

Northern Ireland Audit Office



Public Authority Statutory Equality and Good Relations Duties Annual Progress Report 2014-15

Contact:

• Section 75 of the NI Act 1998 and Equality Scheme	Name:	Roisin McKeating
	Telephone:	028 90 251040
	Email:	roisin.mckeating@niauditoffice.gov.uk
• Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and Disability Action Plan	As above	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Name:	
	Telephone:	
	Email:	

Documents published relating to our Equality Scheme can be found at:

http://www.niauditoffice.gov.uk/index/corporate-documents/corporatedocuments_equality.htm

Signature:

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This report has been prepared using a template circulated by the Equality Commission.

It presents our progress in fulfilling our statutory equality and good relations duties, and implementing Equality Scheme commitments and Disability Action Plans.

This report reflects progress made between April 2014 and March 2015

PART A – Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and Equality Scheme

Section 1: Equality and good relations outcomes, impacts and good practice

- 1** In 2014-15, please provide **examples** of key policy/service delivery developments made by the public authority in this reporting period to better promote equality of opportunity and good relations; and the outcomes and improvements achieved.

Please relate these to the implementation of your statutory equality and good relations duties and Equality Scheme where appropriate.

During 2014/15 the Northern Ireland Audit office (NIAO) took forward its equality responsibilities as part of its normal course of business. This included:

- screening policies;
- reviewing HR policies and procedures – while this exercise is necessary from a business perspective, it also provided the opportunity to identify if there was scope to better discharge our Section 75 statutory duties.

As set out in previous progress reports, NIAO has no formal remit in terms of assessing how well the bodies it audits are meeting the requirements of section 75. However bodies audited by the NIAO are subject to section 75 and the performance of these bodies against their section 75 responsibilities may be relevant to our judgment about how economically, efficiently and effectively they have used their resources. Accordingly, a key way in which Audit can contribute to promoting equality of opportunity is through its programme of work.

PART A

- 2** Please provide **examples** of outcomes and/or the impact of **equality action plans/** measures in 2014-15 (*or append the plan with progress/examples identified*).

The NIAO 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 raising awareness of the statutory duties in the course of its audit work.

Our section 75 action plan focuses on:

- HR/employment related matters
- Communication

NIAO HR policies have been reviewed and aligned to best practice.

PART A

3 Has the **application of the Equality Scheme** commitments resulted in any **changes** to policy, practice, procedures and/or service delivery areas during the 2014-15 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

Yes No (go to Q.4) Not applicable (go to Q.4)

Please provide any details and examples:

3a With regard to the change(s) made to policies, practices or procedures and/or service delivery areas, what **difference was made, or will be made, for individuals**, i.e. the impact on those according to Section 75 category?

Please provide any details and examples:

3b What aspect of the Equality Scheme prompted or led to the change(s)? *(tick all that apply)*

As a result of the organisation's screening of a policy *(please give details):*

As a result of what was identified through the EQIA and consultation exercise *(please give details):*

As a result of analysis from monitoring the impact *(please give details):*

As a result of changes to access to information and services *(please specify and give details):*

Other *(please specify and give details):*

Section 2: Progress on Equality Scheme commitments and action plans/measures

Arrangements for assessing compliance (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 2)

4 Were the Section 75 statutory duties integrated within job descriptions during the 2014-15 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

- Yes, organisation wide
- Yes, some departments/jobs
- No, this is not an Equality Scheme commitment
- No, this is scheduled for later in the Equality Scheme, or has already been done
- Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

5 Were the Section 75 statutory duties integrated within performance plans during the 2014-15 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

- Yes, organisation wide
- Yes, some departments/jobs
- No, this is not an Equality Scheme commitment
- No, this is scheduled for later in the Equality Scheme, or has already been done
- Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

6 In the 2014-15 reporting period were **objectives/ targets/ performance measures** relating to the Section 75 statutory duties **integrated** into corporate plans, strategic planning and/or operational business plans? *(tick all that apply)*

- Yes, through the work to prepare or develop the new corporate plan
- Yes, through organisation wide annual business planning
- Yes, in some departments/jobs
- No, these are already mainstreamed through the organisation's ongoing corporate plan
- No, the organisation's planning cycle does not coincide with this 2013-14 report

PART A

Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

Equality action plans/measures

7 Within the 2014-15 reporting period, please indicate the **number** of:

Actions completed: Actions ongoing: Actions to commence:

Please provide any details and examples (*in addition to question 2*):

Actions completed in previous years, no new actions identified during reporting period.

8 Please give details of changes or amendments made to the equality action plan/measures during the 2014-15 reporting period (*points not identified in an appended plan*):

None

9 In reviewing progress on the equality action plan/action measures during the 2014-15 reporting period, the following have been identified: (*tick all that apply*)

- Continuing action(s), to progress the next stage addressing the known inequality
- Action(s) to address the known inequality in a different way
- Action(s) to address newly identified inequalities/recently prioritised inequalities
- Measures to address a prioritised inequality have been completed

Arrangements for consulting (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 3)

10 Following the initial notification of consultations, a targeted approach was taken – and consultation with those for whom the issue was of particular relevance: (*tick one box only*)

All the time Sometimes Never

11 Please provide any **details and examples of good practice** in consultation during the 2014-15 reporting period, on matters relevant (e.g. the development of a policy that has been screened in) to the need to promote equality of opportunity and/or the desirability of promoting good relations:

PART A

12 In the 2014-15 reporting period, given the consultation methods offered, which consultation methods were **most frequently used by consultees**: *(tick all that apply)*

- Face to face meetings
- Focus groups
- Written documents with the opportunity to comment in writing
- Questionnaires
- Information/notification by email with an opportunity to opt in/out of the consultation
- Internet discussions
- Telephone consultations
- Other *(please specify)*:

Please provide any details or examples of the uptake of these methods of consultation in relation to the consultees' membership of particular Section 75 categories:

13 Were any awareness-raising activities for consultees undertaken, on the commitments in the Equality Scheme, during the 2014-15 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

- Yes No Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

14 Was the consultation list reviewed during the 2014-15 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

- Yes No Not applicable – no commitment to review

Arrangements for assessing and consulting on the likely impact of policies (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 4)

[insert link to any web pages where screening templates and/or other reports associated with Equality Scheme commitments are published]

PART A

- 15 Please provide the **number** of policies screened during the year (*as recorded in screening reports*):

1

- 16 Please provide the **number of assessments** that were consulted upon during 2014-15:

0

Policy consultations conducted with **screening** assessment presented.

0

Policy consultations conducted **with an equality impact assessment (EQIA)** presented.

0

Consultations for an **EQIA** alone.

- 17 Please provide details of the **main consultations** conducted on an assessment (as described above) or other matters relevant to the Section 75 duties:

- 18 Were any screening decisions (or equivalent initial assessments of relevance) reviewed following concerns raised by consultees? (*tick one box only*)

Yes

No concerns were raised

No

Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

Arrangements for publishing the results of assessments (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 4)

- 19 Following decisions on a policy, were the results of any EQIAs published during the 2014-15 reporting period? (*tick one box only*)

Yes

No

Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

Arrangements for monitoring and publishing the results of monitoring (Model Equality

Scheme Chapter 4)

20 From the Equality Scheme monitoring arrangements, was there an audit of existing information systems during the 2014-15 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

- Yes No, already taken place
 No, scheduled to take place at a later date Not applicable

Please provide any details:

21 In analysing monitoring information gathered, was any action taken to change/review any policies? *(tick one box only)*

- Yes No Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

22 Please provide any details or examples of where the monitoring of policies, during the 2014-15 reporting period, has shown changes to differential/adverse impacts previously assessed:

23 Please provide any details or examples of monitoring that has contributed to the availability of equality and good relations information/data for service delivery planning or policy development:

Staff Training (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 5)

24 Please report on the activities from the training plan/programme (section 5.4 of the Model Equality Scheme) undertaken during 2014-15, and the extent to which they met the training objectives in the Equality Scheme.

The NIAO remains focused on timely and relevant training to ensure section 75 statutory duties are effectively implemented.

PART A

- New staff receive induction training.
- Refresher training provided to all staff every two to three years - training due during 16/17.
- Staff with specific responsibilities receive additional training as required.

25 Please provide any examples of relevant training shown to have worked well, in that participants have achieved the necessary skills and knowledge to achieve the stated objectives:

Staff training is conducted via eLearning, this allows staff to access the training at a time of their choosing and review the information at a speed suitable for them.

Public Access to Information and Services (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 6)

26 Please list **any examples** of where monitoring during 2014-15, across all functions, has resulted in action and improvement in relation **to access to information and services**:

Complaints (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 8)

27 How many complaints **in relation to the Equality Scheme** have been received during 2014-15?

Insert number here:

0

Please provide any details of each complaint raised and outcome:

Section 3: Looking Forward

28 Please indicate when the Equality Scheme is due for review:

November 2016

29 Are there areas of the Equality Scheme arrangements (screening/consultation/training) your organisation anticipates will be focused upon in the next reporting period? (*please provide details*)

We do not anticipate any one area of focus.

30 In relation to the advice and services that the Commission offers, what **equality and good relations priorities** are anticipated over the next (2015-16) reporting period? *(please tick any that apply)*

- Employment
- Goods, facilities and services
- Legislative changes
- Organisational changes/ new functions
- Nothing specific, more of the same
- Other (please state):

PART B

PART B - Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (as amended) and Disability Action Plans

1. Number of action measures for this reporting period that have been:

Fully achieved

Partially achieved

Not achieved

2. Please outline below details 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 ⁱ	Outcomes / Impact ⁱⁱ
National ⁱⁱⁱ			
Regional ^{iv}			
Local ^v			

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

	Training Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
1			

PART B

2			

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			

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

	Encourage others Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
1			
2			

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	Outputs	Outcomes / Impact

PART B

	measures)		
1			
2			

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

	Action Measures partly achieved	Milestonesvi / Outputs	Outcomes/Impacts	Reasons not fully achieved
1				
2				

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

	Action Measures not met	Reasons
1	Explore short term placements for disabled persons	Will be considered as part of the Corporate Social Responsibility Policy currently in development.
2		

PART B

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

Feedback/Information is obtained from a variety of sources including:

Internal communication channels, Office wide consultation on HR policies, engagement with Trade Unions, complaints procedure, feedback forum via website.

(b) Quantitative

Monitoring data is collected from applicants and the electronic HR system, further sources of information include staff survey results.

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?

No

If yes please outline below:

	Revised/Additional Action Measures	Performance Indicator	Timescale
1			
2			
3			

PART B

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?

The Disability Action Plan is overdue for review due to the unexpected absence of key personnel. The plan will be reviewed in 15/16

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- ⁱ **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.
 - ⁱⁱ **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.
 - ⁱⁱⁱ **National** : Situations where people can influence policy at a high impact level e.g. Public Appointments
 - ^{iv} **Regional**: Situations where people can influence policy decision making at a middle impact level
 - ^v **Local** : Situations where people can influence policy decision making at lower impact level e.g. one off consultations, local fora.
 - ^{vi} **Milestones** – Please outline what part progress has been made towards the particular measures; even if full output or outcomes/ impact have not been achieved.