



Northern
Ireland
Office

Section 75 Annual Progress Report 2010-11

August 2011

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 OFFICE

Equality Officer (Enter name and contact details below)

S75: **Martin.Adams@nio.x.gsi.gov.uk**

DDO: As above.

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?

With the devolution of policing and justice functions to the Northern Ireland Assembly on 12 April 2010, the Department's role and responsibilities changed significantly. Much of its funding and many of its staff transferred to the newly formed Department of Justice for Northern Ireland, meaning that the Northern Ireland Office reduced in size from over 2,000 staff and a baseline budget of approximately £1.3bn to 164 staff and a baseline budget for 2010/11 of £25.9m.

The role and functions of the Northern Ireland Office are now significantly more limited than they were previously. We are primarily responsible for overseeing the devolution settlement – acting as a voice for Northern Ireland in Westminster and for Westminster in Northern Ireland. We also retain some national security responsibilities. However, we now have significantly fewer direct policy responsibilities, reducing the opportunity to influence equality of opportunity and good relations in Northern Ireland. In addition, with regards to our own staff, we now follow Ministry of Justice terms and conditions and diversity policies and no longer operate an internal HR function.

That is not to say that we have not been active in promoting equality of opportunity and good relations where we retain the opportunity to do so. For instance, over the past year we have:

- *Moved our staff on to Ministry of Justice personnel policies, thereby ensuring that they continue to have access to policies and procedures to support equality of opportunity in the workplace.*
- *Appointed new commissioners to the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, to ensure that the Commission is able to continue its objectives of working towards the elimination of unlawful discrimination, promote equality of opportunity and affirmative and positive action, promoting good relations between persons of different racial groups, overseeing the effectiveness of the statutory duties on public bodies set out in section 75 of the*

Northern Ireland Act 1998, and the disability duties under the Disability Discrimination Order; and keeping relevant legislation under review.

- *Amended electoral law to make it easier for some individuals with disabilities to obtain an absent vote and to allow for the translation and provisions of alternative formats of various electoral documents;*
- *Amended electoral law to ensure that those unable to sign their name due to a disability or because they are unable to read are able to participate in the nomination process.*
- *Ended the provisions for 50/50 recruitment to the PSNI. These provisions played an important role in addressing the underrepresentation of the Catholic community in the PSNI but are now judged to no longer be needed or justified.*
- *Continued to sponsor a number of Arms Length Bodies, including the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission, the Civil Service Commissioners for Northern Ireland, and the Electoral Office for Northern Ireland, each of which, in its own way, plays a key part in ensuring equality of opportunity across a variety of fields, and which report on S.75 compliance separately to the Equality Commission.*
- *Facilitated the use of Hillsborough Castle for events by communities and charities across Northern Ireland.*
- *Undertaken a range of awareness raising and fundraising events around social issues including work with MIND, MS Society and International Women's Day.*
- **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?**

Over the coming year, we will be conducting the statutory review of our equality scheme, in accordance with S.75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. Following the devolution of policing and justice, a significant

number of the measures in our Equality Action Plan and Disability Discrimination Action Plan have transferred to the Department of Justice. We look forward to taking stock of our position, post-devolution of policing and justice, and ensuring that we are continuing to play our part in promoting equality of opportunity and good relations wherever practicable. We will also be taking further steps to ensure compliance with the new public sector equality duty introduced by S.149 of the Equality Act 2010 in Great Britain, which also extends to the Northern Ireland Office in some respects. We will further embed our relationship with the Ministry of Justice in order to ensure all our staff receive appropriate support.

- 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:

	Outline change in policy or practice which have resulted in outcomes	Tick if result of EQIA
Persons of different religious belief	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>End of 50/50 recruitment provisions</i> 	
Persons of different political opinion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	
Persons of different racial groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	
Persons of different age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	
Persons with different marital status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	
Persons of different sexual orientation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	
Men and women generally	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	
Persons with and without a disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Laws governing electoral procedures in Northern Ireland have been amended to make it easier for some individuals with disabilities to register to vote and to participate in the nomination process</i> 	

Persons with and without dependants	•	
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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

Due to the nature of the Department's work and responsibilities, no specific equality objectives were included in our Departmental Business Plan. However, individual policy decisions which had potential equality implications were fully considered and, as necessary, screened.

Section 2: Screening

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

Title of policy subject to screening	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>	Was initial screening decision changed following consultation? <u>Y</u> es/ <u>N</u> o	Is policy being subject to EQIA? <u>Y</u> es/ <u>N</u> o? If yes indicate year for assessment.
<i>End of 50/50 policing provisions</i>	<i>Result</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>N</i>
<i>Extension of confidentiality arrangements for donations and loans to political parties</i>	<i>Screened out</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>N</i>

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 EQIAs were conducted in 2010-11, nor are any planned for 2011-12 at present. EQIAs will be conducted should screening indicate that they are necessary.

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.

2010-11 was a year of transition for the NIO as we sought to significantly reconfigure the Department following the devolution of policing and justice. While, no formal training has been provided to staff on S.75 duties and equality requirements, staff continued to be able to avail of guidance on the Department's intranet and from the Equality Officer. Awareness raising occurred through fund-raising events around social issues including work with MIND, MS Society and International Women's Day, and through a diversity event held in our Millbank offices. We will consider training provision further as part of our review of our equality scheme and action plan going forwards over the 2011-12 financial year. Throughout 2010-11, the Department continued to provide advice and guidance to staff within our ALBs in relation to their statutory equality duties, as necessary.

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.

Communication on implementation of S.75 duties has been carried out through the publication of consultation responses and press releases on relevant issues, for instance the end of 50/50 recruitment provisions.

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.

None.

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

The Commission's Section 75 Monitoring Guide has continued to be available to staff for use as a resource throughout the year.

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.

Copies of consultation documents are published online and printed copies can be requested free of charge. Consultation documents can be made available on request in different formats, for individuals with particular needs. The Department also has access to a translation service for individuals who write to the Department in languages other than English.

Staff within the Department have been provided with access to the Ministry of Justice intranet, which provides guidance and support on equality and diversity issues.

The Department also published a summary of responses received to the previous Government's consultation on the Eames-Bradley report.

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.

No Section 75 complaints were received over the past year.

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.

The Department undertook two consultations during the past year: on ending the policy of 50/50 recruitment to the police service and on extending the confidentiality arrangements for donations to political

parties. Consultations were sent to relevant stakeholders for their consideration as well as being placed on line. Public awareness was raised through media reporting of the consultations.

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.

S.75 requires public authorities in carrying out their functions relating to NI have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion and racial group.

The Department sought to promote good relations between S.75 groups, through publication of the summary of responses received to the previous Government's consultation on the Eames-Bradley report. In this manner we sought to help pave the way for building of consensus between people of different community background and political opinion.

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

The Commission's Good Relations Guide has continued to be available to staff for use as a resource throughout the year.

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.

The Department will be developing a revised equality scheme in 2011-12.

Section 12: Additional Comments

- Please provide any additional information/comments.

As mentioned in the introduction to this report, the Northern Ireland Office is a very different organisation today than it was during the period covered by our last report. Our primary role is one of facilitation and coordination, and we have few remaining policy responsibilities. However, where it lies within our remit we will continue to be fully committed to fulfilling our responsibilities under S.75.

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

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

6

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 people with disabilities to participate in public life at National, Regional and Local levels:

Level	Public Life Action Measures	Outputs ¹	Outcomes / Impact ²
National ³	<i>Fully engage with Cabinet Office reporting mechanisms to monitor diversity of public appointments.</i>	<i>Accurate reporting data on number of public appointments of people with disabilities.</i>	<i>Contributing to Government-wide public appointments processes and policy formation.</i>
Regional ⁴	<i>Ensure consultation documents are available in suitable formats for people with disabilities.</i>	<i>Consultation documents available in a range of formats.</i>	<i>Wider engagement opportunities for people with disabilities.</i>
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	<i>Staff provided with access to E-learning courses on disability and diversity through new relationship with MoJ.</i>	<i>Staff able to access training to meet personal development needs.</i>	<i>Workforce understand the importance of equality and diversity to business delivery</i>
2	<i>Awareness raising through fund-raising events around social issues including work with MIND and MS Society</i>	<i>Staff engaged in events to raise awareness about disabilities and the work of organisations which work with people with disabilities. Funds raised for those organisations.</i>	<i>Increased staff awareness. Fostering corporate and social responsibility within the Department.</i>
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	<i>Staff provided with access to MoJ intranet to get access to policies, procedures and guidance.</i>	<i>All staff better supported through access to relevant resources.</i>	<i>Department and staff fully informed as to policies and procedures.</i>
2	<i>Continuing application of policies and procedures to ensure Department meets the needs of persons with disabilities.</i>	<i>Textphone service available and details included on Departmental letterheads. Internet/Intranet sites AA compliant. Publications can be provided in alternative formats to meet individual needs.</i>	<i>Departmental information more accessible to people with sensory impairments.</i>
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	<i>n/a</i>			
2				
3				
4				

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

	Action Measures not met	Reasons
1	<i>n/a</i>	
2		
3		

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.

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

(b) Quantitative

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			
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?
