

## EQUALITY COMMISSION FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

### Public Authority 2010 – 2011 Annual Progress Report on Section 75 of the NI Act 1998 and Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Order (DDO) 2006

This report template includes a number of self assessment questions regarding implementation of the Section 75 statutory duties from **1 April 2010 to 31 March 2011**. This template also includes a number of questions regarding implementation of Section 49A of the DDO from the **1 April 2010 to 31 March 2011**. Please enter information at the relevant part of each section and ensure that it is submitted electronically (by completing this template) and in hardcopy, with a signed cover letter from the Chief Executive or, in his/her absence, the Deputy Chief Executive to the Commission by **31 August 2011**.

In completing this template it is essential to focus on the application of Section 75 and Section 49. This involves progressing the commitments in your equality scheme or disability action plan which should lead to outcomes and impacts in terms of measurable improvement for individuals from the equality categories. Such outcomes and impacts may include changes in public policy, in service provision and/or in any of the areas within your functional remit.

Name of public authority (Enter details below)

Northern Ireland Audit Office

Equality Officer (Enter name and contact details below)

S75:

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**Please indicate whether you would prefer to receive correspondence from the Commission by:**

**Post**

**Electronically**

### **S75 Executive Summary**

- What were the key policy/service developments made by the authority during this reporting period to better promote equality of opportunity and good relations and what outcomes were achieved?

During 2010-11 the Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO or the Office) took forward its equality responsibilities as part of its normal course of business. This included the screening of policies and the delivery of equality awareness training to all staff which we normally hold every two years.

Other actions included:

- preparing a revised draft Equality Scheme and Action Plan – these were issued for consultation in early April 2011;
- undertaking an inequalities audit to inform the Action Plan noted above; and
- completing an Equal Pay Review which focused on age, gender and community background.

The analysis of salary for gender, community back ground and age confirmed a link between longer service and higher basic salary. When the exceptions to this trend were discounted the review showed no significant differences between salary as a result of factors related to gender, community background or age.

Whilst having no formal remit in terms of assessing how well bodies audited by the Office are meeting the requirements of section 75 (a role which is undertaken by the Equality Commission), equality issues may be relevant to audit work. The bodies audited by NIAO are subject to section 75 and the performance of these bodies against their section 75 responsibilities may be relevant to our judgement about how economically,

efficiently and effectively they have used their resources. We recognise that a key way in which audit can contribute to promoting equality of opportunity is through its programme of work. Examples of NIAO study areas over the past year which had an equality/social need dimension included:

- General report on the health and social care sector in Northern Ireland (30 June 2010)
- General report to the Northern Ireland Assembly (7 July 2010) including report on Middletown Centre for Autism
- School design and delivery (5 August 2010)
- Creating effective partnerships between Government and the Voluntary and Community Sector (15 September 2010)
- Arrangements for ensuring the quality of care in homes for older people (8 December 2010)
- Uptake of benefits by pensioners (23 February 2011)

**(Enter text below)**

- What are the main initiatives planned in the coming year to ensure the authority improves outcomes in terms of equality of opportunity and good relations for individuals from the nine categories covered by Section 75?

In 2011/12 our focus will be on implementing the revised Equality Scheme and Action Plan. Specific actions to be progressed in the short term include, among other things:

- developing an internal and external communications strategy;
- producing a Corporate Learning and Development Strategy;
- reviewing HR policies, including equality guidance for staff; and
- reviewing our equality training programme.

**(Enter text below)**

- Please give examples of changes to policies or practices which have resulted in outcomes. If the change was a result of an EQIA please tick

the appropriate box in column 3 and reference the title of the relevant EQIA in the space provided below:

There have been no significant changes to policies or procedures that result in an outcome to report in respect of 2010-11. No EQIAs have been undertaken (see section 3).

	Outline change in policy or practice which have resulted in outcomes	Tick if result of EQIA
Persons of different religious belief	•	
Persons of different political opinion	•	
Persons of different racial groups	•	
Persons of different age	•	
Persons with different marital status	•	
Persons of different sexual orientation	•	
Men and women generally	•	
Persons with and without a disability	•	
Persons with and without dependants	•	

- Title/s of EQIAs referenced: N/A

**Section 1: Strategic Implementation of the Section 75 Duties**

- Please outline evidence of progress made in developing and meeting equality and good relations objectives, performance indicators and targets in corporate and annual operating plans during 2010-11

**(Enter text below)**

The NIAO Equality Scheme includes a commitment to integrating objectives and targets relating to the statutory duties into Office plans. The annual Corporate Plan has included specific reference to the Office’s intent and commitment to fulfilling its equality obligations, including the promotion of equality of opportunity and good relations in carrying out its functions. The Office’s Annual Report also addresses and highlights the Office’s commitment to equality, the latter also being embedded in NIAO corporate values.

Our Business Plan includes action measures to implement commitments contained in the Equality Scheme and Action Plan in accordance with the dates set in those documents. The delivery of these is monitored through the Office’s governance structures.

Progress on implementing the Scheme approved in 2003 has been clearly set out in the Office’s annual progress reports and the five year review all of which have been issued to the Commission. The revised Equality Scheme and Action Plan contain a range of new measures and targets, providing a fresh focus for the Office. A number of these will be progressed in 2011-12 and achievements and outcomes recorded in the next reporting round.

**Section 2: Screening**

- Please provide an update of new/proposed/revised policies screened during the year.

<b>Title of policy subject to screening</b>	<b>Was the <u>F</u>ull Screening Report or the <u>R</u>esult of initial screening issued for consultation? <i>Please enter <u>F</u> or <u>R</u></i></b>	<b>Was initial screening decision changed following consultation? <u>Yes/No</u></b>	<b>Is policy being subject to EQIA? <u>Yes/No</u>? If yes indicate year for assessment.</b>
Local Government Audit – Code of Audit Practice 2011 (Statutory Consultation)	R	No	No
Review of NIAO corporate governance	R	No	No

arrangements			
Staff rotation- VFM audit	R	No	No
Securing hard copy data	R	No	No
NIAO Business Continuity Plan	R	No	No
Securing electronic data	R	No	No
Complaint handling in the NIAO	R	No	No
NIAO anti-fraud policy and fraud response plan	R	No	No

**Section 3: Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA)**

- Please provide an update of policies subject to EQIA during 2010-11, stage 7 EQIA monitoring activities and an indicative EQIA timetable for 2011-12

No NIAO policies have been subject to an EQIA to date, nor at this point are any EQIAs planned for 2011-12.

EQIA Timetable – April 2010 - March 2011

Title of Policy EQIA	EQIA Stage at end March 2011 (Steps 1-6)	Outline adjustments to policy intended to benefit individuals, and the relevant Section 75 categories due to be affected.

- Where the EQIA timetable for 2010-11 (as detailed in the previous annual S75 progress report to the Commission) has not been met, please provide details of the factors responsible for delay and details of the timetable for re-scheduling the EQIA/s in question.

**(Enter text below)**

N/A

Ongoing EQIA Monitoring Activities April 2010- March 2011

Title of EQIA subject to Stage 7 monitoring	Indicate if differential impacts previously identified have reduced or increased	Indicate if adverse impacts previously identified have reduced or increased

- Please outline any proposals, arising from the authority’s monitoring for adverse impacts, for revision of the policy to achieve better outcomes the relevant equality groups:

**(Enter text below)**

N/A

2011-12 EQIA Time-table N/A

Title of EQIAs due to be commenced during April 2011 – March 2012	Existing or New policy?	Please indicate expected timescale of Decision Making stage i.e. Stage 6

**Section 4: Training**

- Please outline training provision during the year associated with the Section 75 Duties/Equality Scheme requirements including types of training provision and conclusions from any training evaluations.

**(Enter text below)**

Over the life of the Equality Scheme approved in 2003, training has been given a high priority and this will remain so under the revised Scheme. As the Office does not deliver services directly to the public (it conducts audits in accordance with legislation, reporting the results of its work to the Northern

Ireland Assembly), the greatest contribution it can make in terms of promoting equality of opportunity is heightening awareness of the statutory duties in the course of its audit work. Considerable emphasis is placed on ensuring that staff are fully aware of the statutory duties and their implications.

New staff receive induction training and all staff are usually provided with equality awareness training every two years. A full round of refresher and update training was delivered to all staff in early 2010-11.

Staff with specific responsibility for implementing the Office's equality commitments receive additional training as required. In 2010-11, a small number of staff attended training focused on the revised Statutory Code and putting in place a revised Equality Scheme and Action Plan.

In our revised Equality Scheme we have noted that we will review our existing training arrangements and draw up a section 75 training programme over the next few months.

### **Section 5: Communication**

- Please outline how the authority communicated progress on delivery of the Section 75 Duties during the year and evidence of the impact/success of such activities.

**(Enter text below)**

The principal means through which the NIAO communicates progress on the delivery of the statutory duties are its website and internal communication systems (e.g. Office intranet).

As previously mentioned, the Office's Corporate Plan and Annual Report address equality. Other NIAO documents providing a vehicle for reporting progress include minutes of Board/senior management minutes, key points of which are cascaded to staff via a team brief process, and returns to the Equality Commission.

As reported in previous returns, it is difficult to gauge the impact of such activities but they do provide a mechanism:

- to inform NIAO staff of progress on the delivery of the statutory duties. Of particular note, the team brief process enables staff to raise issues/provide feedback to management on corporate and operational matters;

- to enable other interested parties to establish what we are doing.

### **Section 6: Data Collection & Analysis**

- Please outline any systems that were established during the year to supplement available statistical and qualitative research or any research undertaken/commissioned to obtain information on the needs and experiences of individuals from the nine categories covered by Section 75, including the needs and experiences of people with multiple identities.

**(Enter text below)**

The Office has developed its information base over a period of years to assist with policy screening and monitoring. In 2010-11 we carried out activities which further enhanced this, including:

- a NIAO Staff Attitude Survey, which was wide ranging incorporating areas such as communication and equal opportunities;
- meetings with staff. The Comptroller and Auditor General held two office wide briefings (September 2010 and April 2011), and a series of grade meetings to explore issues arising from the staff survey and to inform staff on progress against actions the Office was taking as part of its Change Management Programme. These meetings were complementary to other staff engagement initiatives in the Office.

Going forward, the revised Equality Scheme incorporates commitments relating to reviewing information systems and monitoring information.

- Please outline any use of the Commission's Section 75 Monitoring Guide.

**(Enter text below)**

We continue to find this a useful reference document.

### **Section 7: Information Provision, Access to Information and Services**

- Please provide details of any initiatives/steps taken during the year, including take up, to improve access to services including provision of information in accessible formats.

**(Enter text below)**

A key focus is making Office information generally available, including accessibility and ease of use in IT developments. In 2010-11, we gave consideration to the upgrade of our website, which now forms part of our Action Plan (see S75 Executive Summary, page 2) aimed at further or better discharging our Section 75 statutory duties.

There were no requests for information in alternative formats in 2010-11.

**Section 8: Complaints**

- Please identify the number of Section 75 related complaints:
  - received and resolved by the authority (including how this was achieved);
  - which were not resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant;
  - which were referred to the Equality Commission.

**(Enter text below)**

No section 75 complaints were received during 2010-11.

**Section 9: Consultation and Engagement**

- Please provide details of the measures taken to enhance the level of engagement with individuals and representative groups during the year.
- Please outline any use of the Commission's guidance on consulting with and involving children and young people.

**(Enter text below)**

During 2010-11 we consulted on a number of areas, for example:

- The Local Government Code of Audit Practice – this was a statutory consultation under the Local Government (Northern Ireland) Order 2005.
- As noted in section 6, there has been fairly extensive consultation within the Office over the past 18 months. One development arising from this has been a restructuring of the Office's team brief process which has been in place since early 2011. This will be further considered as part of the Office's review of communications, which is an action measure in the Office Action Plan (see Section 75 Executive Summary page 2).
- Internal policies were discussed with trade unions.

The Office consults interested parties during the course of VFM studies, though this is unlikely to routinely involve a wide range of representative groups.

### **Section 10: The Good Relations Duty**

- Please provide details of additional steps taken to implement or progress the good relations duty during the year. Please indicate any findings or expected outcomes from this work.

**(Enter text below)**

The NIAO implements the good relations duty through various means including:

- corporate values;
- the NIAO Code of Conduct;
- equality and harassment policies;
- equality awareness training.

There is limited scope for the Office to promote good relations within its audit programme, but any opportunities to do so will be considered as they arise.

- Please outline any use of the Commission's Good Relations Guide.

**(Enter text below)**

This is a useful source of information which we can refer to.

### **Section 11: New/Revised Equality Schemes**

- If the Commission has notified you of its intention to request a new/revised scheme or formally requested a new/revised scheme and associated action plan, please outline below what progress has been made in this reporting period.

**(Enter text below)**

The Commission wrote to the Office on 1 February 2011 requesting a revised Equality Scheme to be submitted on or before 1 August 2011. We submitted the revised Scheme in accordance with this timetable.

## **Section 12: Additional Comments**

- Please provide any additional information/comments.  
**(Enter text below)**

None

Annual Report 1 April 2010 / 31 March 2011  
'Disability Duties' Questions

**1. How many action measures** for this reporting period have been



Fully  
Achieved?



Partially  
Achieved?



Not  
Achieved?

The NIAO Disability Action Plan contains 20 action measures. We regard all as achieved except for those noted above. Measures previously reported as achieved are taken forward on an on-going basis as appropriate, for example:

- we continue to progress equality awareness training, incorporating disability awareness, as set out in section 4 above on Section 75 training;
- consultation with/feedback from staff informs us on equality matters, including disability (eg 2010 Staff Attitude Survey);
- the complaints procedure is reviewed – a revision was issued in 2010/11;

- leadership are committed to ensuring equality of opportunity for all, and providing an excellent place to work, where staff are highly motivated, professional and take pride in what they do.

This report focuses on those action measures brought to completion in 2010-11, and those that remain partially achieved or not achieved.

2. Please outline the following detail on **all actions that have been fully achieved** in the reporting period.

2 (a) Please highlight what **public life measures** have been achieved to encourage disabled people to participate in public life at National, Regional and Local levels:

Level	Public Life Action Measures	Outputs <sup>1</sup>	Outcomes / Impact <sup>2</sup>
National <sup>3</sup>	To review measures for appointing public life positions in NIAO.	The Office had vacancies in the non-executive membership of its Board and Audit Committee in 2010-11. Full account of equality	Promotion of equality of opportunity, enabling appropriately qualified and experienced people with disabilities to apply for the positions.

<sup>1</sup> **Outputs** – defined as act of producing, amount of something produced over a period, processes undertaken to implement the action measure e.g. Undertook 10 training sessions with 100 people at customer service level.

<sup>2</sup> **Outcome / Impact** – what specifically and tangibly has changed in making progress towards the duties? What impact can directly be attributed to taking this action? Indicate the results of undertaking this action e.g. Evaluation indicating a tangible shift in attitudes before and after training.

<sup>3</sup> **National** : Situations where people can influence policy at a high impact level e.g. Public Appointments

		requirements were taken into account in the appointment process, which included publicly advertising the positions.	
Regional <sup>4</sup>			
Local <sup>5</sup>			

2(b) What **training action measures** were achieved in this reporting period?

	Training Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
1			
2			
3			
4			

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<sup>4</sup> **Regional**: Situations where people can influence policy decision making at a middle impact level

<sup>5</sup> **Local** : Situations where people can influence policy decision making at lower impact level e.g. one off consultations, local fora.

2(c) What Positive attitudes **action measures** in the area of **Communications** were achieved in this reporting period?

	Communications Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
1			
2			
3			
4			

2 (d) What action measures were achieved to ‘**encourage others**’ to promote the two duties:

	Encourage others Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
1			
2			
3			
4			

No direct outputs in this area. Audit work can cover equality issues, which, dependent on the area under examination, may encourage others to take forward measures relating to disability duties.

2 (e) Please outline **any additional action measures** that were fully achieved other than those listed in the tables above:

	Action Measures fully implemented (other than Training and specific public life measures)	Outputs	Outcomes / Impact
1			
2			
3			

3. Please outline what action measures have been **partly achieved** as follows:

	Action Measures partly achieved	Milestones <sup>6</sup> / Outputs	Outcomes/Impacts	Reasons not fully achieved
1	Build on existing training to ensure that leadership and management programmes include training and development on disability training.	The Office has been addressing management training requirements over the past couple of years.	Training on disability awareness training has been delivered to staff and will continue to be refreshed as appropriate in equality awareness training.	As part of a new HR Plan to be rolled out over the next two years, the Office is taking forward a number of tasks including developing and implementing a Corporate Learning and Development Strategy (which is included in the Office's Action Plan) and developing the staff management capabilities of managers. Consideration of this action measure will be factored into this

<sup>6</sup> **Milestones** – Please outline what part progress has been made towards the particular measures; even if full output or outcomes/ impact have not been achieved.

				process.
2	<p>IT Developments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The content and design of Intranet and Internet services should be accessible to all.</li> <li>• Key policies to be presented in plain language and accessible to all.</li> <li>• Contact details for sources of information to be displayed.</li> </ul>	<p>Policies are presented in plain language and contact details available on the website and intranet. The Intranet and website continue to be developed.</p>	<p>Facilities meet the needs of users from an accessibility and ease of use perspective.</p>	<p>The Office is content that its current systems are accessible etc. However, we will retain this action as 'partially achieved' until the ongoing upgrade of the NIAO website is complete. An action measure relating to the website is incorporated in the Office's Action Plan.</p>
3				
4				

**4. Please outline what action measures have not been achieved and the reasons why?**

	Action Measures not met	Reasons
1	Explore short-term placement for disabled person(s).	Under review.
2		

3		

5. What **monitoring tools** have been put in place to evaluate the degree to which actions have been effective / develop new opportunities for action?

(a) Qualitative

The Office obtains information/feedback through a range of sources including:

- internal communication channels including, but not limited to, the team brief process and ongoing engagement on the change management initiative and consultation with Trade Unions;
- contact points on our website for persons external to the Office to use if they wish to raise matters with us. We also have a complaints procedure etc.

(b) Quantitative

Data is collected from applicants applying for vacancies in the Office. We also obtain information in other ways, for example there was a section in the NIAO Staff Attitude Survey on Disabilities.

6. As a result of monitoring progress against actions, has your organisation either:

- made any **revisions** to your plan during the reporting period or
- taken any **additional steps** to meet the disability duties which were **not outlined in your original** disability action plan / any other changes?

Please delete: No

The Office will review the plan over the next year to establish if any changes are required. This will include considering whether it should undertake any further action measures to meet its disability duties.

If yes please outline below:

	Revised/Additional Action Measures	Performance Indicator	Timescale
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			

7. Do you intend to make any further **revisions to your plan** in light of your organisation’s annual review of the plan? If so, please outline proposed changes?

See comment at 6. above.