

Summary of DRD Equality Scheme - 2011- 2016

The DRD new Equality Scheme has been developed in accordance with the Equality Commission's new Guide for Public Authorities on Section 75 and Schedule 9 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. It was approved by the Equality Commission on 9 August 2011.

The Act requires the Department in carrying out its functions, powers and duties to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity:

- between persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status or sexual orientation;
- between men and women generally;
- between persons with a disability and persons without; and
- between persons with dependants and persons without.

It also needs to have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group.

A copy of the full Equality Scheme, Audit of Inequalities and Action Plan can be accessed at:

<http://applications.drdni.gov.uk/publications/document.asp?docid=22552>

The Scheme comprises 10 chapters which set out the Department's arrangements for assessing compliance with these Section 75 duties, including arrangements for screening, monitoring and consulting on policies.

The Scheme also provides details of staff training together with arrangements for ensuring and assessing public access to information and services we provide. It includes a complaints procedure and arrangements for publication and review.

An Audit of Inequalities and Action Plan have also been developed to address and monitor progress in the Department's functions which have greatest relevance to Section 75 groups.

Appendix 4 of the Scheme sets out a timetable for the full range of measures proposed to ensure our commitments are met. These will be monitored and reported on regularly to the Departmental Board. An Annual Progress Report will also be completed and submitted to the Equality Commission. The Equality Scheme will be reviewed within five years.

Screening and Equality Impact Assessments are key tools for mainstreaming Section 75 issues into policy development and service delivery.

The attached links, which are available to DRD staff, provide access to the new screening form and the guidance developed by the Equality Unit to assist those who have to complete screening forms.

Screening Form:

http://drdinsite.intranet.nigov.net/new_section_75_screening_form.doc

Department's Guide:

http://drdinsite.intranet.nigov.net/screening_process_guide_draft_2.doc