

## Reporting Template

### EQUALITY COMMISSION FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

#### Public Authority Five-Year Review Report

This report template includes a number of self-assessment questions under the twelve key elements of an equality scheme. Please enter information at the relevant part of each Section in the template and ensure that it is submitted to the Commission electronically (by completing this template) **and** in writing, with a signed cover letter from the Chief Executive or, in his/her absence, the Deputy Chief Executive (or equivalent).

Name of public authority (Enter details below)

**Department for Regional Development**

Equality Officer name and contact details (Enter details below)

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## **Executive Summary**

Please provide some main conclusions in terms of:

**a)** To what extent has your public authority's approved scheme provided a workable basis for mainstreaming the need to promote equality of opportunity and good relations into policy-making over the past five years?

**(Enter text below)**

The Department considers that its Equality Scheme has provided a solid and sustainable basis for mainstreaming equality of opportunity and Good Relations into policy making over the past five years.

The Department has established effective structures and procedures and allocated resources to mainstream and develop Section 75 work within the Department and in consultation with stakeholders.

A five-year training and communication programme has ensured that all staff are aware of the statutory duties and given the necessary expertise and assistance to implement them.

Progress on meeting Scheme commitments has been closely and regularly monitored and reviewed to ensure that initiatives reflect Best Practice.

**b)** What key lessons have been learnt over the past five years in terms of effectively implementing the approved equality scheme?

**(Enter text below)**

The key lessons learned by the Department are as follows:

- The importance of open, inclusive, effective and early engagement with stakeholders at screening, pre-consultation and formal consultation stages.
- The importance of fostering good relationships with stakeholders and Section 75 representative groups. The

Department's Equality Forum has proved to be invaluable in this regard.

- The need to consider targeting and the means of consultation in association with key stakeholders at the outset of the process and to make all possible information available on option appraisal.
- The need to constantly review progress and foster a Best Practice approach in all aspects of Section 75 work and to participate in the various interdepartmental groups established for this purpose.
- The need to identify or develop comprehensive and relevant data for all nine Section 75 Categories at an early stage in the policy development process.
- The need to make effective screening decisions and carry out effective EQIAs and monitoring.

**c) What more needs to be done to achieve outcomes for individuals from the nine equality categories?**

**(Enter text below)**

Comprehensive guidance is required on how to progress the Good Relations duty and monitoring requirements.

Comprehensive data on all nine groups needs to be developed.

A greater focus is required on outcomes at all stages of policy development. A more strategic approach to EQIA, with a focus on major policies would help in this regard.

Further development of the screening process is required to ensure that decisions are timely and effective.

Consultation requires on-going work to ensure that appropriate methods are used and that the duty to engage with young people and those with a learning disability is more effectively discharged.

Training must continue and refocus on the achievements to date and the outcomes from this 5-year review.

Best Practice approaches should be developed further. Early feedback from the Annual Progress Reports would be helpful. Input from stakeholders would also be valuable in this context.

**1. A general introductory statement specifying the purpose of the scheme and the public authority's commitment to the statutory duties.**

1a) To what extent were senior management involved in ensuring scheme compliance over the 5 year period and what further steps could be undertaken to ensure effective internal arrangements?

*Prompts – Identify any changes to arrangements for managing scheme implementation, and what were the lessons learnt in terms of enablers and impediments to monitoring scheme implementation?*

**(Enter text below)**

### **Internal Arrangements**

Senior Management were actively involved in ensuring scheme compliance over the 5 year period, particularly in the initial scheme period when the internal arrangements and structures to mainstream and monitor the delivery of Section 75 commitments were put in place. These arrangements included:

- Placing personal responsibility for equality with the Director of the Central Policy and Management Unit and clear designation of responsibility for Section 75 to officers in all Agencies and Divisions.
- The creation of a dedicated Equality Unit, headed by a Grade 7.
- The establishment of a training and communication programme for Section 75 issues.
- The establishment of a Departmental Equality Working Group with representatives from all business areas.
- The establishment of an Equality Forum to facilitate regular liaison between the Department and representatives of Section 75 groups.
- The development of a detailed action plan covering Equality Scheme commitments.

- The submission of quarterly reports on progress generally and against the action plan to the Minister and senior officers.
- Inclusion of Section 75 issues in corporate and business planning objectives at all levels and in personal performance agreements and personal development plans.
- Inclusion of equality in Risk Management and Internal Audit Programmes.
- Inclusion of Section 75 issues as regular agenda items at Department and Agency Boards.
- Development and consideration of Annual Progress Reports to the Equality Commission.
- Dissemination of Best Practice through links with Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) equality networking, Equality and Social Needs Steering Group (ESNSG), Equality Practitioners' Group (EPG), Equality and Social Need Research and Information Group (ESNRIG), and review of annual reports.

### **Further Steps to Enhance Effective Internal Arrangements.**

In accordance with new Corporate Governance arrangements, a range of measures will be implemented in 2006/07 to increase the effectiveness of the Departmental Board. These will include the appointment of two independent board members (IBMs) to bring a broader perspective and an external challenge function to the Board. The quarterly monitoring reports and annual progress report on Section 75 will be formally considered by the Board. Equality issues will therefore be considered on a more formal basis than hitherto and the challenge function of the IBMs will ensure that internal arrangements are as effective as possible. These new arrangements will ensure ongoing top-level commitment to Section 75.

**1b)** Outline annual **direct** expenditure of resources to ensure that the statutory duties were complied with, in terms of staff and money over the past 5 years, and comment on the extent that all necessary resources were allocated.

*Prompts – Identify costs related to equality unit staff, use of consultants, allocation of budgets to training/publications/research, extent of in-year bids and/or reallocation of resources. What were the lessons learnt in terms of enablers and impediments to monitoring resourcing? What could the public authority do in future to ensure effective allocation and monitoring of necessary resources?*

**(Enter text below)**

## **Resources**

The Department is content with the on-going allocation of the resources across business areas and is confident that the necessary resources have been provided to help implement Equality Scheme commitments.

The table below details the number of staff employed in the Department's Equality Unit and associated staff costs. The Equality Unit consists of a Grade 7, Deputy Principal and a Staff Officer. The Grade 7 is engaged in equality work for 50% of the time.

Year	Full Time Equivalent Staff	£'s
2001/02	2.5	92,000
2002/03	2.5	93,800
2003/04	2.5	95,600
2004/05	2.5	97,500
2005/06	2.5	99,500

The Equality Unit is assisted by a working group of officials, from all Division and Agencies across the Department, who help drive forward the practical implementation of the commitments set out in the Department's Equality Scheme. The time spent by these officers on equality duties varies in accordance with the associated policy programmes. Such staff costs amounted to £280,000 in 2003/04 and £174,000 in 2004/05. Significant resources are also

committed to Section 75 consultations - £167,000 in 2003/04 and £143,000 in 2004/05. All screening of policies and EQIAs are carried out by departmental staff, not consultants.

During the 5 years of the Equality Scheme, the Department has spent £61,330 on equality training through Focus Consultancy. In addition, a significant programme of awareness training was carried out in house.

**2. An outline of how the public authority intends to assess its compliance with the Section 75 duties and for consulting on matters to which a duty under that section is likely to be relevant.**

2a) Outline impacts and outcomes (for the public authority and/or individuals from the nine equality categories) over the past five years and what further steps could be undertaken to build on these or address underreporting?

*Prompt – Were outcomes delivered for all of the nine equality categories? Were annual progress reports critically reviewed before or after submission to the Commission? What examples of good practice from other public authorities could be adopted?*

**(Enter text below)**

### **Impacts and Outcomes**

In the five-year period outcomes were delivered for all of the nine equality categories, through both screening and EQIAs. Outcomes associated with disability and age were particularly evident in the area of transportation policy. The outcomes included:

- Agreement to consider the transport needs of disabled people as part of the Accessible Transport Strategy;
- The creation of a Mobility and Inclusion Unit as part of the Accessible Transport Strategy (ATS).
- A more accessible application process for the Senior Smartpass in the context of the ATS.
- An undertaking, in the context of the ATS, to review the Concessionary Fares Scheme.

On Water Reform, the revised and enhanced protections for low-income households and revised metering proposals secured a significant outcome for elderly householders. The revised protections also secured improved outcomes for most other Section 75 categories living in low-income households. These should not need to pay more than 3% of income on Water and Sewerage charges and in many cases would pay a significantly lower percentage than this.

The Department's Equality Scheme has helped ensure that assessment of equality implications is an integral part of the Department's policy development process.

All new or revised policies are screened for possible equality implications across the nine equality categories using the Department's screening analysis form. At this stage, the Department usually carries out focused pre-consultation with appropriate Section 75 representatives. This helps in the formulation of the policies as well as in the identification of potential impacts.

The Department has found that with the mainstreaming of equality considerations to policy development and the practice of pre and targeted consultations, most equality issues will have been taken into account at draft EQIA stage. The EQIA process for many policies has become less a means of changing policies and increasingly, a method of confirming that policies are sound with regard to promotion of equality of opportunity and Good Relations.

### **Good Practice**

Critical review of Annual Progress reports took place both before and after submission to the Commission. Contributions from Agencies and Divisions were critically evaluated by the Equality Unit as part of the preparation process. Senior Officials, the Departmental Board and the Minister were also given the opportunity to review draft reports before they were forwarded to the Commission. The final report and the subsequent Equality Commission Report on Public Authority Annual Reports are reviewed for follow-up action and Best Practice recommendations by the Equality Unit and considered by the Department's Equality Working Group.

Good practice is promulgated across the NICS through the series of Interdepartmental groups, which meet regularly to discuss issues of mutual concern such as ESNISG, ESNRIG and Equality Practitioners. A recent example of good practice taken from these meetings has been the process for consultation on screening exercises now carried out by the Department. Another has been the move to targeted consultation, in line with other Departments' practices. The Department's screening form and complaints

procedure have been shared with and adopted by other Departments.

Consultation methods used by the Department in developing its Accessible Transport Strategy were commended by the Inclusive Mobility Transport Advisory Committee and used as an example of good practice across the Department.

The Equality Forum set up by the Department to ensure regular engagement between policy makers and Section 75 representatives has been commended as good practice by Section 75 representatives.

### **Further Steps to build on Outcomes and Address Underreporting.**

With the mainstreaming of Section 75, outcomes are likely to be evident in the early stages of policy development more frequently than at final EQIA stage. Public Authorities might be asked to comment also on the impact of Section 75 considerations on policy development. However, such information might be protected in Freedom of Information terms as formulation of Government policy – Section 35.

A more precise and concise Annual Reporting template would help to focus on outputs and good practice.

Early availability of the Equality Commission Report on Public Authority's Annual Progress Reports would assist the implementation of formal mechanisms to pick up and disseminate good practice recommendations emerging from the reports.

The availability of more comprehensive data on problematic categories such as Sexual Orientation, Race and Political Opinion would facilitate the assessment of impact and outcomes for these groups.

There is scope for further development of the Equality Commission website of good practice. Consideration could also be given to the detailed development of a similar site by Government Departments.

**2b)** Outline the number of equality scheme related consultation exercises undertaken by your authority over the past five years. Set out the number and percentage related to screening exercises and to EQIAs and indicate the extent that your scheme helped you to engage with external stakeholders.

*Prompt – Identify your authority’s most and least successful means of consultation in relation to s75 categories. Why were some means of consultation more or less successful in relation to particular equality categories?*

**(Enter text below)**

### **Consultation Exercises**

Over the past five years the Department has completed 44 Equality Scheme related consultation exercises. The Department has undertaken 16 (36%) formal consultation exercises on draft EQIAs. The Department has also consulted on 28 (64%) screening exercises. The majority of the consultation exercises on screening have taken place following issue of the Revised Guidance for Implementing Section 75 by the Equality Commission in early 2005.

### **Engagement with External Stakeholders**

Prior to 2000, consultation with external stakeholders was limited and often formulaic. The Equality Scheme has been instrumental in raising awareness within the Department of groups with an interest in departmental policy. It has also helped to foster relationships and to increase levels of engagement between the Department and Section 75 representative groups.

As part of the Equality Scheme the Department set up a Section 75 Consultative Forum between policymakers, service providers and Section 75 representative groups. This Forum, which meets twice a year, has provided an additional means of face-to-face engagement on the full range of the Department’s activities with representative groups. Representative groups have recently commended the Forum to other Departments.

The Department has developed a Consultation Zone on the internet. This gives stakeholders details of past, present and forthcoming consultations and provides easy access to associated policy documents, draft and final EQIAs.

Section 75 representative groups are also notified every six months of policies screened out and forthcoming consultations. They are given the opportunity to indicate the policies in which they have a particular interest. This helps to target pre and draft EQIA consultation.

## **Successful and Unsuccessful Consultation Approaches**

Effective consultation is difficult to secure and over the years it has become clear that one size does not fit all. The saturation written consultation approach adopted at the outset has been adjusted and fine tuned to a more targeted approach with a range of engagements to supplement consultation documents. These include workshops, face-to-face engagement and presentations. The consultation carried out for the Accessible Transport Strategy using this approach has been commended by the Inclusive Mobility Transport Advisory Committee for the comprehensive and inclusive consultation process. More needs to be done. The key to an effective consultation process is early consultation with those most likely to be affected to identify the best methods of engagement as well as potential policy impacts.

**2c)** Indicate if your list of consultees was amended during the 5 year period and what further steps could be taken to develop your level of engagement and consultation?

*Prompt - Outline the extent your authority did or did not move away from formal consultation and on what criteria was any such consultation targeted? To what extent were requests to be included and/or objections from those not included in the consultation process received and how were these addressed?*

**(Enter text below)**

### **List of Consultees**

Over the 5 year period, the Department has continuously updated its consultation list by the addition and deletion of groups on the advice of OFMDFM and other Departments, on request and on the basis of increasing knowledge of the Voluntary and Community Sector. The small number of requests received to be included in the list were granted; no objections were received from groups not included in the consultation list.

In September 2004 the Department carried out a review of the Equality Scheme consultation list which had details of over 400 organisations and groups. A letter issued to all current members of the consultation list asking if they wished to remain on the list and if they knew of any groups which might be interested in joining the list. They were also asked to highlight the method of communication they preferred (i.e. electronic or written). As a result, the Department formally updated the consultation list removing 15 groups and adding six groups. Two separate consultation lists have now been created, one for those receiving written communications and another for those receiving papers in electronic format.

### **Methods of Consultation**

The Department's policy makers widely engage in pre-consultation with representative groups at an early stage in the consultation process. This is generally informal. Final policy proposals are generally subject to formal written consultation exercises.

The initial commitment to consult all groups on the consultee list in all equality related exercises proved difficult to implement and ineffective. Early in the five-year period the Department moved to a more targeted approach to consultation. This involves the provision of full documentation to the main groups likely to have an interest in the policy and copies of the Executive Summary only to the other organisations on the consultation list. These have the option of requesting full copies of the documents.

Recent meetings with Section 75 representative groups have affirmed that targeting consultation and using means of consultation other than paper exercises have improved communication and consultation with stakeholders.

The Department has taken steps to adopt other means of consultation to supplement written documentation. During consultation for the Accessible Transport Strategy, the Department invited representative groups to workshops and presentations. This was commended by groups and has been disseminated to policymakers in other areas of the Department as an example of good practice.

## **Further Steps to Develop levels of Engagement and Consultation**

The Department plans to make full use of electronic consultation and is developing the Consultation Zone on the Department's website to improve electronic access to, and encourage comment on, departmental policy issues

The Department will continue to amend and improve consultation lists and the range of consultation options and procedures as Best Practice is promulgated through OFMDFM and Equality Practitioner Group meetings.

The Department has developed a system to enable Section 75 groups to self-select the policies on which they wish to engage. It is hoped to use this system to encourage policy makers to focus on these groups during pre-consultation and in doing so also to use them to help identify the optimum approach to formal consultation.

**2d)** To what extent did your authority consult directly with directly affected individuals as well as with representative groups, particularly in relation to young people and those with learning disabilities, and was this sufficient?

*Prompt – How effective was your authority at providing feedback to consultees as a result of consultation exercises? What were the lessons learnt in terms of enablers and impediments to consulting directly with affected individuals? What could your authority do in future to provide effective consultee feedback?*

**(Enter text below)**

### **Consultation with Representative Groups and Individuals**

The Department has established a Section 75 Forum that meets bi-annually. The Forum consists of policymakers and Section 75 representative groups who meet to discuss policy development and equality issues. It has fostered good personal working relationships between policy officials and Section 75 representatives. Presentations to the Forum are two way to ensure a mutual appreciation of the issues within and outside Government. The Forum has played a key role on the development of departmental advice on accessibility of information.

Policymakers have been involved in workshops, presentations and face-to-face meetings with various Section 75 representative groups and affected individuals at both pre and formal consultation stages.

The Department's Guide to Making Information Accessible has proved useful for staff involved in consultation in considering how best to communicate with Section 75 groups, including young people and those with learning disabilities. However, given the range of the Department's policies, direct engagement with young people and those with a learning disability has been limited. There has been a tendency to over-rely on representative groups which attend the Forum such as Mencap and Youthnet. This issue will be considered further by the Department's Equality Working Group.

The Department will also look at ways to maximise the use of the 'Consultation Zone' on the Department's website, which has created an alternative means of communication with representative groups including young people. The website has recently been successfully assessed and audited for accessibility compliance.

### **Feedback to Consultees.**

All of the Department's EQIAs are quality assured by the Equality Unit, which advises policymakers to follow Best Practice guidance and provide a detailed response to the main points raised during consultations.

Representative groups have indicated that Public Authorities are not good at providing feedback following consultation. However, it is felt that DRD may be an exception. Most consultation reports contain a section which identifies the main points raised, the organisation which made it and provides a Government response to each point.

All groups or individuals who comment on a draft EQIA are sent copies of the final EQIA. Others on the consultation list usually receive a copy of the Executive Summary. Final EQIA decisions are also reviewed in the Equality Forum.

All consultation analysis has been carried out in-house by the policy makers involved; consultants have not been used. The Equality Unit monitors Best Practice on consultee feedback and will ensure that a high standard is maintained in this area.

### **3. The authority's arrangements for assessing and consulting on the impact of policies adopted or proposed to be adopted on the promotion of equality of opportunity.**

**3a)** Outline and discuss the number of policies your authority subject to screening over the past five years, setting out the number and percentage of 'policies screened in' on the basis of equality considerations and the percentage 'screened in' on the basis of the Good Relations duty.

*Prompt - What were the lessons learnt in terms of enablers and impediments to screening in terms of, screening criteria and priority factors? Are there any other criteria which could usefully be included? What lessons are there regarding responsibility for screening at regional level and subsequent screening of local policy? What could your authority do in future to ensure effective screening arrangements? Set out in an appendix a list of all policies screened out during scheme implementation.*

**(Enter text below)**

#### **Number of Policies Screened**

Over the past five years 79 policies (see Annex A) have been subject to screening. As a result 23 (29%) have been screened in for Equality Impact Assessment on the basis of equality considerations. No policies have been screened in on the basis of Good Relations.

#### **Enablers**

A screening template was developed at the outset for use throughout the Department. This template ensured that a consistent approach to screening was maintained using set questions/criteria and that decisions were clearly recorded and explained. The template was revised in 2005 to take account of the Revised Guidance for Implementing Section 75.

All screening decisions are quality assured and monitored by the Department's Equality Unit.

#### **Impediments**

The Department has found that availability of appropriate data for certain categories has proved an impediment to screening. It has

proved difficult to obtain quantitative data on sexual orientation for the screening of both internal and external policies. Regulations set by employment law have also limited the quantitative data available for religion and political opinion when screening internal policies. However contact with relevant Section 75 groups and Trade Unions has proved to be a means of obtaining qualitative data to compensate.

The screening criteria are very broad and it can be difficult to decide whether an EQIA is required, particularly for low-level policies. Clearer Guidance on the 'significance' test which leads to full EQIA would be welcome.

The absence to date of detailed guidance on the Good Relations Duty has made screening difficult. That said, the Department's policies do not have a major impact on Good Relations.

### **Other Criteria**

To ensure a focus on the most important policies consideration could be given to the use of the priority factors as part of a significance test in making the decision on whether or not to proceed to final EQIA.

### **Screening at Regional and Local level**

The Department would welcome further guidance on the screening of high-level strategies. The main regional policy the Department has introduced during the implementation of the Equality Scheme has been the Regional Development Strategy. The assessment of such a high level policy has proved to be more meaningful when implemented through the underlying policies of the RDS, such as local area plans.

### **More Effective Screening Arrangements**

Greater pre-consultation during screening exercises is important. Section 75 consultees have also requested early publication of screening results and to be consulted and involved during the process of policy development and screening rather than when a screening exercise has been completed.

Consultation with stakeholders has also identified the need for a clear appeals mechanism other than judicial review or contacting the Commission. This appeals mechanism could then be utilised by stakeholders or individuals who disagree with the results of a screening exercise.

The system for publishing and consulting on screening decisions is at an early stage. Without pre-consultation problems may emerge with the biannual nature of the exercise particularly if a decision made early in the cycle were challenged. This area may require further consideration.

**3b)** To what extent did your authority's consideration of the screening criteria **not** identify equal opportunity implications on any of s75 categories, but for which consultees then highlighted problems?

*Prompt –Identify the extent the collection of quantitative and qualitative data informed screening processes. Outline the extent consultations with representative groups produced data to inform the screening process which was not otherwise available to your authority. Outline any difficulties in identifying policies and equality implications using the definition of policy set out in the Guide to the Statutory Duties.*

**(Enter text below)**

### **Data and Screening**

All policy development has a strong evidence base and data focus. This data is utilised fully in the screening process with additional data collected, where necessary.

No data has been produced by consultation with representative groups to inform the screening process which was not otherwise available to the Department.

The Department has yet to receive any feedback from screening forms. However, the formal publication of screening results is at an early stage i.e. since the issue of the revised Section 75 Guidance for implementing Section 75 in early 2005.

## Definition of Policy

The definition of policy set out in the Guide to the Statutory Duties is deemed to be too wide ranging. Consultation with stakeholders confirmed that a clearer definition of 'policy' is necessary. The need for consultation on policies where stakeholders will have little influence was also questioned i.e. EU led directives.

**3c)** Outline over the past five years how many EQIAs your authority commenced as a result of i) initial screening and ii) as a result of screening new/revised policies subsequently, and discuss the extent that your authority has become more effective at identifying equality of opportunity dimensions in its policies.

*Prompt – Were changes made to the screening process?*

*Outline any examples of any changes made to policies to better promote equality of opportunity and/or good relations, rather than to address any perceived differential impact, as a result of screening policies that were 'screened out'?*

**(Enter text below)**

## EQIAs

Initial screening carried out at the beginning of the Equality Scheme identified 15 policies that were programmed for EQIA. Three policies were removed. The Operation and Delivery of Bus and Rail Services and Operational Transport Planning were subsumed in the RTS and Fares Pricing Policy became the responsibility of NITHC when it developed its Equality Scheme in 2005. EQIAs have been completed on eight of the 12 remaining policies and are currently underway for the other four.

EQIAs have been carried out on a further six new/revised policies and three other new EQIAs are programmed or underway.

## Screening Process

There is no doubt that, over time, the Department has become more confident and effective at identifying equality of opportunity dimensions to policies. This is due to the maintenance of a stable and experienced Equality Unit at the centre of the Department and the development of a cadre of officers experienced in equality issues across Agencies and Divisions. Increased knowledge and

experience has also developed in policy divisions with senior officers' involvement in screening exercises increasingly evident.

The screening template was introduced at an early stage to ensure a consistent and systematic approach. It has been revised to take account of the revised Guidance on the Implementation of Section 75 issued by the Equality Commission early in 2005. The Department now issues to Equality Scheme Consultees on a bi-annual basis details of new policies screened out. Stakeholders have criticised the retrospective nature of consultation on screening decisions. The Department would be happy to review decisions if significant evidence were submitted. Generally, however, we proceed to full EQIA on cases where the screening results are marginal. This may be why screening exercises have not been subject to serious challenge so far.

### **Changes made to Policies Screened Out**

Following consultation carried out alongside the screening of the Review of Controlled Pedestrian Crossings Procedures, which was subsequently screened out, suggestions from consultees were accommodated in the final policy document. These changes included: some textural changes to reflect the associated subtleties with referencing people with disabilities; the definition of children to reflect the legal definition; the inclusion of a paragraph recommending liaison with local interest groups who represent people with disabilities; and the inclusion of a reference to the Department for Transport's 'Inclusive Mobility' document.

In addition, a decision was taken in the course of the screening exercise on a proposal to refuse domestic septic tank emptying services, carried out by Water Service, to properties which failed to meet Health and Safety criteria. It was decided to introduce alternative machinery which would minimise the numbers of properties which might have been denied the service.

**3d)** Outline over the past five year period the percentage of your authority's initial EQIA timetable that reached i) stage 6 of the EQIA process i.e. decision making, and ii) stage 7 of the EQIA process i.e. annual monitoring & publication of results, and indicate the extent that your authority has become more effective at progressing EQIAs.

*Prompt – Explain any slippage that occurred and what was done to rectify it. To what extent did you notify representative groups of this slippage and what was their reaction? What were the lessons learnt in terms of enablers and impediments to monitoring EQIAs?*

**(Enter text below)**

## **Progress**

Of the Department's initial EQIA timetable some 66% (8 out of 12 of the policies) have reached stage 6 of the EQIA process.

Some 59% (7 out of 12) of policies originally identified for EQIA have progressed to Stage 7 of the EQIA process.

## **Slippage**

As the Equality Scheme has developed some slippage has been evident in the completion of EQIAs both in terms of the original Equality Scheme Programme and Annual Programmes. This slippage has occurred for a variety of reasons including delays in policy development due to other factors. The inexperience of those involved in the development of the Scheme also led to the establishment of overambitious targets that proved difficult to achieve. The designation of the Northern Ireland Transport Holding Company (NITHC) also resulted in changes to the EQIA timetable. It has not proved helpful to have had the initial timetable set so far ahead.

Representative groups have been informed of EQIA progress and subsequent slippage through the Department's Section 75 Forum and Annual Reports. The Department has received no formal complaints or criticism as a result of slippage. Internally, quarterly and annual progress reports to Senior Officials contain targets for EQIA completion and explanations of delays.

## **Lessons Learned**

The Department has now completed 14 EQIAs, most in 2004/05 and 2005/06. This is testimony to the Department's growing effectiveness in progressing EQIAs.

Policy making is a lengthy process which can be subject to slippage. The Department encourages engagement with stakeholders at all stages and considers that it is important to take the time to ensure that policy proposals are equitable and effective. The Department has developed a rolling EQIA programme which is reviewed and updated quarterly with progress reported to senior officers and Ministers. This maintains a strong focus on progress without the onus of unrealistic targets.

#### **4. The authority's arrangements for monitoring any adverse impact of policies adopted by the authority on the promotion of equality of opportunity.**

**4a)** To what extent were sufficient arrangements put in place to collect data relating to the nine equality categories to monitor the impact of policies and what could your authority do in future to develop monitoring arrangements?

*Prompt - What were the lessons learnt in terms of enablers and impediments to monitoring and developing new/additional quantitative data over the past five years? Did your authority consult its own employees or collaborate with other authorities to collect data? Did your authority engage with representative groups to develop monitoring arrangements?*

**(Enter text below)**

#### **Data Collection**

The Department has put in place a range of arrangements to source and/or collect data relating to Section 75. The Department's Statistician is a member of the Equality and Social Needs Research and Information Group (ESNRIG) which meets to assess and guide the collection and use of Section 75 data. The Department contributes to the ESNRIG research budget. The OFMDFM Review Report will provide full details of the work on monitoring carried out under the auspices of the ESNRIG Research and Information Strategy.

The Department's Statistician works closely with the Equality Unit to ensure that data availability and requirements are identified at the start of the screening process and, where appropriate, tracked through the EQIA to annual monitoring reports.

Data has been collected from a range of sources including staff surveys, other Departments and Public Authorities. Data prepared by Queen's University on water affordability was a key consideration in the final EQIA on Water Reform.

The Department consults with Community Transport Partnerships when collecting monitoring data for related policies.

In liaison with the Equality Forum, the Department has set up a formal monitoring system for completed EQIAs. The Equality Unit meets with policyholders following the publication of a Final EQIA to discuss how monitoring will take place. A representative from the Department's Statistics Branch also attends these meetings to advise on existing data sources and how additional data might be collected.

## **Impediments**

A main difficulty has been the absence to date of comprehensive guidance on monitoring, in particular how to obtain data on sensitive Section 75 categories such as Political Opinion and Sexual Orientation. In addition, the Department has experienced difficulties in obtaining data - qualitative or quantitative – from representative groups on Sexual Orientation.

Positive outcomes identified in EQIAs have also been difficult to monitor. The lack of central guidance on how to monitor equality implications for multiple identities has proved problematic. The need to consider multiple identities has been highlighted by Section 75 representative groups.

The insufficient consideration given to monitoring requirements in the early EQIAs is causing problems now. With hindsight some of the policies might have been screened out and monitoring in such cases can be regarded as both difficult and pointless.

## **Enablers**

The Department welcomes the Equality Monitoring and Research Project Report published in November 2005. This is a project undertaken on behalf of OFMDFM and the Commission. The purpose of the research is to inform the development of the Commission's guidance on Section 75 monitoring. The report contains some useful points of clarification and sets the scene for the early development of comprehensive guidance on monitoring by the Commission.

**5. The authority's arrangements for publishing the results of equality impact assessments and of monitoring any adverse impact of policies adopted by the authority on the promotion of equality of opportunity.**

**5a)** Indicate the number of reports published outlining the results of EQIAs and monitoring over the past five years, and outline what your authority could do in future in relation to improving the publication of EQIA results and monitoring.

*Prompt – Identify the number of reports that were provided in alternative formats. What were the lessons learnt in terms of enablers and impediments to publishing the results of EQIAs and monitoring?*

**(Enter text below)**

**Publication of EQIA Reports and Monitoring**

The Department has not experienced any problems with the publication of EQIA results or monitoring. In the early years it took time on occasion to get to final EQIA stage. This was largely as a result of inexperience or, in the case of Water Reform, the additional policy development work required to mitigate impacts further.

The 14 final EQIA Reports have all been formally published on the Department's Internet Site and widely circulated to organisations on the consultee list. Major EQIAs have attracted media comment. Details of the assessments have been provided in the four Annual Progress Reports submitted to the Commission. These are also published on the Internet.

Monitoring Reports are included in the Annual Progress Reports and published on the Internet. Apart from the members of the Equality Forum, effort may be required to make Section 75 groups more aware of the existence and location of monitoring reports.

Requests for the provision of EQIAs in alternative formats have been met with the provision of information on audiotape, Braille and computer disc. The number of such requests has been low. No requests have been made for monitoring reports in alternative formats.

**6. A commitment that in making any decision with respect to a policy adopted or proposed to be adopted by it that the public authority shall take into account any equality impact assessment and consultation carried out in relation to the policy.**

**6a)** In terms of the number of EQIAs that reached stage 6 i.e. decision making to what extent were mitigation measures and alternative policies adopted?

*Prompt - Outline the extent to which your authority produced EQIAs that did **not** identify adverse impact on any of s75 categories, but which consultees then gave an indication of adverse impact of s75 category and/or proposed mitigation measures or alternative policies.*

**(Enter text below)**

### **Mitigation Measures and Alternative Policies**

The need for mitigation measures/ alternative policies was considered in each Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) carried out. In some cases, such as the Regional Transportation Strategy and Transport Plans, mitigation measures to balance and minimise equality impacts were built into the policy development process from the outset. In others mitigation was proposed in the draft EQIA as a consequence of the impacts identified. Examples of some mitigation measures/ alternative policies are set out below:

- Mitigation measures were adopted following the EQIA of the Discontinuance of Services on the Antrim Knockmore Railway line. The likely limited differential impact was alleviated by bus substitution.
- Following the consultation process on the RTS Draft EQIA, the Department agreed that research into the transport needs of disabled people would be considered as part of the Accessible Transport Strategy included in the RTS.
- In the draft EQIA on the Regional Development Strategy: Housing Growth Indicators, adjustments were made to proposed figures in some District Council areas in light of equality impacts identified. This policy is currently subject to Public Examination.

## **Additional Impacts/Mitigation Measures identified by Consultees**

The consultation responses to the draft EQIA on Water Reform Domestic Charging Proposals pointed to further impacts on a range of Section 75 Groups arising from affordability. In addition, the mitigation measures, in particular the 25% discount proposal for low-income households, were criticised. In light of the additional impacts, including the additional equality impacts, the Government reviewed and agreed to enhanced protections for low-income households.

**6b)** To what extent did consideration of EQIAs and consultations contribute to a change in policy, as opposed to policy decisions which would probably have been made in any event by your authority?

*Prompt - Set out any key examples. What were the lessons learnt in terms of enablers and impediments to making a decision and taking into account an EQIA and consultation? What could your authority do in future to ensure decision making effectively takes these issues into account?*

**(Enter text below)**

### **Policy Changes**

The Water Reform EQIA was a key example of where consultation and consideration of an EQIA led to a direct and significant change in policy. In this case the protections proposed for low-income households were reviewed and significantly revised to ensure that low-income households should not need to spend more than 3% of their income on water and sewerage services. For many low-income households it would be less than this.

This case illustrated the need for more engagement with stakeholders at the outset on all aspects of policy development, including mitigation measures. This point has been emphasised by Section 75 representative groups and policy makers will be encouraged to engage on all aspects of policy development at the earliest possible stage and to ensure that all appropriate evidence surrounding option development is available to consultees.

Some further examples to changes made to policies on foot of EQIA and consultation are set out below:

- Following the Concessionary Fares EQIA, changes were made to ensure that the Senior Smartpass application process was made as simple and accessible as possible with postal applications, large print and audio versions of the application form and offers of assistance in completion of it. An undertaking was also made to review the Scheme in the context of the Accessible Transport Strategy (ATS).
- During the development of Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 12, there was criticism of the level of engagement with community groups. Community Technical Aid was then employed to engage with groups. Pre-consultation also demonstrated the need for Travellers' specific needs to be covered in the PPS. The Travellers' accommodation policy was amended and clarified in light of comments made in the draft EQIA consultation.
- Consultation on the draft ATS led to a significant number of changes to policies and supporting actions. These changes will benefit all groups. The changes included the establishment of a Mobility and Inclusion Unit, the redrafting and reordering of policy statements and greater focus on accessibility of information.
- A number of issues were identified in the EQIA on the Blue Badge scheme including the level of fees, which would merit separate, further research and consultation.

## **7. The authority's arrangements for training staff on issues relevant to the duties.**

**7a)** To what extent were sufficient arrangements put in place to develop and deliver a training programme in accordance with scheme commitments?

*Prompt - Was the training programme focused on the initial period of scheme implementation or did it effectively cover all five years? To what extent were outside trainers from representative groups used in designing or delivering training? Was focused training for staff in management and roles associated with aspects of scheme implementation provided on an ongoing basis?*

### **Training and Communication Programme**

The Department developed a 5 year training and communication plan that has been reviewed and rolled forward each year in liaison with all business areas and Training Branch.

As part of the annual roll forward of the Training and Communication Plan, the Equality Unit, through the Equality Working Group (EWG), determines the training needs of staff in respect of Equality Awareness, EQIA Methodology and Consultation. A representative from Training Branch is a member of the Department's EWG and attends meetings to provide regular updates on training.

All staff in the management grades Executive Officer Grade II to Deputy Principal have received general equality awareness training, which includes the S75 statutory requirements. EQIA Methodology and Consultation courses are available to all policymaking staff. Senior management have received training through NICS-wide seminars and masterclasses.

The Department through a centralised NICS call off contract, employees Focus Consultancy to deliver training on Equality Impact Assessment and Consultation. Discussions have taken place with Focus Consultancy on the introduction of a revised training package focusing on the Revised Guidance for Implementing Section 75 released by the Equality Commission in February 2005, including screening.

The list of staff directly involved in Equality Impact Assessment and screening who are in need of training is regularly updated and forwarded to Training Branch who arrange training using Focus Consultancy. The content of courses is regularly reviewed and updated to ensure that the training material is current and relevant, and uses the Department's completed EQIAs as examples where possible. To help understand the revised ECNI guidance, the Equality Unit delivered a presentation to the Equality Working Group on the main changes to the Guidance and procedures required to implement them.

Best Practice is promulgated through the Equality and Social Needs Steering Group and inter-departmental equality practitioners' groups. This is then passed on to staff via the internal Equality Working Group. The Equality Unit has also provided presentations and minor training to the Working Group when appropriate.

**7b)** Have all staff received awareness training and what could your authority do in future to deliver an effective training programme?

*Prompt – Does the authority have evidence that over the past five years staff understood their role in implementing the scheme? What were the lessons learnt in terms of enablers and impediments to communication and training?*

### **Training Delivered**

Equality of opportunity and anti-discrimination issues are included in all induction training courses, training courses for new managers and the Management Development Programme being rolled out across DOE, DRD and DCAL over 5 years.

By the end of March 2005, 1880 staff in management grades, Executive Officer to Deputy Principal, had received a half-day general awareness course addressing Section 75 responsibilities.

257 staff had received training on the Methodology of Equality Impact Assessment and Consultation. This specific training has helped raise awareness of issues when carrying out EQIAs.

## **Evidence of Understanding**

A survey of those who received training carried out in 2004/05 indicated that most staff felt that the training provided was relevant and useful.

The Equality Unit has always ensured that Training material is regularly revised to ensure that it remains regular and current. Training has also been supplemented by regular information about the Equality Scheme and EQIAs in the Team Brief, the departmental magazine and material posted on the Intranet site, such as the Equality Scheme, Annual Progress Reports, Complaints Procedure, and the Guide to Making information Accessible.

## **Future Effective Training Programmes**

The Department considers that a major adjustment of training programmes will be required to reflect the progress made so far and focus on the outstanding areas of difficulty, particularly screening and monitoring. Extensive training on monitoring will be required once final guidance is developed by the Commission.

The Equality Unit is already working with Focus Consultancy to help develop a course which will reflect the Revised Guidance and help policymakers with screening.

Additional work will be required to pick up on the issues emerging from this 5 year review. It is expected that more emphasis will be placed on Best Practice approaches with internal fora such as the Equality Working Group increasingly used to disseminate Best Practice and develop understanding of issues.

## **8. The authority's arrangements for ensuring and assessing public access to information and to services provided by the authority.**

**8a)** To what extent were sufficient arrangements put in place to ensure and assess public access to information and to services provided by the authority?

*Prompt - Was an audit of information provision undertaken? To what extent did you provide accessible formats without specific requests? What were the lessons learnt in terms of enablers and impediments to ensuring and assessing public access to information and to services? What could your authority do in future to ensure equality of opportunity in public access to information and to services?*

### **Access to Information and Services**

An audit was carried out in March 2001 to establish the effectiveness of departmental systems and policies for making information accessible to socially excluded groups.

Drawing on the Good Practice Guide issued by OFMDFM in 2003, the Department developed a 'Guide to Making Information Accessible'. The Guide, which was published in January 2004, was developed in consultation with the Section 75 Equality Forum. It included specific arrangements to monitor access to information provided by the Department and review implementation of the guidance on an annual basis.

The Guide was reviewed in 2005 and amended to reflect Best Practice issues and the views of the Section 75 Equality Forum. A revised Guide issued in July 2005. The 2006 review is underway.

All of the Department's consultation documents are available in large print and name a contact person to whom requests for information in accessible formats may be made. Records are maintained of all material provided in accessible formats.

The provision of information in advance in accessible formats can pose problems over cost and timing. Generally, therefore, accessible formats are provided on request. Advance copies would be prepared on an accessible basis only for those policies targeted at groups likely to experience difficulties accessing

information. For example, an audiotape explanation of the Concessionary Fares Scheme is available.

Regular customer-based surveys are carried out by Roads Service, Water Service and Ports and Public Transport Division. These include equality and accessibility of services and information issues.

On public transport, the Accessible Transport Strategy published in March 2005 aims to provide equitable access to transport services, infrastructure and information. In addition the uptake of transport schemes funded by the Department is monitored closely to ensure that any access difficulties are identified and remedied as quickly as possible.

The Department's website has been developed as an alternative means of communication and for the provision of information. The website was revamped and relaunched in 2005 to include a Consultation Zone which places consultations in a prominent place (i.e. as a key feature of the website). This recently revised site was externally audited for accessibility compliance. The site achieved the accessibility standards required by the independent assessor.

The Department's Rural Transport website was the first NICS site to obtain a Triple A accreditation for accessibility.

Increased awareness of the needs of S75 groups through consultation and monitoring of correspondence and complaints is key to ensuring equality of opportunity in access to the Department's information and services.

## **9. The authority's timetable for measures proposed in the scheme.**

**9a)** Outline the extent to which measures set out in the original timetable have been implemented. Any detailed information should be included as an appendix to the report.

*Prompt – Update any progress previously reported as underway or delayed. Has a mechanism been developed to report by exception i.e. on specific issues that have not been progressed?*

### **Implementation of Timetable**

The timetable for the measure proposed in the scheme has been largely adhered to, albeit with some slippage and adjustment to the EQIA timetable. An update is set out in Annex B.

The Department's monitoring/progress reporting arrangements have tended to focus more on new policies and initiatives, using in-year programmes as opposed to the Equality Scheme timetable. No mechanism has been developed to report by exception, i.e., on specific issues that have not been progressed.

**9b)** If your authority was to be reconstituted in the next five years what would be the main scheme actions/equality considerations that an incoming authority should address? Any detailed information should be included as an appendix to the report.

*Prompt – Outline what arrangements could be put in place to transfer equality scheme knowledge.*

### **Changes to the Department**

Over the next few years major changes are anticipated to the Department. Water and Sewerage services will be delivered by a self-financing Government-Owned Company, Northern Ireland Water Limited, from 1 April 2007. Under the Review of Public Administration, responsibility for local roads and a role in the planning of bus services will pass to Local Government by 2009. Under the 1998 Northern Ireland Act, NIWL will be a public authority and will have to produce an Equality Scheme. Issues to be considered will include accessibility of information, standards of service, metering proposals and charging and debt recovery

procedures. Equality Scheme knowledge within Water Service will transfer to the NIWL.

It is too early to predict the RPA implications on departmental structures and operations or to identify any associated equality considerations. These will be kept under review.

## **10. Details of how the scheme will be published.**

**10a)** Were scheme commitments in this section delivered and what evidence supports this view?

### **Publication of Scheme**

Equality Scheme Commitments to publish the Scheme were fully met with the circulation of the approved scheme to all consultees, in February 2001, the posting of the Scheme on the Internet, an advertisement in the three daily papers in March 2001, and the circulation of a summary of the scheme to all departmental staff. All action taken is clearly recorded in the Department's Action Plan, which is updated every quarter.

## 11. The authority's arrangements for dealing with complaints arising from a failure to comply with the scheme.

**11a)** Outline the number and nature of complaints received by your authority, and what your authority could do in future to develop its complaints handling process and learn from complaints.

*Prompt – Outline the nature of complaints and scheme element e.g. screening, consultation. What effect did complaints have on the operation of your scheme?*

The Department received seven formal Section 75 complaints during the period of the Scheme. Many of the complaints were not well founded; three related to the failure to include women age 60-64 in the Concessionary Fares Scheme. This would not be possible under the Sex Discrimination (NI) Order. Details of all complaints are set out below:

Complainant	Date	Nature of Complaint	Action Taken
1. Equality Commission	June 2001	Legislation proposal – Failure to adhere to consultation commitments set out in the Equality Scheme.	Clarified with the EC the Department's approach to its consultation on the legislation proposal
2. The Omnibus Partnership	Oct 2001	Conference arrangements failed to comply with Department's Equality Scheme	The points raised were noted and a full response issued to The Omnibus Partnership
3. EC on behalf of unidentified citizen	Mar 2002	Difficulty regarding application process for senior smartpass.	Clarified with the EC the background to the application process.
4. North Belfast Senior Citizens Forum on behalf of unidentified citizen	Jan 2004	Issue over women aged between 60 and 64 not being included in the Concessionary Fares Scheme.	Complainant advised that to have different eligibility ages for women and men would contravene the Sex Discrimination (NI) Order 1976.
5. Member of the public.	July 2004	Complainant felt that the Concessionary Fares Scheme had an adverse impact on women in the 60-64 age group.	The Minister whilst sympathetic took the view that any additional resources should in the first instance be used to improve public transport for everyone rather than subsidised travel for a

			limited number.
6. Northern Ireland Public Service Alliance (NIPSA)	July 2004	NIPSA felt the failure of the Dept. to conduct an EQIA on Water Service's Alpha PPP Project was in breach of statutory duty.	Dept confirmed a screening exercise would take place and advised that an overarching EQIA on PPP projects had been carried out by OFMDFM.
7. Equality Commission	Nov 2004	EQIA consultation – Failure to take into account the concerns raised in the Consultation by the EC and a Pensioners' Associations.	Further to investigation, the EC responded finding that a failure to comply with the Department's Equality Scheme had not been established.

In August 2002 the Department issued comprehensive guidance for staff and the public on the Complaints Procedure for S75 issues. The Complaints Procedure was reviewed and updated in 2004/05.

**12. A commitment to conducting a review of the scheme within five years of its submission to the Equality Commission and to forwarding a report of this review to the Equality Commission.**

**12a)** What has been your authority's experience of conducting this review? To what extent has the Commission's guidance been useful in undertaking the review?

**Review Experience**

The Review has provided a welcome and timely opportunity to reflect on progress and to identify, with stakeholders, the problems and issues which have to be addressed in the future.

The Commission's Guidance has been useful in helping the Department to carry out the review and engage with stakeholders. However, in adhering to the template provided, it was difficult to avoid repetition and duplication of evidence. Unless a fresh template is developed, this is also likely to be a feature of the 2005/06 Progress Report, due later in the year.

The main issues emerging from the Review, in particular the difficulties in handling Good Relations, screening multiple impacts, data gaps and monitoring are likely to be common to all public authorities and will help to inform future work on Section 75, individually and collectively.

**Policies Screened out during 5 year period.**

2001-02

Winter Gritting  
Grass Cutting  
Railway Safety Bill  
Subordinate Legislation: Belfast/Derry/Warrenpoint Harbour Orders  
Shorts Harbours Bill  
Strategic Planning Bill

2002-03

Street Works (Recovery of Costs) Regulations (NI) 2003  
Airport Byelaws (Designation) Order  
The River Bann Navigation Order and Londonderry Port and Harbour (Variation of Pilotage Limits) Order.  
The Bangor (Harbour Area) Order (NI)  
The Groomsport (Harbour Area) Order (NI)  
The Ballycastle (Harbour Area) Order (NI)  
The Rathlin (Harbour Area) Order (NI)  
Procurement Strategy Review (Construction)  
Water Resource Strategy  
Provision of Road Restraint Systems on Retaining Walls and the Like  
DRD Publication Scheme  
NI Walking Action Plan  
Alleygating Schemes

2003-04

Proposed Bangor, Groomsport, Ballycastle, Rathlin (Harbour Area) Orders  
Use of Bus Lanes by Motor Cycles  
DRD Stress Management Policy  
Statutory Procedures involved in the Development of Road Schemes  
Decriminalised Parking Enforcement  
Road Safety Engineering Policy  
Review of Controlled Pedestrian Crossings Procedures

2004-05

Transport Assessment Guidelines for Development Proposals in NI  
Review of Tourist Signing Policy  
Draft Street Works (Records) Regulations (NI) 2003  
Strangford Lough Ferry Service Fare Review  
The Traffic Signs (Amendment) Regulations (NI) 2004  
Pedestrian Crossings Regulations (NI) 2004  
Direction Signs Policy  
Roads Service Design/ Build/ Finance/ Operate Programme – Packages 1&2  
Rural Dual Carriageways – Provision of right/u-turn facilities

Street Works (Amendment) Order 2006  
Draft Street Works (Reinstatement) (Amendment) Regulations (NI) 2004  
Roads Service Emergency Response (RSERP) – Part 1  
The Traffic Weight Restriction (Amendment) Order (NI) 2005  
The Roads (Restriction of Waiting) Order (NI) 2005  
Septic tank emptying policy  
Economic and Consumer Regulation proposals  
Customer Representation proposals  
Non-Domestic charging  
Rationalisation of Telemetry Operations  
RSC – Professional Services Consultancy Contract

#### 2005-06

Safer Routes to School – Accelerated Programme  
Pilot Traffic Management Studies  
Roads Maintenance Standards for Safety  
On – Off Street Parking Orders and Parking Concessions for the Disabled  
DPE – Transfer of Staff  
Street Works (Inspection Fees) Regulations (NI) 2005  
Water Service – Voluntary Early Retirement scheme for Grade 6 and 7 Professional & Technical and scientific staff  
Water Service - Accounts Payable Centralisation  
Draft Street Works (Reinstatement) (Amendment) Regulations (NI) 2004  
Water Reform – Economic and Consumer regulation  
Water Reform – Customer Representation  
Water Reform – Reform of non-domestic charging

#### **Completed EQIAs from Initial Scheme.**

Review of Concessionary Fares  
Rural Transport Fund  
Regional Planning Policy Statement on Housing (PPS 12)  
Provision of Pedestrian Facilities  
Operation and Management of Car Parks  
Regional Planning Policy Statement on Transportation and Land Use (PPS 13)  
Regional Transportation Strategy  
Transport Programme for People with Disabilities

#### **Additional EQIAs completed during 5 year period**

Proposed Discontinuance of Services on Antrim Knockmore Railway Line  
Review of Blue Badge Scheme  
Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan  
Regional Strategic Transport Network Transport Plan  
Accessible Transport Strategy  
Water Service Reform

### **Ongoing EIAs identified during 5 year period**

Regional Planning Policy Statement on retailing and town centres (PPS 5)  
Regional Development Strategy – Housing Growth Indicators  
Regional Planning Policy Statement on Sustainable Development in the Coastal Zone (PPS 20)  
Sub-Regional Transport Plan  
Regional Planning Policy Statement on Planning in the Countryside (PPS 14)  
Reform and Rationalisation of Water Service

### **EIAs covered in other policies**

Operation and delivery of bus and rail services (covered by Regional Transport Strategy)  
Operational Transport Planning (covered by Regional Transport Strategy)  
Households not connected to mains water or sewerage (covered by Water Reform)

## Annex B

Equality Scheme Timetable		Progress at February 2006
Year 1	Review of Concessionary Fares Scheme Rural Transport Fund Regional Planning Policy Statement on Housing Fares Pricing Policy	Completed April 2004 Completed February 2005 Completed July 2005 Now the responsibility of NITHC - Equality Scheme published in July 2004
Year 2	Operation and delivery of bus and rail services Operational Transport Planning Provision of Pedestrian Facilities Operation and Management of Car Parks Regional Planning Policy Statement on Transport Regional Planning Policy Statement on Retail Regional Transportation Strategy Transport Programme for People with Disabilities Households not connected to mains water or sewerage	Policy subsumed in the Regional Transportation Strategy Policy subsumed in the Regional Transportation Strategy Completed April 2004 Completed July 2004 Completed February 2005 Minister considering action in light of Judicial Review Completed July 2002 Completed September 2004 Policy review currently underway
Year 3	Regional Planning Policy Statement on Rural Areas	Draft EQIA to be issued in March 2006
Year 4	No assessments	
Year 5	Regional Development Strategy; including Housing Growth Indicators (HGI)	Draft EQIA of HGI published in January 2005. Public Examination underway. Screening of remainder of RDS underway.
Monitoring Arrangements		Completed 2001 and detailed monitoring system established in 2003/04.
Arrangements for Providing Information to the public		Audit carried out in March 2001. Accessible Guidance published 2004 and reviewed in 2005.
Training		Achieved
Specialist Training		Achieved