice. Changes will be approved by the Departmental Management Board and as appropriate, reflected in the Departmental business plans, and Equality Scheme, and be published on the website.

26. The Department will continue to update this Equality Scheme as necessary, and continues to welcome comments on it. These will be considered during the annual review of Action Measures.

27. The latest Section 75 annual progress report is available on the website: www.nio.gov.uk

Action Plan

28. The Northern Ireland Office has developed an action plan to promote equality of opportunity and good relations. This action plan is set out in Annex C to this Equality Scheme. The action measures contained in the plan are directly relevant to the Department's specific functions, and have been consulted on as part of the consultation on the Equality Scheme.

29. The Department will monitor progress on the delivery of these action measures annually and update the action plan as necessary to ensure that it remains effective and relevant to its functions and work.

30. The Department will inform the Equality Commission of any changes or amendments to the action plan and include this information in the

Department's Section 75 annual progress report to the Commission. The Department's Section 75 annual progress reports will incorporate information on progress the Department has made in implementing action plans and action measures.

Part 3: Assessing the Impact of Policies on the Promotion of Equality of Opportunity.

31. Where appropriate, the Department will use equality screening and equality impact assessments to assess the likely effects of a policy on equality of opportunity and on good relations.² The Department will take a proportionate approach to considering whether an activity engages the existing screening mechanisms.

Equality Screening

32. The purpose of screening is to identify policies that are likely to affect equality of opportunity or good relations, or both. Screening is done as soon as possible in the policy development and review process. All policies the Department proposes to adopt where it is considered that there might be equality considerations will be screened before being implemented. For more detailed strategies or policies that are to be implemented in stages, the Department will, as appropriate, screen at various stages during implementation.

33. The policy advisor leads the screening process and s/he has the authority to recommend changes to that policy. However, screening may also involve team members, people who are responsible for implementing the policy and staff from other relevant work areas. Where appropriate the Department will also involve key stakeholders in the screening process.

34. Through the screening process the Department will consider the impact of each policy in terms of the nine Section 75 categories. For each policy the following questions will be applied:

² For the purposes of the equality duties, 'policy' is broadly defined and covers all the ways the Department carries out its work. For this Scheme 'policy' is used for any proposed amended or existing strategy, initiative, practice or decision, either written or unwritten and regardless of its label.

- what is the likely impact on equality of opportunity and/or good relations for those affected by this policy?
- is there any evidence of higher or lower uptake by any specified group?
- is there any evidence that different groups have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to the given policy?
- is there any opportunity to promote equality of opportunity or good relations better by altering the policy or working with others in Government or within the community at large?

35. After screening is complete, and taking into account the answers to all questions, one of the following will happen:

- the policy is 'screened in' or included for equality impact assessment
- the policy is 'screened out', or excluded with changes, or an alternative policy is proposed
- the policy is 'screened out', or excluded without changes, or an alternative policy is proposed.

36. If the screening process concludes that the impact on any of the given categories, either for equality of opportunity or for good relations, is considered 'unknown' or 'minor', then the Department may occasionally consider an equality impact assessment if it is appropriate to the policy. If the Department decides not to carry out an equality impact assessment then it will consider

- measures that might lessen the negative effects of the policy on equality.
- alternative policies that might promote equality of opportunity/good relations in a better way.

37. If the Department elects to use measures to reduce the negative impact of the policy on equality then it will outline in the screening template:

- the reasons for supporting the decision
- the proposed changes, amendments or alternative policies pending being signed off by the appropriate lead policy advisor.

38. If the screening concludes that the impact on any of the given categories, either for equality of opportunity and/or for good relations, is considered 'major,' the Department will normally carry out an equality impact assessment on the policy. The screening decision will require sign off from the lead policy advisor.

39. As soon as possible after screening is complete, the screening document will be signed off and approved by the senior manager responsible for the policy advice. Screening documents will normally be made available to consultees on request. If a consultee, including the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland and other relevant regulatory bodies, raises a concern about the regulatory process it will be reviewed. A summary of screening reports carried out will be included in the annual Section 75 progress report.

Equality Impact Assessments (EQIAs)

40. An EQIA is a thorough and systematic analysis of a policy, whether the policy is formal or informal, and regardless of scope. The main purpose of an EQIA is to find out how far a policy affects the Section 75 categories and whether the effects are adverse. It also represents an opportunity to demonstrate the positive impacts on equality and good relations that the policy might bring about.

42. If the screening process has identified an EQIA is necessary then one will be carried out in accordance with the guidance issued by the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland. The EQIA will be carried out as part of the policy development process and prior to implementation. EQIAs will be subject to consultation at the appropriate stages. A summary of EQIAs conducted will be included in the annual Section 75 progress report.

42. The EQIA reports when published will include;
- a statement of the aim of the policy assessed
 - information collected
 - details of the assessment of the impacts of the policy

- consideration given to measures that might lessen any adverse affects
- consideration given to alternative policies that might promote equality and good relations more effectively
- consultation responses
- the decision
- future monitoring plans

43. The annual reports containing the Screenings and Equality Impact Assessment Reports will be available online at:

<http://www.nio.gov.uk/index/nio-publication.htm?keywords=section+75> and by contacting the Corporate Governance Unit.

Part 4: Consultation

44. The Department is very aware of the importance of consulting key stakeholders in relation to the implementation of statutory equality duties. The Department will consult on the Equality Scheme and on other matters relevant to the Section 75 statutory duties.

45. Through Consultations will seek the views of those directly affected by the matter/policy will be sort. This may include as appropriate, the Northern Ireland Equality Commission, other public authorities, voluntary and community groups, NIO staff and trades unions and such other groups who have a legitimate interest in the matter, including those organisations representing the Section 75 categories, listed at Annex A.

46. The Department will consider proposals from these bodies relating to its compliance with Section 75 obligations.

47. In order to assist with the consultation process, the Department will make available upon request, subject to legislation regarding the release of government information, any qualitative and quantitative information relating to equality issues as they affect Section 75 categories.

48. In addition to consultation on EQIAs the Department may, from time to time, consult on legislation, strategies, reviews and other plans.

49. In consulting groups representative of the Section 75 categories the Department will aim to provide a period of response of at least twelve weeks and begin consultation as early as possible. However, under exceptional circumstances, this timescale may not be feasible, for instance: when dealing with emergency measures, or international, legally-binding deadlines, or when the consultation needs to fit into fixed timetables such as the electoral cycle. When this occurs it will be justified very clearly and carefully monitored.

50. When consulting on any matter to which this Scheme relates, the Department will normally initially write to (via email and/or post) the relevant bodies referred to in Annex A. If appropriate, consultation may involve face-to-face meetings, advisory groups, surveys, consultative panels, internet discussions or other ways of engaging with stakeholders. It is intended that all barriers to proper consultation will be removed by ensuring accessibility of language and appropriate format. Issues concerning access to information highlighted in Part 6 and 8 of the Scheme will be given particular consideration.

51. The Department considers it particularly important that sufficient, timely and appropriate information is provided to enable all affected groups and individuals to consider the full implications of proposals, and it will take steps to ensure this.

52. When organising consultation meetings, the Department will aim to ensure full participation in setting the time, venue, accessibility, how the meeting will be run, the possibility of the provision of childcare and alternative formats including the presence of signers.

53. The Department will publish its response to the comments received from those consulted.

54. The Department will at all times seek to comply with the Government Code of Practice on Consultation:

<http://www.bis.gov.uk/policies/bre/consultation-guidance>.

Part 5: Monitoring the Impact of Policies

55. Monitoring the impact of policies helps us provide better public services and continuous improvement. When monitoring the impact of Departmental policies, consideration will be given to the impact on Section 75 groups. Monitoring equality information involves processing sensitive personal data (about, for example, racial or ethnic origin, sexual orientation, political opinion and religious belief). To monitor confidentially and effectively, the Department follows guidance issued by the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland and other relevant regulatory bodies.

56. The Department will monitor any adverse effects of policies it has adopted on promoting equality of opportunity. Such monitoring will include consideration of any opportunities to better promote good relations.

57. Systems for monitoring the effects of policies and identifying opportunities to promote equality of opportunity and good relations will vary according to the policy area. However, these may include:

- collecting, collating and analysing existing relevant quantitative and qualitative data across all relevant equality strands. This might be from internal or external sources
- reviewing information collected to;
 - o identify the extent of current monitoring,
 - o take action to deal with any gaps so the Department has the information it needs on which to base decisions
- knowledge of the uptake of services provided by the Department and the impact of its policies on the different groups within the Section 75 categories will be of assistance in assessing progress towards equality of opportunity.

58. In some cases an EQIA may identify an anticipated differential impact on particular groups within the Section 75 categories. In some of those cases that differential impact may be a deliberate policy objective to redress a

previous inequality. In other cases, where a differential impact is confirmed, the Department will consider whether it is justifiable in terms of the NIO's human rights and other statutory obligations and the wider objectives which the policy is designed to achieve. If this is not the case, the Department will take steps either to put in place an alternative policy or, if this is not possible, will consider how the negative impact may be mitigated. The Department may, in these circumstances, commission special monitoring analysis to confirm the extent of the differential impact and/or the success of any mitigating measures. Information collated in this special monitoring would be taken into account in any future review of the policy.

Part 6: Publication and Ensuring Public Access

Publication of this Scheme

59. The publication of this Scheme will primarily be addressed by placing it on the Department's website: www.nio.gov.uk. It will, however, also be made available in a range of alternative formats on request as set out below.

60. This Equality Scheme is available free of charge in print from the Corporate Governance Unit. The Unit can also provide copies of the Equality Scheme in alternative formats, on request.

61. To meet the needs of specific groups, the Department may, on request, provide this Scheme and other information in alternative formats. These formats include Braille, large print, and in minority languages for those not fluent in the English language. The Department may also consider preparing consultations in formats specific to communicate information to young people and those with learning disabilities.

Public Access to NIO Information

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

- people with sensory and learning disabilities may have particular difficulties with information in print;
- members of cultural and ethnic groups, whose first language is not English, may have difficulties with information provided only in English;
- for historical reasons, some sections of the community may be reluctant to engage in exchanges with the NIO;
- some local newspapers are read predominantly by one section of the local community.

63. Therefore, in disseminating information through the local press, the Department will ensure that press statements and public advertisements are carried by all three Belfast daily newspapers. Where press statements or public advertisements are aimed at a particular area within Northern Ireland, the Department will ensure that the information is disseminated through at least two local newspapers circulating in that area, ensuring the information is accessible to both communities; and where appropriate, the Department will consider what other measures are necessary to ensure the effective dissemination of relevant information to all members of the community.

64. Specific consideration will be given to how best to communicate information to young people and those with learning difficulties.

65. The Department is able to provide information in alternative formats as laid out above for the benefit of those for whom English language and/or print are not the most accessible medium.

66. The Department's commitments in this Scheme on equality of opportunity in accessing information are without prejudice to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 or the Data Protection Act 1998.

Part 7: Training

Awareness raising and training arrangements

67. The following arrangements will be put in place to ensure all Northern Ireland Office staff and the Management Board are aware of and understand the equality obligations.

- the Department will develop a summary of this Equality Scheme and make it available to all staff.
- the Department will provide access to copies of the full Equality Scheme to all staff and ensure that any queries or questions of clarification from staff are addressed effectively.
- staff will receive a briefing on this Equality Scheme within three months of approval of the Scheme.
- on an annual basis, staff will be provided with refresher training on equality and diversity issues.
- when appropriate and on an ongoing basis, arrangements will be made to ensure staff are kept up to date with Section 75 developments.

Part 10: Review of The Departmental Equality Scheme

68. As laid out in Schedule 9 paragraph 8 (3) of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 the Department will conduct a thorough review of this Equality Scheme. This review will take place either within five years of submission of this Scheme to the Equality Commission or within a shorter timescale to allow alignment with the review of other planning cycles or as otherwise deemed appropriate by the Department in order to best fulfil the spirit of Section 75 equality duty.

List of Organisations to be Consulted

This list is not comprehensive and will be altered depending on specific circumstances as appropriate. Consultation will be focused on the most appropriate organisations

(On the Department's Scheme Generally)

NIO Non-Departmental Public Bodies

Equality Commission for NI
Chief Electoral Officer for NI
Civil Service Commissioners for NI
Parades Commission for NI
NI Human Rights Commission
Boundary Commission for NI

Political Parties

APNI
Conservative
DUP
Green
Labour
Liberal Democrat
PUP
SDLP
Sinn Fein
TUV
UUP

Religious Organisations

Church of Ireland
Roman Catholic Church

Presbyterian Church
Baptist Church
Methodist Church
Free Presbyterian Church
Christian Scientists
NI Inter-Faith Forum
Belfast Hebrew Congregation
Belfast Islamic Centre
Jesus Christ Church of Latter Day Saints Belfast

Representative Organisations

Committee on the Administration of Justice
Equality Commission
Community Relations Council
British-Irish Rights Watch
Justice
Liberty
Amnesty International
Age Sector Reference Group
Putting Children First
Youth Council for NI
Chinese Welfare Association
Indian Community Centre
Multi-Cultural Resource Centre
NI Council for Ethnic Minorities
Traveller Movement NI
NI African Cultural Centre
Coalition on Sexual Orientation
NI Gay Rights Association
Gay and Lesbian Youth NI
Disability Action
MENCAP
NI Association for Mental Health
British Deaf Association

RNID NI

RNIB NI

Women's Forum NI

NI Women's Aid Federation

Gingerbread NI

Carers National Association NI

NIPSA

NIC-ICTU

FDA

UNISON

Home Civil Service Staff Side

Recruitment Service (DFP)

Institute of Personnel and Development (NI Branch)

EPIC

Tar Anall

Coiste na n-Iarchimi

PANG

OFMDFM

**MAIN GROUPS RELEVANT TO THE SECTION 75 CATEGORIES FOR
NORTHERN IRELAND PURPOSES**

Category Main Groups

Religious belief

- Protestants;
- Catholics;
- People of non-Christian faiths;
- People of no religious belief.

Political opinion

- Unionists generally;
- Nationalists generally;
- Members/supporters of any political party.

Racial or ethnic group

- Bangladeshi;
- Black African;
- Black Caribbean;
- Chinese;
- Indian;
- Irish Traveller;
- Pakistani;
- White;
- Mixed Ethnic Group;
- and others.

Men and women generally

- Men (including boys);
- Women (including girls);

- Transgender people.

Marital status

- Married people;
- Unmarried people;
- Divorced or separated people;
- Widowed people.

Age

- Children under 18;
- People up to 25;
- People of working
- Age (16/65);
- People over 65

Persons with a disability

- Persons with a physical, sensory or learning disability as defined in Sections 1 and 2 and Schedules 1 and 2 of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995

Persons with dependants

- Persons with personal responsibility for the care of a child;
- Persons with personal responsibility for the care of a person with an incapacitating disability;
- Persons with personal responsibility for the care of a dependant elderly person

Sexual orientation

- Heterosexual people;
- Homosexual people;
- Bisexual people.

Annex C

Action Measure and Criteria Measurement	Expected result	Responsibility	Dates
Working with other Government and Northern Ireland Executive Departments to explore what extent exists to promote a Pilot Youth Service Scheme in Northern Ireland that should directly contribute to the building of good relations between Section 75 groups	A possible tool for future contribution to good relations between Section 75 groups.	Deputy Director Constitutional and Political Group	September 2012
Communicating and assisting the understanding of Section 75 duties to Central Government Departments as appropriate when issues arise in the course of the NIO's work in assisting communication between Central Government and the Devolved Administration, and supporting Central Government Departments operating in Northern Ireland on excepted and reserved matters.	Wider and more effective engagement with Section 75 duties by Central Government Departments	Deputy Director Constitutional and Political Group	Ongoing
In line with our objective to provide appropriate protection for those at risk, we will assess all initial applications to the Home Protection Scheme in a just and equal manner within the terms of the laid down criteria of the Scheme, and monitor the Scheme to ensure compliance with Section 75.	Assurance that protective security measures are applied fairly across Section 75 groups.	Deputy Director Security and Legacy Group	Ongoing

Action Measure and Criteria Measurement	Expected result	Responsibility	Dates
<p>We will ensure that the Department takes a fully human rights compliant approach, and gives meaningful consideration to implications of activities on Section 75 groups in exercising the Secretary of State's powers under the Justice and Security Act 2007 in relation to the implementation of security measures, including conducting annual reviews.</p>	<p>Assurance that our response is proportionate and that due consideration is given to any potential impacts on Section 75 groups.</p> <p>Increased protection and safety from terrorist attack across Section 75 groups while respecting human rights and equality issues.</p>	<p>Deputy Director Security and Legacy Group</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>In developing a new set of HR policies, the Department will give particular consideration to the extent to which these support and promote the interests of Section 75 groups</p>	<p>NIO HR policies will, as appropriate, take account of the needs of Section 75 groups.</p>	<p>Deputy Director Business Development Group</p>	<p>September 2012</p>

Action Measure and Criteria Measurement	Expected result	Responsibility	Dates
Conduct annual analysis of the outcomes of the Staff Engagement Survey to determine whether or not any issues / trends have emerged which would provide opportunities to better meet the Department's Section 75 responsibilities	Any opportunities to further promote the interests of Section 75 groups within and across NIO staff will be identified and acted upon	Deputy Director Business Development Group	Annually
Monitor staff grievance procedures to ensure that any action which might be taken to improve Section 75 outcomes for staff is acted upon	Any opportunities to further promote the interests of Section 75 groups within and across NIO staff will be identified and acted upon	Deputy Director Business Development Group	Annually
We will ensure that all NIO staff undertake regular refresher training on equality and diversity issues.	Increased awareness of equality and diversity amongst all staff.	Deputy Director Business Development Group	Annually
Continue to promote good relations and support integration of people from a wide range of cultural and community backgrounds through the facilitation of citizenship ceremonies at Hillsborough Castle	Promotion of good relations	Deputy Director Business Development Group	Ongoing

Action Measure and Criteria Measurement	Expected result	Responsibility	Dates
Working with wider Government and the Northern Ireland Executive Departments to promote good relations by visiting all sections of the community and engaging with the broader political and civic society when organising Secretary of State, Ministerial and VIP visits.	Any opportunities to further promote the interests of Section 75 groups will be identified and acted upon. Promotion of good relations.	Deputy Director Constitutional and Political Group	Ongoing
Provision of advice to sponsor teams with responsibility for Public Appointments, together with guidance on best practice including transparency, equality and fairness for all.	Any opportunities to further promote the interests of Section 75 groups will be identified and acted upon.	Deputy Director Constitutional and Political Group (B)	Ongoing