



Northern  
Ireland  
Office

## **Section 75 Annual Progress Report 2012-13**

**August 2013**

# 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 OFFICE**

**Equality Officer** (Enter name and contact details below)

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DDO (if different from above): As 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?

The Northern Ireland Office (NIO) is fully committed to promoting equality of opportunity and good relations in all areas of their work in line with Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and the Equality Act 2010 in Great Britain, which also extends to the NIO in some respects.

The NIO is responsible for overseeing the Northern Ireland devolution settlement. We represent Northern Ireland interests at UK Government level and UK Government interests in Northern Ireland. The NIO retains responsibility for a range of *excepted* and *reserved* issues. Excepted matters are those upon which central government retains the ability to legislate, such as elections and national security policy in Northern Ireland. Reserved matters are those on which the Northern Ireland Administration are able to legislate, but only if they have can secure consent from the Secretary of State, such as telecommunications.

Our vision is a stable, peaceful, prosperous, forward-looking, mainstream, 'normalised' Northern Ireland. We work through partnerships within Whitehall and with the Northern Ireland Executive, the Irish Government, and all those who share this ambition, in order to achieve our objectives.

Throughout this reporting period, the NIO was headed by the Director General and was organised around three core business areas:

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

By the end of the reporting period, the NIO had 317 staff employed by or seconded to the Department, or on fixed term appointments.

The core Department had 173 members of staff comprised of 93 members of the Home Civil Service (HCS), 72 staff seconded from the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS), and 8 others including casual staff and Commissioners. In addition, there are a number of staff and other appointees working on activities funded by the NIO vote such as the Crown Solicitor's Office, the Electoral Office and other smaller bodies.

The Department's key purpose, as outlined in our vision and statement of strategic direction, is to make the political settlement work and in partnership with the Northern Ireland Executive help bring about a stable, prosperous Northern Ireland at peace with itself and ready for the challenges and opportunities of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. To do this we:

- Support and implement the political Agreements to increase the stability of the institutions.
- Work with the Executive to rebalance the Northern Ireland economy, promoting growth, trade and encouraging inward investment.
- Support reconciliation and the Executive's objective of building a shared future for all, while acknowledging the past.
- Champion Northern Ireland's interests in Whitehall making sure Cabinet takes full account of Northern Ireland and Whitehall policies are represented there effectively.
- Support democracy and take the lead against the terrorism and violence that threatens national security.
- Work closely with the Irish Government on matters of common interest.

We work hard as a Department to offer our best advice and support to our Ministers and colleagues, to help us all carry out our duties and statutory obligations to Parliament, the public and others. We maximise our people's talents and use our resources to carry all this work out as effectively as possible.

In addition to the core Department, there are a range of matters which are dealt with through a network of associated bodies. These 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.

Although the NIO is no longer as engaged in the delivery of frontline services as it has been in previous years, we nevertheless continue to be 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:

- Made training available on s.75 statutory duties to all staff based in Belfast.
- Undertaken work to support Cabinet Office and the Devolved Administration's efforts to extend the National Citizen's Service Scheme to Northern Ireland. This will help promote good relations between young people from several of the s.75 groups including race, religious belief and political opinion. A pilot was launched in autumn 2012.
- Worked with key partners, such as the Ministry of Justice (MOJ) and the Northern Ireland Civil Service; thereby ensuring that all staff had access to the appropriate personnel policies and procedures to support equality of opportunity in the workplace.
- Promoted a Guaranteed Interview Scheme to actively encourage applications from registered disabled staff.

- Operated arrangements to enable staff to join either the MOJ or the Department of Justice's (DOJ) diversity networks, the DOJ being more convenient for Belfast based staff whilst MOJ is more convenient for those in London.
- Sponsored 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 the wider community and charities across Northern Ireland. During 2012-13, Hillsborough Castle hosted 41 citizenship ceremonies, resulting in over 1,300 individuals receiving their British citizenship and 69 charity events that raised money for the Prince's Trust, Cancer Focus NI, Rotary International, Volunteer Now, SOS Bus, Order of Malta, Order of St John and the NI Wildlife Trust. Over 12,000 people attended these charity events. In addition, more than 17,000 people visited the gardens during the Garden Show Ireland weekend and over 2,000 visited during the European Heritage Open weekend.

The Department's Corporate Social Responsibility policy reinforces its commitment to making a positive impact in the community in which it operates. During 2012-13, we supported 3 of our members of staff to be volunteers at the Olympic Games in the summer, and another member of staff was released to help with the Paralympic Games. In addition, the NIO continued to participate in fundraising activities for a range of local charities, from having coffee mornings and selling Easter chicks for local charities in Northern Ireland to donating for use by a homeless shelter in Vauxhall operated by the London based charity Centrepont.

- 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 hope to publish our revised Equality Scheme and a summary of the consultation responses, in accordance with s.75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

We will continue to develop our links with other government departments and our stakeholders to ensure that we play our part in promoting equality of opportunity and good relations wherever practicable.

We will further embed our relationship with the Ministry of Justice and the Northern Ireland Civil Service to ensure that all our members of staff receive appropriate support.

We will keep under review our effectiveness of internal and external communications to ensure that our services are accessible to all, providing alternative formats where appropriate on request.

We will be considering what additional steps we need to take to ensure compliance with our public sector equality duties under the Equality Act 2010, which also extend to the Northern Ireland Office.

We will be exploring how we can contribute to the government's 'Time to Change' pledge and the 'Public Health Responsibility Deal' pledge on mental health

We will also continue to conduct screening and EQIAs and to mainstream the screening and EQIA process across all business areas. As part of this process, we will be providing equality and diversity training to all staff based in London.

## **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?

Our draft Equality Scheme was presented to the Equality Commission during the last reporting period and we are currently waiting for it to be approved. Once approved, the Equality Scheme and the summary of responses to the consultation will be made available on the NIO website. Outcomes will be reported on in future Annual Progress reports.

## **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.

Specific equality objectives are not included in our Departmental Business Plan.

However, we are responsible for delivering the coalition Government's programme for democratic and political renewal in Northern Ireland, including the development of civil liberties and working with the Northern Ireland Executive and others in fostering the Big Society in Northern Ireland.

At a Departmental level, we are fully committed to fulfilling our s.75 equality duties and reporting requirements. We adhere to the principles set out in the Civil Service Code and the Commissioner for Public Appointments Code of Practice which continues to ensure that all appointments are made on merit on the basis of fair and open competition. Equality and good relations are ongoing responsibilities for all staff within the NIO and its sponsored bodies and we ensure that all individual policy decisions which have potential equality implications are fully considered and, as necessary, screened.

## **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:
  - *Describe* the action measure /section 75 process undertaken.
  - *Who* was affected across the Section 75 categories?
  - *What impact* it achieved?

As previously mentioned in this report, the NIO has taken action to support equality of opportunity in the workplace and continues to ensure equality of opportunity across a variety of fields through the sponsorship of the number of Arms Length Bodies.

We have well established arrangements that allow staff to join Ministry of Justice and the Departments of Justice's diversity networks. This helps to promote equality of opportunity between persons with a disability and those without, between persons of different racial group and between persons of differing sexual orientation

We have also undertaken work to support Cabinet Office and the Devolved Administration's efforts to extend the National Citizen's Service Scheme to Northern Ireland. A pilot was launched in autumn 2012. The scheme brings together young people from different backgrounds to work together, and teaches them what it means to be responsible and serve their communities. It gives young people the chance to prove to themselves and their peers what they can do, develop their confidence and learn new skills. This will help promote good relations between young people from several of the s.75 groups including race, religious belief and political opinion.

- 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.

No EQIAs were conducted in 2012-13. EQIAs will be conducted should screening indicate that they are necessary.

- 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:

Following the devolution of policing and justice in April 2010, a significant number of the measures in our Equality Action Plan and Disability Discrimination Action Plan transferred to the Department of Justice. However, our revised Equality Scheme includes a new action plan with measures that are relevant to the current work and functions of the Department. Once our revised Scheme is approved, the outcomes or impacts on individuals will be detailed in the next Annual Progress Report.

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

None.

### **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:

<b>Title of policy subject to screening</b>	<b>What was the <i>screening decision?</i> E.g. screened in, screened out, mitigation, EQIA...</b>	<b>Were any <i>concerns raised about screening by consultees;</i> including the Commission?</b>	<b>Is policy being subject to <i>EQIA?</i> Yes/No If yes indicate timeline for assessment.</b>
NIO Information Security Policy	Screened out	No	No
NIO Information Assurance Policy	Screened out	No	No
NIO Security Breach Policy	Screened out	No	No
NIO Recruitment Policy	Screened out	No	No
Donations and Loans to Northern Ireland Political Parties: Greater Transparency Arrangements	Screened out	No	No
Extension of opening hours at Hillsborough Castle and increase in price	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.

- **EQIA Timetable: April 2012 - March 2013**

<b>Title of Policy EQIA</b>	<b>EQIA Stage at end March 2013 (Steps 1-6)</b>	<b>Outline adjustments to policy intended to benefit individuals and the relevant Section 75 categories due to be affected.</b>
None	-	-

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.

Not applicable.

- **Ongoing EQIA Monitoring Activities: April 2012- March 2013**

<b>Title of EQIA subject to Stage 7 monitoring</b>	<b>Indicate if differential impacts previously identified have reduced or increased</b>	<b>Indicate if adverse impacts previously identified have reduced or increased</b>
None	-	-

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:

Not applicable.

### 2013-14 EQIA Timetable

<b>Title of EQIAs due to be commenced during April 2013 – March 2014</b>	<b>Revised or New policy?</b>	<b>Please indicate expected timescale of Decision Making stage i.e. Stage 6</b>
None at present	-	-

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## **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.

Formal training was provided to members of staff located in Belfast by the Centre for Applied Learning on s.75 duties and equality requirements. The training provided members of staff with an overview of how to mainstream s.75 into policy development and explained how equality fits with the Northern Ireland Executive's Programme for Government.

In addition, during the year all members of staff continued to be able to avail of guidance on the NIO's intranet and from the Equality Officer. Awareness of issues was raised through the participation of members of staff in the Ministry of Justice and Department of Justice diversity networks.

## **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 NIO is committed to communicating progress on the delivery of its s.75 duties. We recognise the growing range of communications channels and the differing needs and preferences of different groups. Progress on the delivery on s.75 duties is communicated through the publication of consultations responses and press releases on relevant issues.

## **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.

No new systems were introduced in 2012-13.

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

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

### **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.

The NIO makes all its publications, including consultation documents, available online and printed copies can be requested free of charge. We have put in place arrangement so that publications can be made available on request in different formats, for individuals with particular needs. The NIO also has access to a translation service for individuals who write to us in languages other than English.

### **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 s.75 complaints were received over the reporting period.

### **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.

The NIO is committed to carrying out consultation in accordance with best practice guidance. All consultations seek the views of those directly affected by the matter/policy, the Equality Commission, representative groups of s.75 categories, other public authorities, voluntary and community groups, our staff and their trades unions and such other groups who may have a legitimate interest in the matter, whether or not they have a direct economic or personal interest.

### **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 NIO routinely monitors any adverse impact on the promotion of equality of opportunity of our policies. This is an important part of continually improving our service delivery. We are also committed to monitoring more broadly to identify opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity and good relations in line with Equality Commission guidance.

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

The Equality Commission's Good Relations Guide was considered as part of the process to review and develop the NIO's draft Equality Scheme.

### **Section 12: Additional Comments**

- Please provide any additional information/comments.

As mentioned in this report, the NIO's role and responsibilities has significantly changed since the devolution of policing and justice. During the initial stages of devolution, our primary focus was on reshaping and reorganising the NIO to effectively deliver our core functions. As we emerge from that process, greater emphasis is now being placed on reviewing policies and processes to ensure they remain relevant going forward. Significant work has already progressed in this area and over the last year we delivered equality and diversity training to staff located in Belfast. The NIO continues to be fully

committed to fulfilling our responsibilities under s75 and over the course of 2013-14 reporting period we will be rolling out a programme of training to staff located in London.

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

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

7

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 <sup>1</sup>	Outcomes / Impact <sup>2</sup>
National <sup>3</sup>	Engage with Cabinet Office reporting mechanisms to monitor diversity of public appointments.	Accurate reporting data on number of public appointments of people with disabilities.	We contribute to Government wide public appointments processes and policy formation.
Regional <sup>4</sup>	Ensure that consultation documents are available in suitable formats for people with disabilities.	Consultation documents available in a range of formats.	We contribute to wider engagement opportunities for people with disabilities
Local <sup>5</sup>	-	-	-

<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

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

	Training Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
1	Arrangements in place to allow staff to join Ministry of Justice and the Department of Justice diversity networks.	Staff able to access information and training resources.	Workforce understands the importance of equality and diversity to business delivery.
2	Awareness raising of social issues through participation in fund-raising events.	Staff engagement with a diverse range of charities and funds were raised for the work of the charities.	Increased staff awareness and fostering of corporate and social responsibility within the Department.

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	All members of Staff continue to have access to Ministry of Justice and Department of Justice intranet to view policies, procedures and guidance.	All staff better supported through access to relevant resources.	Department and staff fully informed as to policies and procedures.
2	Continuing application of policies and procedures to ensure the Department meets the needs of persons with disabilities	Text phone service available and details included on Departmental letterheads and publications. Intranet/Internet sites AA compliant. Publications are available in alternative formats to meet individual requirements.	Departmental information more accessible to persons with disabilities.

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

	Encourage others Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
1	We undertook work to support Cabinet Office and the Devolved Administration’s efforts to extend the National Citizen’s Service Scheme to Northern Ireland.	Will help promote good relations between young people from several of the s75 groups including race, religious belief and political opinion.	Will help promote equality and good relations in Northern Ireland.

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	-	-	-	-
2				
3				
4				

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

	Action Measures not met	Reasons
1	-	-
2		
3		

<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.

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

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(b) Quantitative

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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

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?

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