

Equality Scheme

Children's Court Guardian Agency for NI

Drawn up in accordance with Section 75 and Schedule 9 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998

This document is available in a range of formats on request. Please contact us with your requirements.

Jennifer Ferguson
Head of Corporate Services
Children's Court Guardian Agency for NI
James House
2-4 Cromac Avenue
Gasworks
Belfast
BT7 2JD

Telephone: 0300 555 0102
Email: admin@ccgani.hscni.net

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Foreword

Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 (the Act) requires public authorities, in carrying out their functions relating to Northern Ireland, to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity and regard to the desirability of promoting good relations across a range of categories outlined in the Act¹.

In our equality scheme we set out how the Children's Court Guardian Agency proposes to fulfil the Section 75 statutory duties.

We will commit the necessary resources in terms of people, time and money to make sure that the Section 75 statutory duties are complied with and that the equality scheme is implemented effectively, and on time.

We commit to having effective internal arrangements in place for ensuring our compliance with the Section 75 statutory duties and for monitoring and reviewing our progress.

We will develop and deliver a programme of communication and training with the aim of ensuring that all our staff and board members are made fully aware of our equality scheme and understand the commitments and obligations within it. We will develop a programme of awareness raising for our consultees on the Section 75 statutory duties and our commitments in our equality scheme.

We, the Chair and Chief Executive of the Children's Court Guardian Agency, are fully committed to effectively fulfilling our Section 75 statutory duties across all our functions (including service provision, employment and procurement) through the effective implementation of our equality scheme.

¹ See section 1.1 of our Equality Scheme.

We realise the important role that the community and voluntary sector and the general public have to play to ensure the Section 75 statutory duties are effectively implemented. Our equality scheme demonstrates how determined we are to ensure there are opportunities, for people affected by our work, to positively influence how we carry out our functions in line with our Section 75 statutory duties. It also offers the means whereby persons directly affected by what they consider to be a failure, on our part, to comply with our equality scheme, can make complaints.

On behalf of the Children's Court Guardian Agency and our staff we are pleased to support and endorse this equality scheme which has been drawn up in accordance with Section 75 and Schedule 9 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and Equality Commission guidelines.

Gemma Loughran, Chair

Edel McKenna, Chief Executive Officer

Date: 2 July 2026

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998

- 1.1 Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 (the Act) requires the Children's Court Guardian Agency to comply with two statutory duties:

Section 75 (1)

In carrying out our functions relating to Northern Ireland we are required 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
- men and women generally
- persons with a disability and persons without
- persons with dependants and persons without.

Section 75 (2)

In addition, without prejudice to the obligations above, in carrying out our functions in relation to Northern Ireland we are required to have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group.

“Functions” include the “powers and duties” of a public authority². This includes our employment and procurement functions. Please see below under “Who we are and what we do” for a detailed explanation of our functions.

² Section 98 (1) of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

How we propose to fulfil the Section 75 duties in relation to the relevant functions of the Children's Court Guardian Agency

- 1.2 Schedule 9 4. (1) of the Act requires the Children's Court Guardian Agency as a designated public authority to set out in an equality scheme how it proposes to fulfil the duties imposed by Section 75 in relation to its relevant functions. This equality scheme is intended to fulfil that statutory requirement. It is both a statement of our arrangements for fulfilling the Section 75 statutory duties and our plan for their implementation.
- 1.3 The Children's Court Guardian Agency is committed to the discharge of our Section 75 obligations in all parts of our organisation and we will commit the necessary available resources in terms of people, time and money to ensure that the Section 75 statutory duties are complied with and that our equality scheme can be implemented effectively.

Who we are and what we do

- 1(a) Ensure the independent representation of the wishes and feelings and safeguard the best interests of the children and young people who are the subject of court proceedings.
- (b) Appoint solicitors to work in tandem with guardians in public law cases under The Children (NI) Order 1995 and in relevant proceedings under The Adoption (NI) Order 1987.
2. Improve service provision by providing the opportunity for continuous professional development and the enhancement of knowledge and skills for all staff members.

3. Regularly seek the views of users of the service and key stakeholders in order to improve standards of practice and inform service development.
4. Corporate Governance (Information Governance, ICT, Finance, Procurement, Risk Management, Health and Safety, Controls Assurance).
5. Human Resources (recruitment and selection, employee relations, policy development)

Chapter 2: Our arrangements for assessing our compliance with the section 75 duties (Schedule 9 4. (2)2 (a))

- 2.1 Some of our arrangements for assessing our compliance with the Section 75 statutory duties are outlined in other sections of this equality scheme, including our monitoring arrangements (chapter 4), assessment of impact of policies (chapter 4), consultation (chapter 3), publication (chapter 9), and complaints (chapter 8).

In addition, we have the following arrangements in place for assessing our compliance:

Responsibilities and reporting:

- 2.2 We are committed to the fulfilment of our Section 75 obligations in all aspects of our work.
- 2.3 Responsibility for the effective implementation of our equality scheme lies with the Executive Director. The Executive Director is accountable to the Children's Court Guardian Agency's Board for the development, implementation, maintenance and review of the equality scheme in accordance with Section 75 and Schedule 9 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, including any good practice or guidance that has been or may be issued by the Equality Commission.
- 2.4 If you have any questions or comments regarding our equality scheme, please contact in the first instance Jennifer Ferguson at the address given below and we will respond to you as soon as possible:

Children's Court Guardian Agency for NI
James House
2-4 Cromac Avenue
Gasworks
Belfast
BT7 2JD

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- 2.5 Objectives and targets relating to the statutory duties will be integrated into our strategic and operational business plans³.
- 2.6 Employees' job descriptions and performance plans reflect their contribution to the discharge of the Section 75 statutory duties and implementation of the equality scheme, where relevant. The personal performance plans are subject to appraisal in the annual performance review.
- 2.7 The Children's Court Guardian Agency prepares an annual report on the progress made on implementing the arrangements set out in this equality scheme to discharge our Section 75 statutory duties (Section 75 annual progress report).

The Section 75 annual progress report will be sent to the Equality Commission by 31 August each year and will follow any guidance on annual reporting issued by the Equality Commission.

Progress on the delivery of Section 75 statutory duties will also be included in the Children's Court Guardian Agency's annual report.

³ See Appendix 4 'Timetable for measures proposed' and section 2.11 of this equality scheme.

- 2.8 The latest Section 75 annual progress report is available on our website <https://childrenscourtguardianagency.ni.co.uk/> or by contacting:

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- 2.9 The Children's Court Guardian Agency will liaise closely with the Equality Commission to ensure that progress on the implementation of our equality scheme is maintained.
- 2.10 The Business Services Organisation has in place further arrangements for taking forward implementation of its Equality Scheme:
- HSC Organisations Equality Partnership Forum, convened by the Business Services Organisation;
 - Quarterly reporting to Senior Management Team/Board on progress against Service Delivery Plans and Corporate Plan.

Action plan/action measures

- 2.11 The Children's Court Guardian Agency has developed an action plan to promote equality of opportunity and good relations. This action plan does not form part of this equality scheme.
- 2.12 The action measures that make up our action plan are relevant to our functions. They have been developed and prioritised on the basis of an audit of inequalities. The audit of inequalities, which is a living

document, gathered and analysed information across the Section 75 categories⁴ to identify the inequalities that exist for our service users and those affected by our policies⁵.

- 2.13 Action measures are specific, measurable, linked to achievable outcomes, realistic and time bound. Action measures include performance indicators and timescales for their achievement.
- 2.14 Our action plan has been developed for a period of 2 years in order to align with our corporate and business planning cycles. Implementation of the action measures is incorporated into our business planning process.
- 2.15 We will seek input from our stakeholders and consult on our action plan before we send it to the Equality Commission and thereafter when reviewing the plan as per 2.16 below.
- 2.16 We will monitor our progress on the delivery of our action measures annually, or more frequently if new data is received, and update the action plan as necessary to ensure that it remains effective and relevant to our functions and work.
- 2.17 The Children's Court Guardian Agency will inform the Commission of any changes or amendments to our action plan and will also include this information in our Section 75 annual progress report to the Commission. Our Section 75 annual progress report will incorporate information on progress we have made in implementing our action plans/action measures.
- 2.18 Once finalised, our action plan will be available on our website <https://childrenscourtguardianagencyni.co.uk/>. Requests for copies of

⁴ See section 1.1 of this equality scheme for a list of these categories.

⁵ See section 4.1 of this equality scheme for a definition of policies.

the action plan or copies in alternative formats should be made by contacting:

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Chapter 3: Our Arrangements for Consulting

(Schedule 9 4. (2) (a)) - on matters to which a duty (S75 (1) or (2)) is likely to be relevant (including details of the persons to be consulted).

(Schedule 9 4. (2) (b)) on the likely impact of policies adopted or proposed to be adopted by us on the promotion of equality of opportunity.

- 3.1 We recognise the importance of consultation in all aspects of the implementation of our statutory equality duties. We will consult on our equality scheme, action measures, equality impact assessments and other matters relevant to the Section 75 statutory duties.
- 3.2 We are committed to carrying out consultation in accordance with the following principles (as contained in the Equality Commission's guidance 'Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 – A Guide for Public Authorities (April 2010)'):
 - 3.2.1 All consultations will seek the views of those directly affected by the matter/policy, the Equality Commission, representative groups of Section 75 categories, other public authorities, voluntary and community groups, our staff and their trades unions and such other groups who have a legitimate interest in the matter, whether or not they have a direct economic or personal interest.

Initially all consultees (see Appendix 3), as a matter of course, will be notified (by email or post) of the matter/policy being consulted upon to ensure they are aware of all consultations. Thereafter, to ensure the most effective use of our and our consultee resources, we will take a targeted approach to consultation for those consultees that may have a particular interest in the matter/policy being consulted upon and to whom the matter/policy is of particular relevance. This may include for example regional or local consultations, sectoral or thematic consultation.

3.2.2 Consultation with all stakeholders will begin as early as possible. We will engage with affected individuals and representative groups to identify how best to consult or engage with them. We will ask our consultees what their preferred consultation methods are and will give consideration to these. Methods of consultation could include:

- Face-to-face meetings
- Focus groups
- Written documents with the opportunity to comment in writing
- Questionnaires
- Information/notification by email with an opportunity to opt in/opt out of the consultation
- Internet discussions or
- Telephone consultations.

This list is not exhaustive and we may develop other additional methods of consultation more appropriate to key stakeholders and the matter being consulted upon.

3.2.3 We will consider the accessibility and format of every method of consultation we use in order to remove barriers to the consultation process. Specific consideration will be given as to how best to communicate with children and young people, people with disabilities (in particular people with learning disabilities) and minority ethnic communities. We take account of existing and developing good practice, including the Equality Commission's guidance *Let's Talk Let's Listen – Guidance for public authorities on consulting and involving children and young people* (2008).

Information will be made available, on request, in alternative formats⁵, in a timely manner, usually within 10 working days

⁵ See Chapter 6 of our equality scheme for further information on alternative formats of information we provide.

(unless third party timescales dictate otherwise, e.g. translation providers). We will ensure that such consultees have equal time to respond.

3.2.4 Specific training is provided to those facilitating consultations to ensure that they have the necessary skills to communicate effectively with consultees.

3.2.5 To ensure effective consultation with consultees⁶ on Section 75 matters, we will develop a programme of awareness raising on the Section 75 statutory duties and the commitments in our equality scheme by undertaking the following:

- We will include a comprehensive explanation of our statutory duties including commitments made in our Equality Scheme in the consultation documentation, or, where appropriate, alternative steps will be taken to raise such awareness, e.g. public consultation meetings.
- The Agency will produce an accessible document outlining the functions of the organisation and the commitments in our Equality Scheme.
- In addition, we will approach consultees with a proposal for the establishment of an Advisory Group.
- If screening of a particular policy or decision identifies any external stakeholders who may not have the ability to respond to consultation effectively we will engage with the individual(s) in the first instance to find out how to best facilitate their input to the consultation, and where this is not effective or appropriate we will make contact with relevant Section 75

⁶ Please see Appendix 3 for a list of our consultees.

representative groups to find out how best we can encourage their input.

3.2.6 The consultation period lasts for a minimum of twelve weeks to allow adequate time for groups to consult amongst themselves as part of the process of forming a view. However, in exceptional circumstances when this timescale is not feasible (for example implementing EU Directives or UK wide legislation, meeting Health and Safety requirements, addressing urgent public health matters or complying with Court judgements), we may shorten timescales to eight weeks or less before the policy is implemented. We may continue consultation thereafter and will review the policy as part of our monitoring commitments⁷.

Where, under these exceptional circumstances, we must implement a policy immediately, as it is beyond our authority's control, we may consult after implementation of the policy, in order to ensure that any impacts of the policy are considered.

3.2.7 If a consultation exercise is to take place over a period when consultees are less able to respond, for example, over the summer or Christmas break, or if the policy under consideration is particularly complex, we will give consideration to the feasibility of allowing a longer period for the consultation.

3.2.8 We are conscious of the fact that affected individuals and representative groups may have different needs. We will take appropriate measures to ensure full participation in any meetings that are held. We will consider for example the time of day, the appropriateness of the venue, in particular whether it can be accessed by those with disabilities, how the meeting is to be conducted, the use of appropriate language, whether a signer

⁷ Please see below at 4.27 to 4.31 for details on monitoring.

and/or interpreter is necessary, and whether the provision of childcare and support for other carers is required.

3.2.9 We make all relevant information available to consultees in appropriate formats to ensure meaningful consultation. This includes detailed information on the policy proposal being consulted upon and any relevant quantitative and qualitative data.

3.2.10 In making any decision with respect to a policy being adopted or proposed to be adopted, we take into account any assessment and consultation carried out in relation to the policy.

3.2.11 We provide feedback to consultees in a timely manner. A feedback report is prepared which includes summary information on the policy consulted upon, a summary of consultees' comments and a summary of our consideration of and response to consultees' input. The feedback is provided in formats suitable to consultees. (Please see also 6.3)

3.3 A list of our consultees is included in this equality scheme at Appendix 3. It can also be obtained from our website <https://childrenscourtguardianagencyni.co.uk/>. (See Page 9 for contact details).

3.4 Our consultation list is not exhaustive and is reviewed on an annual basis to ensure it remains relevant to our functions and policies.

We welcome enquiries from any person/s or organisations wishing to be added to the list of consultees. Please contact Patricia O'Kane to provide your contact details and have your areas of interest noted or have your name/details removed or amended. Please also inform us at this stage if you would like information sent to you in a particular format or language.

Chapter 4: Our Arrangements for Assessing, Monitoring and Publishing the impact of Policies(Schedule 9 4. (2) (b); Schedule 9 4. (2) (c); Schedule 9 4. (2) (d); Schedule 9 9. (1); Schedule 9 9. (2))

Our arrangements for assessing the likely impact of policies adopted or proposed to be adopted on the promotion of equality of opportunity
(Schedule 9 4. (2) (b))

- 4.1 In the context of Section 75, 'policy' is very broadly defined and it covers all the ways in which we carry out or propose to carry out our functions in relation to Northern Ireland. In respect of this equality scheme, the term policy is used for any (proposed/amended/existing) strategy, policy initiative or practice and/or decision, whether written or unwritten and irrespective of the label given to it, e.g., 'draft', 'pilot', 'high level' or 'sectoral'.
- 4.2 In making any decision with respect to a policy adopted or proposed to be adopted, we take into account any assessment and consultation carried out in relation to the policy, as required by Schedule 9 9. (2) of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.
- 4.3 The Children's Court Guardian Agency uses the tools of **screening** and **equality impact assessment** to assess the likely impact of a policy on the promotion of equality of opportunity and good relations. In carrying out these assessments we will relate them to the intended outcomes of the policy in question and will also follow Equality Commission guidance:
- the guidance on screening, including the screening template, as detailed in the Commission's guidance 'Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 – A Guide for Public Authorities (April 2010)' and

- on undertaking an equality impact assessment as detailed in the Commission's guidance 'Practical guidance on equality impact assessment (February 2005)'.

Screening

- 4.4 The purpose of screening is to identify those policies that are likely to have an impact on equality of opportunity and/or good relations.
- 4.5 Screening is completed at the earliest opportunity in the policy development/review process. Policies which we propose to adopt will be subject to screening prior to implementation. For more detailed strategies or policies that are to be put in place through a series of stages, we will screen at various stages during implementation.
- 4.6 The lead role in the screening of a policy is taken by the policy decision maker who has the authority to make changes to that policy. However, screening will also involve other relevant team members, for example, equality specialists, those who implement the policy and staff members from other relevant work areas. Where possible we will include key stakeholders in the screening process.
- 4.7 The following questions are applied to all our policies as part of the screening process:
- What is the likely impact on equality of opportunity for those affected by this policy, for each of the Section 75 equality categories? (minor/major/none);
 - Are there opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity for people within the Section 75 equality categories?;

- To what extent is the policy likely to impact on good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group? (minor/major/none);
- Are there opportunities to better promote good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group?

4.8 In order to answer the screening questions, we gather all relevant information and data, both qualitative and quantitative. In taking this evidence into account we consider the different needs, experiences and priorities for each of the Section 75 equality categories. Any screening decision will be informed by this evidence.

4.9 Completion of screening, taking into account our consideration of the answers to all four screening questions set out in 4.7 above, will lead to one of the following three outcomes:

1. The policy has been 'screened in' for equality impact assessment
2. The policy has been 'screened out' with mitigation⁸ or an alternative policy proposed to be adopted
3. The policy has been 'screened out' without mitigation or an alternative policy proposed to be adopted.

4.10 If our screening concludes that the likely impact of a policy is 'minor' in respect of one, or more, of the equality of opportunity and/or good relations categories, we may on occasion decide to proceed with an equality impact assessment, depending on the policy. If an EQIA is not to be conducted we will nonetheless consider measures that might mitigate the policy impact as well as alternative policies that might

⁸ Mitigation – Where an assessment (screening in this case) reveals that a particular policy has an adverse impact on equality of opportunity and / or good relations, a public authority must consider ways of delivering the policy outcomes which have a less adverse effect on the relevant Section 75 categories.

better achieve the promotion of equality of opportunity and/or good relations.

Where we mitigate we will outline in our screening template the reasons to support this decision together with the proposed changes, amendments or alternative policy.

This screening decision will be 'signed off' by the appropriate policy lead within the Children's Court Guardian Agency.

- 4.11 If our screening concludes that the likely impact of a policy is 'major' in respect of one, or more, of the equality of opportunity and/or good relations categories, we will normally subject the policy to an equality impact assessment. This screening decision will be 'signed off' by the appropriate policy lead within the Children's Court Guardian Agency.
- 4.12 If our screening concludes that the likely impact of a policy is 'none', in respect of all of the equality of opportunity and/or good relations categories, we may decide to screen the policy out. If a policy is 'screened out' as having no relevance to equality of opportunity or good relations, we will give details of the reasons for the decision taken. This screening decision will be 'signed off' by the appropriate policy lead within the Children's Court Guardian Agency.
- 4.13 As soon as possible following the completion of the screening process, the screening template, signed off and approved by the senior manager responsible for the policy, will be made available on our website <https://childrenscourtguardianagency.ni.co.uk/> (See Page 9 for contact details)
- 4.14 If a consultee, including the Equality Commission, raises a concern about a screening decision based on supporting evidence, we will review the screening decision.

4.15 Our screening reports are published quarterly [see below at 4.20-4.22 and 4.23 for details].

Equality Impact Assessment

4.16 An equality impact assessment (EQIA) is a thorough and systematic analysis of a policy, whether that policy is formal or informal, and irrespective of the scope of that policy. The primary function of an EQIA is to determine the extent of any impact of a policy upon the Section 75 categories and to determine if the impact is an adverse one. It is also an opportunity to demonstrate the likely positive outcomes of a policy and to seek ways to more effectively promote equality of opportunity and good relations.

4.17 Once a policy is screened and screening has identified that an equality impact assessment is necessary, we will carry out the EQIA in accordance with Equality Commission guidance. The equality impact assessment will be carried out as part of the policy development process, before the policy is implemented.

4.18 Any equality impact assessment will be subject to consultation at the appropriate stage(s). (For details see above Chapter 3 “Our Arrangements for Consulting”).

Our arrangements for publishing the results of the assessments of the likely impact of policies we have adopted or propose to adopt on the promotion of equality of opportunity

(Schedule 9 4. (2) (d); Schedule 9 9. (1))

4.19 We make publicly available the results of our assessments (screening and EQIA) of the likely impact of our policies on the promotion of equality of opportunity and good relations.

What we publish

4.20 **Screening reports:** These are published quarterly. Screening reports detail:

- All policies screened by the Children's Court Guardian Agency over the three-month period
- A statement of the aim(s) of the policy/policies to which the assessment relates
- Consideration given to measures which might mitigate any adverse impact
- Consideration given to alternative policies which might better achieve the promotion of equality of opportunity;
- Screening decisions, i.e.:
 - Whether the policy has been 'screened in' for equality impact assessment.
 - Whether the policy has been 'screened out' with mitigation or an alternative policy proposed to be adopted.
 - Whether the policy has been 'screened out' without mitigation or an alternative policy proposed to be adopted.
- Where applicable, a timetable for conducting equality impact assessments
- A link to the completed screening template(s) on our website.

4.21 **Screening templates:** For details on the availability of our screening templates please refer to 4.13.

4.22 **Equality impact assessments:** EQIA reports are published once the impact assessment has been completed. These reports include:

- A statement of the aim of the policy assessed
- Information and data collected
- Details of the assessment of impact(s)

-
- Consideration given to measures which might mitigate any adverse impact
 - Consideration given to alternative policies which might better achieve the promotion of equality of opportunity
 - Consultation responses
 - The decision taken
 - Future monitoring plans.

How we publish the information

4.23 All information we publish is accessible and can be made available in alternative formats on request. Please see 6.3 below.

Where we publish the information

4.24 The results of our assessments (screening reports and completed templates, the results of equality impact assessments) are accessible through our website <https://childrenscourtguardianagency.cyni.co.uk/> (See Page 9 for contact details)

4.25 In addition to the above, screening reports (electronic link or hard copy on request if more suitable for recipients) which include all policies screened over a 3 month period are also sent directly to all consultees on a quarterly basis.

4.26 We will inform the general public about the availability of this material through communications such as press releases where appropriate.

Our arrangements for monitoring any adverse impact of policies we have adopted on equality of opportunity

(Schedule 9 4. (2) (c))

4.27 Monitoring can assist us to deliver better public services and continuous improvements. Monitoring Section 75 information involves the

processing of sensitive personal data (data relating to the racial or ethnic origin of individuals, sexual orientation, political opinion, religious belief, etc). In order to carry out monitoring in a confidential and effective manner, the Children's Court Guardian Agency follows guidance from the Office of the Information Commissioner and the Equality Commission.

- 4.28 We monitor any adverse impact on the promotion of equality of opportunity of policies we have adopted. 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.
- 4.29 The systems we have established to monitor the impact of policies and identify opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity and good relations are:
- The collection, collation and analysis of existing relevant primary quantitative and qualitative data across all nine equality categories on an ongoing basis
 - The collection, collation and analysis of existing relevant secondary sources of quantitative and qualitative data across all nine equality categories on an ongoing basis
 - An audit of existing information systems within one year of approval of this equality scheme, to identify the extent of current monitoring and take action to address any gaps in order to have the necessary information on which to base decisions.
 - Undertaking or commissioning new data if necessary.
- 4.30 If over a two year period monitoring and evaluation show that a policy results in greater adverse impact than predicted, or if opportunities arise

which would allow for greater equality of opportunity to be promoted, we will ensure that the policy is revised to achieve better outcomes for relevant equality groups.

- 4.31 We review our EQIA monitoring information on an annual basis. Other monitoring information is reviewed generally on an annual basis also, unless specified otherwise (for example, if a project has a duration of two years, monitoring information may be reviewed as part of the evaluation after the completion of the project).
- 4.32 Schedule 9 4. (2) (d) requires us to publish the results of the monitoring of adverse impacts of policies we have adopted. However, we are committed to monitoring more broadly and the results of our policy monitoring are published as follows:
- 4.33 EQIA monitoring information is published as part of our Section 75 annual progress report [see 2.7]
- 4.34 Other monitoring information will be made available on our website and sent to consultees with the exception of quantitative monitoring information that may otherwise compromise the identity of individuals (for example if only small numbers of people are involved).
- 4.35 All information published is accessible and can be made available in alternative formats on request. Please see below at 6.3 for details.

Chapter 5: Staff Training

(Schedule 9 4. (2) (e))

Commitment to staff training

- 5.1 We recognise that awareness raising and training play a crucial role in the effective implementation of our Section 75 duties.
- 5.2 Our Executive Director wishes to positively communicate the commitment of the Children's Court Guardian Agency to the Section 75 statutory duties, both internally and externally.

To this end we have introduced an effective communication and training programme for all staff and will ensure that our commitment to the Section 75 statutory duties is made clear in all relevant publications.

Training objectives

- 5.3 The Children's Court Guardian Agency will draw up a detailed training plan for its staff which will aim to achieve the following objectives:
- To raise awareness of the provisions of Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, our equality scheme commitments and the particular issues likely to affect people across the range of Section 75 categories, to ensure that our staff fully understand their role in implementing the scheme.
 - To provide those staff involved in the assessment of policies (screening and EQIA) with the necessary skills and knowledge to do this work effectively
 - To provide those staff who deal with complaints in relation to compliance with our equality scheme with the necessary skills and knowledge to investigate and monitor complaints effectively

- To provide those staff involved in consultation processes with the necessary skills and knowledge to do this work effectively
- To provide those staff involved in the implementation and monitoring of the effective implementation of the Children's Court Guardian Agency equality scheme with the necessary skills and knowledge to do this work effectively.

Awareness raising and training arrangements

5.4 The following arrangements are in place to ensure all our staff and board members are aware of and understand our equality obligations.

- We will develop a summary of this equality scheme and make it available to all staff.
- We will provide access to copies of the full equality scheme for all staff; ensure that any queries or questions of clarification from staff are addressed effectively.
- Staff in the Children's Court Guardian Agency will receive a briefing on this equality scheme within 6 months of scheme approval.
- The Section 75 statutory duties form part of induction training for new staff.
- Focused training is provided for key staff within the Children's Court Guardian Agency who are directly engaged in taking forward the implementation of our equality scheme commitments (for example those involved in research and data collection, policy development, service design, conducting equality impact assessments, consultation, monitoring and evaluation).

- Where appropriate, training will be provided to ensure staff are aware of the issues experienced by the range of Section 75 groups.
- When appropriate and on an ongoing basis, arrangements will be made to ensure staff are kept up to date with Section 75 developments.

5.5 Training and awareness raising programmes will, where relevant, be developed in association with the appropriate Section 75 groups and our staff.

In order to share resources and expertise, the Children's Court Guardian Agency will, where possible, work closely with other bodies and agencies in the development and delivery of training.

Monitoring and evaluation

5.6 Our training programme is subject to the following monitoring and evaluation arrangements:

- We evaluate the extent to which all participants in this training programme have acquired the necessary skills and knowledge to achieve each of the above objectives.
- The extent to which training objectives have been met will be reported on as part of the Section 75 annual progress report, which will be sent to the Equality Commission.

We will also monitor the number of staff trained, the equality profile of staff trained, as well as the job roles of staff trained.

Chapter 6: Our arrangements for ensuring and assessing public access to information and services we provide
(Schedule 9 4. (2) (f))

- 6.1 The Children's Court Guardian Agency is committed to ensuring that the information we disseminate and the services we provide are fully accessible to all parts of the community in Northern Ireland. We keep our arrangements under review to ensure that this remains the case.
- 6.2 We are aware that some groups will not have the same access to information as others.

In particular:

- People with sensory, learning, communication and mobility disabilities may require printed information in other formats.
- Members of ethnic minority groups, whose first language is not English, may have difficulties with information provided only in English.
- Children and young people may not be able to fully access or understand information.

Access to information

- 6.3 To ensure equality of opportunity in accessing information, we provide information in alternative formats on request, where reasonably practicable. Where the exact request cannot be met we will ensure a reasonable alternative is provided.

Alternative formats may include Easy Read, Braille, audio formats (CD, mp3 or DAISY), large print or minority languages to meet the needs of those for whom English is not their first language.

The Children's Court Guardian Agency liaises with representatives of young people and disability and minority ethnic organisations and takes account of existing and developing good practice.

We will respond to requests for information in alternative formats in a timely manner, usually within 10 working days (unless third party timescales dictate otherwise, e.g. translation providers).

For those not fluent in English, we have arrangements in place for accessing a regional contract for translation and interpreting services. We also have access to the Regional Interpreting Service for all Health and Social Care Organisations throughout Northern Ireland.

For children and young people, we aim to produce information in a language and in a format that meet their needs. In such cases, we also seek to draw on the support of relevant organisations.

For people with learning disabilities we aim to produce information in Easy Read format.

- 6.4 In disseminating information through the media we will seek to advertise in the press where appropriate.

Access to services

- 6.5 The Children's Court Guardian Agency is committed to ensuring that all of our services are fully accessible to everyone in the community across the Section 75 categories.

The Children's Court Guardian Agency also adheres to the relevant provisions of current anti-discrimination legislation.

- 6.6 We also ensure public access to our services through arrangements outside and inside our buildings such as providing signage, lowered reception desks.

Assessing public access to information and services

- 6.7 In line with our general arrangements for monitoring (see 4.31) we also monitor across all our functions, in relation to access to information and services, to ensure equality of opportunity and good relations are promoted.
- 6.8 This includes monitoring and reviewing complaints information and soliciting feedback from users (such as through surveys and user fora).

Chapter 7: Timetable for measures we propose in this Equality Scheme (Schedule 9 4. (3) (b))

- 7.1 Appendix 4 outlines our timetable for all measures proposed within this equality scheme. The measures outlined in this timetable will be incorporated into our business planning processes.
- 7.2 This timetable is different from and in addition to our commitment to developing action plans/action measures to specifically address inequalities and further promote equality of opportunity and good relations. We have included in our equality scheme a commitment to develop an action plan. Accordingly, this commitment it is listed in the timetable of measures at Appendix 4. For information on these action measures please see above at 2.11–2.18.

Chapter 8: Our Complaints Procedure (Schedule 9 10.)

- 8.1 The Children's Court Guardian Agency is responsive to the views of members of the public. We will endeavour to resolve all complaints made to us.
- 8.2 Schedule 9 paragraph 10 of the Act refers to complaints. A person can make a complaint to a public authority if the complainant believes he or she may have been directly affected by an alleged failure of the authority to comply with its approved equality scheme.

If the complaint has not been resolved within a reasonable timescale, the complaint can be brought to the Equality Commission.

- 8.3 A person wishing to make a complaint that the Children's Court Guardian Agency has failed to comply with its approved equality scheme should contact:

Complaints Officer
Children's Court Guardian Agency for NI
James House
2-4 Cromac Avenue
Gasworks
Belfast
BT7 2JD

Telephone: 0300 555 0102

Email: complaints@ccgani.hscni.net

Website: [Complaints | Children's Court Guardian Agency for Northern Ireland](#)

Section 75 complaints are integrated into the general complaints procedure within the Children's Court Guardian Agency.

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- 8.4 We will in the first instance acknowledge receipt of each complaint within two working days.
- 8.5 The Children's Court Guardian Agency will carry out an internal investigation of the complaint and will respond substantively to the complainant within one (1) month of the date of receiving the letter of complaint. Under certain circumstances, if the complexity of the matter requires a longer period, the period for response to the complainant may be extended to two (2) months. In those circumstances, the complainant will be advised of the extended period within one month of making the complaint.
- 8.6 During this process the complainant will be kept fully informed of the progress of the investigation into the complaint and of any outcomes.
- 8.7 In any subsequent investigation by the Equality Commission, the Children's Court Guardian Agency will co-operate fully, providing access in a timely manner to any relevant documentation that the Equality Commission may require.

Similarly, the Children's Court Guardian Agency will co-operate fully with any investigation by the Equality Commission under sub-paragraph 11 (1) (b) of Schedule 9 to the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

- 8.8 The Children's Court Guardian Agency will make all efforts to implement promptly and in full any recommendations arising out of any Commission investigation.

Chapter 9: Publication of our equality scheme

(Schedule 9 4. (3) (c))

9.1 Our equality scheme is available free of charge in print form and alternative formats from:

Children's Court Guardian Agency for NI
James House
2-4 Cromac Avenue
Gasworks
Belfast
BT7 2JD

Telephone: 0300 555 0102

Email: admin@ccgani.hscni.net

9.2 Our equality scheme is also available on our website at:

<https://childrenscourtguardianagencyni.co.uk/>

9.3 The following arrangements are in place for the publication in a timely manner of our equality scheme to ensure equality of access:

- We will make every effort to communicate widely the existence and content of our equality scheme. This may include press releases, prominent advertisements in the press, the internet and direct mail shots to groups representing the various categories in Section 75.
- We will email a link to our approved equality scheme to our consultees on our consultation lists. Other consultees without e-mail will be notified by letter that the scheme is available on request. We will respond to requests for the equality scheme in alternative formats in a timely manner, usually within 10 working days (unless third party timescales dictate otherwise, e.g. translation providers).

- Our equality scheme is available on request in alternative formats such as Easy Read, Braille, large print, audio formats (CD, mp3, DAISY) to meet the needs of people with a disability, and in minority languages to meet the needs of those not fluent in English and in a format and language that is accessible to children and young people.

For a list of our stakeholders and consultees please see Appendix 3 of the equality scheme, visit our website at <https://childrenscourtguardianagencyni.co.uk/> (See Page 9 for contact details).

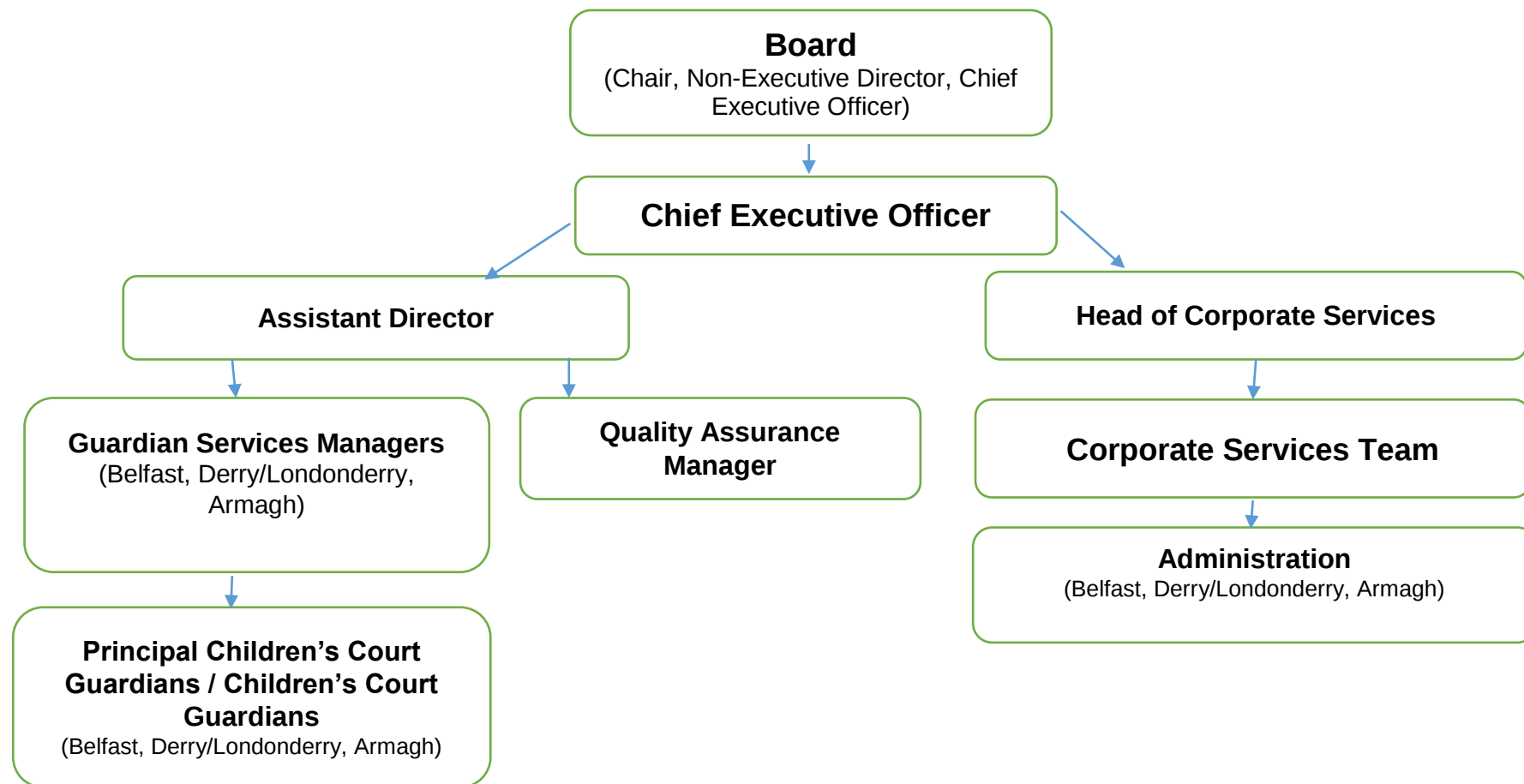
Chapter 10: Review of our equality scheme
(Scheme 9 8. (3))

10.1 As required by Schedule 9 paragraph 8 (3) of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 we will conduct a thorough review of this equality scheme. This review will take place either within five years of submission of this equality scheme to the Equality Commission or within a shorter timescale to allow alignment with the review of other planning cycles.

The review will evaluate the effectiveness of our scheme in relation to the implementation of the Section 75 statutory duties relevant to our functions in Northern Ireland.

10.2 In undertaking this review we will follow any guidance issued by the Equality Commission. A report of this review will be made public by placing it on our website and by informing our consultees via email or post of its availability. It will also be sent to the Equality Commission.

Appendix 1: Organisational Chart



Appendix 2: Example groups relevant to the Section 75 categories for Northern Ireland purposes

Please note, this list is for illustration purposes only. It is not exhaustive.

Category	Example Groups
Religious belief	Buddhist; Catholic; Hindu; Jewish; Muslims; people of no religious belief; Protestant; Sikh; other faiths. For the purposes of Section 75, the term “religious belief” is the same definition as that used in the Fair Employment & Treatment (NI) Order⁹. Therefore, “religious belief” also includes any perceived religious belief (or perceived lack of belief) and, in employment situations only, it also covers any “similar philosophical belief”.
Political opinion	Nationalist generally; Unionists generally; members/supporters of other political parties.
Racial group	Black people; Chinese; Indians; Pakistanis; people of mixed ethnic background; Polish; Roma; Travellers; White people.
Men and women generally	Men (including boys); Trans-gendered people; Transsexual people; women (including girls).

⁹ See section 98 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, which states “In this Act...”political opinion” and “religious belief” shall be construed in accordance with Article 2(3) and (4) of the Fair Employment & Treatment (NI Order 1998”.

Category	Example Groups
Marital status	Civil partners or people in civil partnerships; divorced people; married people; separated people; single people; widowed people.
Age	Children and young people; older people.
Persons with a disability	Persons with disabilities as defined by the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.
Persons with dependents	Persons with personal responsibility for the care of a child; for the care of a person with a disability; or the care of a dependant older person.
Sexual orientation	Bisexual people; heterosexual people; gay or lesbian people.

Appendix 3: List of Consultees

Schedule 9 4. (2) (a))

Consultation List
Organisation
Action Cancer
Action on Elder Abuse
ADOPT
Advice NI
Advice Space
Afro-Community Support Organisation
Age NI
Alliance Party of Northern Ireland
Al-Nisa Women's Group
Alzheimer's Disease Society NI
ARC (NI)
Armagh Banbridge & Craigavon Borough Council
Arthritis Care
Aspergers Network
Autism Initiatives NI
Aware Defeat Depression
Barnardos
Belfast Butterfly Club
Belfast City Council
Belfast Islamic Centre
Belfast Trans Resource Centre
Belfast Trust
Black Youth Network
Britain's General Union (GMB)

Consultation List	
Organisation	
British Association of Occupational Therapists	
British Association of Social Workers (NI Office)	
British Deaf Association (NI)	
British Dental Association (NI) Branch	
British Dietetic Association	
British Medical Association	
British Orthodontic Society	
British Psychological Society NI Office	
British Red Cross	
Brook Northern Ireland Advisory Centre	
Bryson Group	
Bytes Project	
Cara-friend	
Carers NI	
CAUSE	
Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council	
CFNI (Community Foundation NI)	
Chartered Society of Physiotherapy	
Chest, Heart and Stroke Association	
Children's Court Guardian Agency for Northern Ireland	
Children in Northern Ireland	
Children's Law Centre NI	
Chinese Welfare Association	
Church of Ireland	
Commissioner for Older People	
Committee on the Administration of Justice	

Consultation List	
Organisation	
Community Development and Health Network	
Community Practitioners & Health Visitors Association	
Community Relations Council	
Contact A Family	
Council for the Curriculum Examination and Assessment	
Craic NI	
Craigavon Asian Women's & Children's Association	
Craigavon Travellers' Support Committee	
Crossroads Caring for Carers	
CRUSE	
Cystic Fibrosis Trust	
Democratic Unionist Party DUP	
Department for Communities	
Department for the Economy	
Department of Education - Equality Team	
Department of Finance	
Department of health	
Department of Health for Northern Ireland	
Department of Infrastructure	
Department of Justice	
Derry City and Strabane District Council	
Derry Well Woman	
Diabetes UK Northern Ireland	
Disability Action	
Down & Connor Family Ministry	
Down's Syndrome Association	

Consultation List	
	Organisation
	Eagle Project
	Early Years Organisation
	East Belfast Community Development Agency
	Education Authority (Belfast Office)
	Epilepsy Action
	Equality Coalition
	Equality Commission for Northern Ireland
	Executive Office - Human Rights and Equality Unit
	Extern
	Extra Care
	Falls Community Council
	Family Planning Association NI
	Federation of Experts by Experience
	Focus the Identity Trust
	Focus: The identity Trust
	Foyle Down's Syndrome Trust
	Foyle Multi Cultural Forum
	Glencraig Camphill Community
	Green Party
	Headway
	Here Northern Ireland
	Honorary Consul of Italy in Northern Ireland
	ICO NI
	Include Youth
	Incredible (previously Enable NI)
	Independent Health Care Providers

Consultation List	
Organisation	
Independent Workers Union of Great Britain (IWGB) - Foster Carer Worker Union	
Inspire Wellbeing	
Japan Society of NI	
Law Society NI	
Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council	
Macmillan Cancer Relief	
Magherafelt Women's Group	
Marie Curie Cancer Care	
MENCAP	
Men's Advisory Project	
Mental Health Review Tribunal	
Methodist Church in Ireland	
Mind Yourself	
Mindwise	
Multiple Sclerosis Society	
Muscular Dystrophy Group	
National Autistic Society NI	
Newry & Mourne Senior Citizens' Forum	
NI Assembly	
NI Blood Transfusion Service	
NI Commissioner for Children and Young People	
NI Committee of Irish Congress of Trade Unions	
NI Council for the Homeless	
NI Federation of Housing Associations	
NI Fire & Rescue Service	

Consultation List
Organisation
NI Housing Executive
NI Human Rights Commission
NI Medical and Dental Training Agency
NI Practice & Education Council for Nursing and Midwifery
NI Rare Diseases Partnership
NI Social Care Council (NISCC)
NI Statistics and Research Agency
NI Women's European Platform
NI Youth Forum
NIACRO (Northern Ireland Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders)
Nonbinary NI
North West Community Network
North West Forum of People with Disabilities
Northern HSC Trust
Northern Ireland Ambulance Service Trust
Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action
Northern Ireland Deaf Youth Association
Northern Ireland Public Service Alliance NIPSA
Northern Ireland Volunteer Development Agency
Northern Trust
Northern Trust
NSPCC
NUS-USI Northern Ireland Student Centre
Omagh Ethnic Minority Group
Orchardville Society

Consultation List
Organisation
Parenting NI
Parents and Professionals and Autism
Parents Education as Autism Therapists (PEAT)
Parkinson's Disease Society
Patient Client Council
Pharmaceutical Society of NI
PIPS Hope and Support
Playboard
Police Service of Northern Ireland
Positive Futures
Positive Life
Praxis
Presbyterian Church in Ireland
Press for Change
Princes Trust
Probation Board NI
Public Health Agency
Queen's University Belfast- Equal Opportunities Unit
Radius Housing
Rainbow Project
RCN
Regulation & Quality Improvement Authority
RNIB
RNID
Royal College of GPs
Royal College of Midwives

Consultation List
Organisation
Sai Pak Community Group
Salvation Army
Samaritans Belfast
Save the Children
Scouting Association NI
SDLP
SENSE NI
Shelter
Sikh Community Project
Simon Community
Sinn Fein
Socialist Party
South Antrim Community Network
South Eastern HSC Trust
South Eastern HSC Trust
South Eastern HSC Trust
Southern HSC Trust
Sperrin Lakeland Senior Citizens' Consortium
STEP (South Tyrone Empowerment Prog.)
Strabane Ethnic Communities Association
Stroke Association
Sustainable Northern Ireland Programme
The Cedar Foundation
The Commission for Victims and Survivors
The Egyptian Society of Northern Ireland
The Northern Ireland Prison Service

Consultation List	
Organisation	
The Omnibus Partnership	
The Society of Chiropodists & Podiatrists	
The Society of Radiographers	
The Women's Centre	
Threshold	
Tiny Life	
Traditional Unionist Voice (TUV)	
Training for Women Network	
Transderry	
Triangle Housing Association Ltd	
Ulster Chemists Association	
Ulster Quaker Service Committee	
Ulster Scots Agency	
Ulster Unionist Party	
Ulster-Scots Heritage Council	
Unison	
UNITE	
Victim Support	
Voice of Young People in Care	
WAVE Trauma Centre	
West Belfast Partnership	
Western HSC Trust	
Western HSC Trust	
Women's Aid Federation NI	
Women's Forum NI	
Women's Resource and Development Agency	

Consultation List	
Organisation	
Women's Support Network	
Youth Action NI	
Youth Council for Northern Ireland	
Youth Justice Agency NI	

Appendix 4: Timetable for measures proposed

Schedule 9 4. (3) (b))

Measure	Lead Responsibility	Timetable
Section 75 Annual Progress Report [2.7]	Chief Executive	31 August (annually)
Action Plan		
Consultation on draft action plan [2.15]	Equality Manager	Dec 2010 to Feb 2011
Finalised action plan published [2.18]	Equality Manager/Chief Executive	May 2011
Arrangements for monitoring progress in place [2.16]	Chief Executive	May 2011
Implementation of actions [2.11]	Directors	May 2011 to Mar 2013
Consultation list reviewed and updated [3.4]	Equality Manager	Nov 2010 and ongoing
Screening timetable [4.4]	Directors	Ongoing
Screening Reports [4.15]	Equality Manager	Quarterly from May 2011
EQIA timetable		
Rolling (based on screening outcomes [4.16])	Equality Manager	Ongoing

Measure	Lead Responsibility	Timetable
Monitoring		
Review of monitoring information [4.31]	Directors	Annually
Publication of monitoring information [4.33;4.34]	Directors	Annually
Training		
Development of summary Scheme [5.4]	Equality Manager	Within 6 months of scheme approval
Development of overall training programme [5.5]	Equality Manager and Directors	Annually
Focussed training [5.4]	Equality Manager	Annually
Update training [5.4]	Equality Manager	Ongoing
Evaluation of training [5.6]	Equality Manager	Ongoing
Assessing access to information and services [6.9]	Directors	Annually
Communication of equality scheme [9.3]	Chief Executive	Within 6 months of scheme approval
Notification of consultees [9.3]	Chief Executive	Within 6 months of scheme approval
Review of equality scheme [10.1]	Chief Executive	Within 5 years after approval

Appendix 5: Glossary of Terms

Action plan

A plan which sets out actions a public authority will take to implement its Section 75 statutory duties. It is a mechanism for the realisation of measures to achieve equality outcomes for the Section 75 equality and good relations categories.

Audit of inequalities

An audit of inequalities is a systematic review and analysis of inequalities which exist for service users and those affected by a public authority's policies. An audit can be used by a public authority to inform its work in relation to the Section 75 equality and good relations duties. It can also enable public authorities to assess progress on the implementation of the Section 75 statutory duties, as it provides baseline information on existing inequalities relevant to a public authority's functions.

Consultation

In the context of Section 75, consultation is the process of asking those affected by a policy (i.e., service users, staff, the general public) for their views on how the policy could be implemented more effectively to promote equality of opportunity across the 9 categories. Different circumstances will call for different types of consultation. Consultations could, for example, include meetings, focus groups, surveys and questionnaires.

Equality impact assessment

The mechanism underpinning Section 75, where existing and proposed policies are assessed in order to determine whether they have an adverse impact on equality of opportunity for the relevant Section 75 categories. Equality impact assessments require the analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data.

Equality of opportunity

The prevention, elimination or regulation of discrimination between people on grounds of characteristics including sex, marital status, age, disability, religious belief, political opinion, dependants, race and sexual orientation.

The promotion of equality of opportunity entails more than the elimination of discrimination. It requires proactive measures to be taken to secure equality of opportunity between the categories identified under Section 75.

Equality scheme

A document which outlines a public authority's arrangements for complying with its Section 75 obligations. An equality scheme must include an outline of the public authority's arrangements for carrying out consultations, screening, equality impact assessments, monitoring, training and arrangements for ensuring access to information and services.

Good relations

Although not defined in the legislation, the Equality Commission has agreed the following working definition of good relations: 'the growth of relations and structures for Northern Ireland that acknowledge the religious, political and racial context of this society, and that seek to promote respect, equity and trust, and embrace diversity in all its forms'.

Inequality

Where something an organisation does has a differential or unfair impact on anyone in any of the groups listed in **Section 75** definition below.

Mainstreaming equality

The integration of equal opportunities principles, strategies and practices into the everyday work of public authorities from the outset. In other words, mainstreaming is the process of ensuring that equality considerations are built into the policy development process from the beginning, rather than being bolted on at the end. Mainstreaming can help improve methods of working by increasing a public authority's accountability, responsiveness to need and relations with the public. It can bring added value at many levels.

Monitoring

Monitoring consists of continuously scrutinising and evaluating a policy to assess its impact on the Section 75 categories. Monitoring must be sensitive to the issues associated with human rights and privacy. Public authorities should seek advice from consultees and Section 75 representative groups when setting up monitoring systems.

Monitoring consists of the collection of relevant information and evaluation of policies. It is not solely about the collection of data, it can also take the form of regular meetings and reporting of research undertaken. Monitoring is not an end in itself but provides the data for the next cycle of policy screening.

Northern Ireland Act

The Northern Ireland Act, implementing the Good Friday Agreement, received Royal Assent on 19 November 1998. Section 75 of the Act created the statutory equality duties.

Policy

The formal and informal decisions a public authority makes in relation to carrying out its duties. Defined in the New Oxford English Dictionary as 'a course or principle of action adopted or proposed by a government party, business or individual'. In the context of Section 75, the term **policies** covers all the ways in which a public authority carries out or proposes to carry out its functions relating to Northern Ireland. Policies include unwritten as well as written policies.

Screening

The procedure for identifying which policies will be subject to equality impact assessment, and how these equality impact assessments will be prioritised. The purpose of screening is to identify the policies which are likely to have a minor/major impact on equality of opportunity so that greatest resources can be devoted to improving these policies. Screening requires a systematic review of existing and proposed policies.

Section 75

Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act provides that each public authority is required, in carrying out its functions relating to Northern Ireland, 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 and sexual orientation;
- men and women generally;
- persons with a disability and persons without; and
- persons with dependants and persons without.

Without prejudice to these obligations, each public authority in carrying out its functions relating to Northern Ireland must also have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group.

Appendix 6: Section 75 Equality Scheme Version Control

Version 1: Original Equality Scheme approved on 19 April 2011.

Version	Amendment Date	Name of Officer/Job Role making the change	Chapter & Paragraph	Description of Changes	Amendments approved by and date
1.1	August 2025	Sinéad Casey, Business Support Officer	All pages in document Throughout document. Page 1 Page 2, para 2.8 Page 10, para 2.4 Page 13, para 2.18 Page 35, para 8.3 Page 37, para 9.1	Amendments made to Equality Scheme: ▪ Change of organisational name from NI Guardian Ad Litem Agency to The Children's Court Guardian Agency. ▪ Contact details updated	

Version	Amendment Date	Name of Officer/Job Role making the change	Chapter & Paragraph	Description of Changes	Amendments approved by and date
1.1	August 2025	Sinéad Casey, Business Support Officer	All pages. Page 40	▪ New organisational logo added to each page. ▪ Organisation structure updated.	
			Page 3 Page 43	Chair and CEO details updated and re-signed. Consultation List updated	
1.2	June 2026		Page 1 Page 2, para 2.8 Page 10, para 2.4 Page 13, para 2.18 Page 35, para 8.3 Page 37, para 9.1	▪ Contact details updated due to email address change to a shorter address.	