

EQUALITY COMMISSION FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

Public Authority 2012 – 2013 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 2012 to 31 March 2013 (Part A)*.

This template also includes a number of questions regarding implementation of **Section 49A of the DDO** from the *1 April 2012 to 31 March 2013 (Part B)*.

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 2013**.

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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DDO (if different from above):

Part A: Section 75 Annual Progress Report 2012 - 2013

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 2012/13 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 was necessary from a business perspective, it also provided the opportunity to identify if there was scope to better discharge our Section 75 statutory duties; and
- procuring online equality and diversity training for all staff.

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.

- 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 2013/14 our focus will be on implementing our Equality Scheme and action plan.

New / Revised Equality Schemes

- Please indicate whether this reporting period applies to a new or revised scheme and (if appropriate) when the scheme was approved?

Reporting period applies to the scheme approved in November 2011.

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 2012-13.
 - **The three year Corporate Plan reaffirms our commitment to discharging our obligations under equality law.**
 - **The annual Business Plan incorporates action to progress commitments in the Equality Scheme and Action Plan in accordance with target dates.**
 - **HR management information reviewed resulting in decision to procure new electronic HR system providing staff with on-line access to update personal information, including monitoring details.**
 - **Personal objectives and targets are set for staff engaged in the discharge of section 75 duties.**
 - **Progress reported to senior management.**

Section 2: Examples of Section 75 Outcomes / Impacts

Given the renewed focus of Section 75 aiming to achieve more tangible impacts and outcomes and addressing key inequalities; please report in this section how the authority's work has impacted on individuals across the Section 75 categories. Consider narrative in the following structure:

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.

In terms of internal matters, the Office is nearing the completion of an extensive review of its own HR policies and procedures, which includes consideration of employment law/equality requirements. The results of the screening of these updated policies are posted to the Office's website.

- Please give examples of changes to policies or practices using **screening or EQIA**, which have resulted in **outcomes or impacts for individuals**. If the change was a result of an EQIA please indicate this and also reference the title of the relevant EQIA.

All policies were screened out and not subject to EQIA

- Please give examples of **outcomes or impacts on individuals** as a result of any **action measures** undertaken as part of your Section 75 action plan:

Our section 75 action plan focuses on:

- HR/employment related matters
- Communication

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

Communication strategies, covering both internal and external communications, were produced in 2011-12. The Office continues to keep an active focus on communication having identified it as an area for further consideration in 2013-14. Our aim is to ensure effective communication and engagement with all stakeholders, including section 75 categories.

- Please give examples of ***outcomes or impacts on individuals*** as a result of any **other Section 75 processes** e.g. consultation or monitoring:

NIAO seeks input/feedback from staff on an ongoing basis for example through internal communication processes such as team brief, engagement with Trade Union Side, surveys and office wide consultation on HR policies.

Section 3: Screening

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

For those authorities that have started issuing of screening reports in year; this section may be completed in part by appending, to this annual report, a copy of all screening reports issued within the reporting period.

Where screening reports have not been issued, for part or all of the reporting period, please complete the table below:

Title of policy subject to screening	What was the screening decision? E.g. screened in, screened out, mitigation, EQIA...	Were any concerns raised about screening by consultees; including the Commission?	Is policy being subject to EQIA? Yes/No If yes indicate timeline for assessment.
Attendance Management	Screened out with mitigation	No	No
Bullying and Harassment	Screened out	No	No
Disciplinary	Screened out	No	No
Performance Review	Screened out	No	No
Managing Performance	Screened out	No	No

Section 4: Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA)

Please provide an update of policies subject to EQIA during 2012-13, stage 7 EQIA monitoring activities and an indicative EQIA timetable for 2013-14.

No NIAO policies have been subject to an EQIA to date nor at this point are any EQIA's planned for 2013-14

- EQIA Timetable: April 2012 - March 2013

Title of Policy EQIA	EQIA Stage at end March 2013 (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 2012-13 (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.

N/A

- Ongoing EQIA Monitoring Activities: April 2012- March 2013

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:

N/A

2013-14 EQIA Timetable

Title of EQIAs due to be commenced during April 2013 – March 2014	Revised or New policy?	Please indicate expected timescale of Decision Making stage i.e. Stage 6

Section 5: 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.

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

- **New staff receive induction training.**
- **Refresher training provided to all staff every two to three years.**
- **Staff with specific responsibilities receive additional training as required.**

Section 6: 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.

The NIAO communicates regularly on the delivery of our section 75 duties via our website and external communication systems.

- **Equality scheme available on the web.**
- **Publication of quarterly screening reports.**
- **Commitment to equality published in Corporate Plan and Annual report.**
- **Screening templates published on line.**

Section 7: 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.

NIAO did not establish additional systems during year 2012/13. As noted in Section, HR management information was reviewed.

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

We continue to find this a useful reference document.

Section 8: 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.

We will offer alternative formats on request. During the year 2012/13 there was no requests for information to be provided in an alternative format.

Section 9: 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.

No section 75 complaints were received during 2012/13

Section 10: 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.

No formal external communications were completed during the year 2012/13.

Section 11: 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.

The NIAO implements the good relations duty through various means including

- **Corporate values**
 - **NIAO code of conduct**
 - **Equal Opportunities statement**
 - **Awareness training**
 - **Policy Screening**
- Please outline any use of the Commission's Good Relations Guide.
N/A

Section 12: Additional Comments

- Please provide any additional information/comments.

N/A

Part B: 'Disability Duties'
Annual Report 1 April 2012 / 31 March 2013

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

Fully
Achieved?

Partially
Achieved?

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 ¹	Outcomes / Impact ²
National ³			
Regional ⁴			
Local ⁵			

¹ **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.

² **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.

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

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

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

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

	Training Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
1			
2			
3			
4			

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			

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 ⁶ / Outputs	Outcomes/Impacts	Reasons not fully achieved
1	<p>IT developments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The content and design of the internet and intranet should be accessible to all. • Key policies to be presented in plain language and accessible to all. • Contact details for sources of information to be displayed. 	<p>Policies are presented in plain language and contact details are available on the website.</p> <p>Website has been redesigned and is AA compliant.</p>	<p>Website meets the needs of all users.</p>	<p>We will retain this action measure as partially achieved until the upgrade of the intranet is completed. Work on the Intranet has been rescheduled to accommodate other priorities in the IT programme.</p>
2	<p>Build on existing training to ensure that leadership and management programmes include training and development on disability training.</p>	<p>Office continues to address management training requirements.</p>	<p>Disability awareness training delivered to staff as part of equality awareness training every two years.</p>	<p>A Corporate Learning and Development strategy has been issued to all staff. The Office is currently preparing to seek tenders for a</p>

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

				learning and development partner to design and deliver leadership training.
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 placements for disabled persons	Will be considered as part of the Corporate Social Responsibility Policy currently in development.
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

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 new 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?

Please delete: No

The disability action plan will be reviewed in November 2013 and the Office will consider any further action measures necessary to meet its disability duties at this stage.

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?

Please see comment 6 above.