

Revised Equality Scheme for Down District Council

***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 (see
page 6 for contact details).***

Down District Council
Equality & Policy Officer
24 Strangford Road
Downpatrick
N Ireland
BT30 6SR

Approved by the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland on

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 Act.

In our revised equality scheme we set out how Down District Council 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 effective 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 Councillors and staff are made fully aware of our equality scheme and understand the commitments and obligations within it. We will advise our consultees on the Section 75 statutory duties and our commitments as detailed in our equality scheme.

We, the Chairman and Clerk and Chief Executive of Down District Council, 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 revised 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.

We support and endorse this revised 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.



Dermot Curran
Chairman



John Dumigan
Clerk and Chief Executive

19 December 2011

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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 Down District Council 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 authority. 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.

How we propose to fulfill the Section 75 Duties in relation to the relevant functions of Down District Council

1.2 Schedule 9 4. (1) of the Act requires Down District Council 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 details the plan for their implementation.

1.3 Down District Council is committed to the discharge of its Section 75 obligations in all parts of its organisation and 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 the Down District Council equality scheme can be implemented effectively.

Who we are and what we do

The roles and functions of Councils, established in the Local Government Act 1972 and in other legislation, falls into three types:

- **Direct** - Councils are responsible for the provision and management of services
- **Representative** - Council nominees sit on statutory bodies
- **Consultative** - Councils reflect community views in the operation of a range of statutory bodies, community concerns or give views on proposed administrative decisions

Most Council's carry out the functions outlined below. However, not every Council will have the entire range of services, depending upon its geographical location and size:

Down District Council is responsible for:

Refuse Collection and Disposal	Recycling and Waste Management
Civic Amenity Provision	Grounds Maintenance
Street Cleansing	Cemeteries
Public Conveniences	Food Safety
Health & Safety	Environmental Protection
Environmental Improvement	Estates Management Building Design and
Building Control	Maintenance
Dog Control	Inspection/Regulation of New
Community Centres	Construction
Sundry Licensing	Sports and Leisure Services
Parks, Open Spaces, Playgrounds	Recreational Facilities
Arts, Heritage and Cultural Facilities	
Registration of Births, Deaths and	
Marriages	

Council also have a role in

- Economic Development
- Community Development
- Community Safety
- District Policing
- Sports Development & Summer Schemes
- Tourism

Section 75 is mainstreamed across all of Down District Council's business areas. The Council's Senior Management Team is responsible for ensuring that Section 75 obligations are taken into account in developing and implementing Council functions.

Chapter 2 Our arrangements for assessing our compliance with the Section 75 duties

2.1 Some of our arrangements for assessing our compliance with the Section 75 statutory duties are outlined in other relevant parts of this equality scheme please see Page 13 Screening, Page 15 Equality impact assessment, Page 18 Our arrangements for monitoring any adverse impact of policies we have adopted on equality of opportunity.

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 parts of our work.

2.3 Responsibility for the effective implementation of our equality scheme lies with the Chief Executive's Department. The Clerk and Chief Executive is accountable to Down District Council 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:

Liam McLernon
Equality & Policy Officer
Down District Council
24 Strangford Road
Downpatrick
N Ireland
BT30 6SR

Telephone: (028) 44610807

Email: liam.mclernon@downdc.gov.uk

Text Number / Minicom Number: (028) 44610817

2.5 Objectives and targets relating to the statutory duties will be integrated into our strategic and operational business plans.

2.6 Employees' job descriptions and performance plans reflect their contributions 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 Down District Council prepares an annual report on the progress we have 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 our annual report.

2.8 The latest Section 75 annual progress report is available on our website www.downdc.gov.uk

or by contacting:

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Equality & Policy Officer
Down District Council
24 Strangford Road
Downpatrick
N Ireland
BT30 6SR

Telephone: (028) 44610807

Email: liam.mclernon@downdc.gov.uk

Text Number / Minicom Number: (028) 44610817

2.9 Down District Council liaise closely with the Equality Commission to ensure that progress on the implementation of our revised equality scheme.

2.10 All Council's policies whether new or revised will be screened to ensure compliance with this equality scheme

Action plan/action measures

2.11 Down District Council has developed an action plan to promote equality of opportunity and good relations. The action plan is set out in Appendix 8 to this equality scheme.

2.12 The action measures that will make up our action plan will be relevant to our functions. They will be developed and prioritised on the basis of an audit of inequalities. In line with the Equality Commission's guidance the Council will carry out an Audit of Inequalities. The Audit of Inequalities will inform which Down District Council functions are addressed in terms of inequalities in relation to Section 75 groups. It will enable Council to identify potential functional areas for further or better discharge of its Section 75 duties and will inform its key strategic actions.

The Audit will reveal where the Council has information gaps and allow the development of action measures to take forward the work required to deal

with the issues and inequalities highlighted by the Audit. Many of the Councils functions are statutory in nature and cut across many of the Section 75 categories however there are some areas of Council work that may have an impact on certain Section 75 groups. During the development of the Council's Action Plan all council services and functions were reviewed and a recommendation made for four key areas of activity to be included:

- (a) Arts & Leisure
- (b) Development
- (c) Corporate Governance
- (d) Environmental Services

As part of the Council's annual equality report to the Equality Commission NI the Action Plan will be reviewed to identify key areas of inequalities that require to be addressed in the incoming period.

2.13 Action measures will be specific, measurable, linked to achievable outcomes, realistic and time bound. Action measures will include performance indicators and timescales for their achievement.

2.14 We will develop action plans for a period of between one and five years in order to align them with our corporate, business and planning cycles. Implementation of the action measures will be 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 and update the action plan as necessary to ensure that it remains effective and relevant to our functions and work.

2.18 Once finalised our action plan will be available on our website www.downdc.gov.uk or by contacting:

Liam McLernon
Equality & Policy Officer
Down District Council
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Downpatrick
N Ireland
BT30 6SR
Telephone: (028) 44610807
Email: liam.mclernon@downdc.gov.uk
Text Number / Minicom Number: (028) 44610817

If you require it in alternative format please contact us on the details provided.

Chapter 3 Our arrangements for consulting

3.1 Council recognises 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)*')

3.3.1 All consultations will seek the views of 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.

All consultees will be notified (by email or post) of this revised equality scheme and Council policies being consulted upon. Thereafter, to ensure the most effective use of our and our consultees' resources, we will take a targeted approach to consultation for those consultees that may have a particular interest in the policy being consulted upon and to whom the policy is of particular relevance.

Initially all consultees (see Appendix 6), 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 consultees' 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 etc.

3.2.2 Consultation with all stakeholders will begin as early as possible. 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
- Internet discussions or
- Telephone consultations.

3.2.3 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.

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 all section 75 categories e.g. 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 *Lets Talk Lets Listen-Guidance for public authorities on consulting and involving children and young people (2008)*. All relevant information will be made available to consultees in appropriate formats to ensure meaningful consultation and we will ensure that all consultees have equal time to respond and adequate time is allowed for groups to consult among themselves. Information will be made available, on request, in alternative formats, in a timely manner, usually within 7 days. 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 consultees 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 presentations to community groups, disability groups and forums, local Down diversity forum and by providing regular communication via the Council's Good Relations monthly circular.

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 commitments.

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

3.2.9 We will 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 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 will 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.

3.3 A list of our consultees is included in this equality scheme at Appendix 6. It can also be obtained from our website at www.downdc.gov.uk

or by contacting:

Liam McLernon

Equality & Policy Officer

Down District Council

24 Strangford Road

Downpatrick

N Ireland

BT30 6SR

Telephone: (028) 44610807

Email: liam.mclernon@downdc.gov.uk

Text Number / Minicom Number: (028) 44610817

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:

Liam McLernon

Equality & Policy Officer

Down District Council

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Downpatrick

N Ireland

BT30 6SR

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Email: liam.mclernon@downdc.gov.uk

Text Number / Minicom Number: (028) 44610817

to provide your contact details and have your areas of interest noted or have your name/details removed or amended. Please also inform us 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

Our arrangements for assessing the likely impact of policies adopted or proposed to be adopted on the promotion of equality of opportunity.

4.1 In the context of Section 75, 'policy' is very broadly defined and 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 revised 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 Down District Council 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 a different religious belief, political opinion or racial group? (minor / major / none)
- Are there opportunities to better promote good relations between people of a 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 screening questions, 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 mitigation 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 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 Down District Council.

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 Down District Council.

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 Down District Council.

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 www.downdc.gov.uk

and on request by contacting:

Liam McLernon

Equality & Policy Officer

Down District Council

24 Strangford Road

Downpatrick

N Ireland

BT30 6SR

Telephone: (028) 44610807

Email: liam.mclernon@downdc.gov.uk

Text Number / Minicom Number: (028) 44610817

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 the 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

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 Down District Council 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 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
- 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 available on our website www.downdc.gov.uk

or by contacting:

Liam McLernon

Equality & Policy Officer

Down District Council

24 Strangford Road

Downpatrick

N Ireland

BT30 6SR

Telephone: (028) 44610807

Email: liam.mclernon@downdc.gov.uk

Text Number / Minicom Number: (028) 44610817

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

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, Down District Council 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 with each policy review, all Council policies are reviewed on a two year cycle.

Our arrangements for publishing the results of our monitoring

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 Results of Council EQIA monitoring can be viewed on our website www.downdc.gov.uk

or by contacting:

Liam McLernon

Equality & Policy Officer

Down District Council

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Downpatrick

N Ireland

BT30 6SR

Telephone: (028) 44610807

Email: liam.mclernon@downdc.gov.uk

Text Number / Minicom Number: (028) 44610817

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

Commitment to staff training

5.1 Down District Council recognises that awareness raising and training play a crucial role in the effective implementation of our Section 75 duties.

5.2 Our Chief Executive and Clerk of Council wishes to positively communicate the commitment of Down District Council 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 Council has a detailed training plan for its staff which is supported by personal development and appraisal procedures to ensure:

- 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
- provide staff involved in the assessment of policies (screening and EQIA) with the necessary skills and knowledge to do this work effectively
- to provide 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 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 Down District Council 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 Councillors and Council staff 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 Councillors and staff and ensure any queries or questions of clarification are addressed effectively.

- Down District Council staff will receive a briefing on this equality scheme within the Core Brief and Team Meeting process once the revised scheme has been approved
- Section 75 statutory duties form part of induction training for new full time and seasonal staff via a presentation titled "Equality Matters".
- Focused training is provided for key staff within Down District Council who are directly engaged in taking forward the implementation of our equality scheme commitments e.g. those involved in research and data collection, policy development, conducting equality impact assessments, consultation, monitoring and evaluation.
- Where appropriate, training will be provided to ensure Councillors and 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 Councillors and 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, Down District Council will, where possible, work closely with other bodies and agencies in the development and delivery of training.

Monitoring and evaluation

5.6 Our training programmes are subject to the following monitoring and evaluation arrangements:

- We evaluate the extent to which all participants in Council training programmes have acquired the necessary skills and knowledge to achieve each of the above objectives.
- The extent to which training objectives have been met are identified for individual staff through the Annual Performance and Development Review. Objectives will be reported on as part of the Section 75 annual progress report, a copy of is sent to the Equality Commission.

Chapter 6 Our arrangements for ensuring public access to information and services

6.1 Down District Council is committed to ensuring the information we disseminate and the services we provide are fully accessible to all parts of the community. 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.
- 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.

Down District Council 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 normally within 7 days.

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

6.5 Down District Council is committed to ensuring that all of our services are fully accessible to everyone in the community across the Section 75 categories and adheres to the relevant provisions of current anti-discrimination legislation.

Access to services

6.6 All Council services are provided so as to ensure public access by all members of the community. A monthly information circular is sent to all community, sports, charities and disability groups in the District advising of the services available and any new ones being introduced.

6.7 Council works with both the Down District Disability forum and the Down Diversity Forum, District Policing Partnership and the Community Safety Partnership to ensure the public is aware of the services and how to avail of them.

Assessing public access to information and services

6.8 We monitor across all our functions, in relation to access to information and services, to ensure equality of opportunity and good relations are promoted. All Council departments report their activities to the relevant Council committees, produce out turn reports on a monthly / bimonthly, quarterly, six monthly and annual basis these are made available on the Council website.

6.9 We carry out regular satisfaction surveys in regard of the use and access of Council services by the public and analyse, report and take action regarding complaints, comments and compliments received regarding both access to and use of these services and information.

Chapter 7 Timetable for measures we propose in this equality scheme

7.1 Appendix 7 outlines our timetable for all measures proposed within this equality scheme. The measures outlined in this timetable will be incorporated into our business planning process.

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 is listed in the timetable of measures at Appendix 7. For information on these action measures please see above at 2.11 – 2.18.

Chapter 8 Our complaints procedure

8.1 Down District Council 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 raised with the Equality Commission.

8.3 A person wishing to make a complaint that Down District Council has failed to comply with its approved equality scheme should contact:

Liam McLernon

Equality & Policy Officer

Down District Council

24 Strangford Road

Downpatrick

N Ireland

BT30 6SR

Telephone: (028) 44610807

Email: liam.mclernon@downdc.gov.uk

Text Number / Minicom Number: (028) 44610817

8.4 We will in the first instance acknowledge receipt of each complaint within 3 working days.

8.5 The Council Equality and Policy Officer 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 Down District Council will co-operate fully, providing access in a timely manner to any relevant documentation that the Equality Commission may require.

Similarly Down District Council 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 Down District Council will make all efforts to implement promptly and in full any recommendations arising out of any Commission investigation.

Chapter 9 Publication of the Equality Scheme

9.1 Down District Council's equality scheme is available free of charge in electronic, print form and alternative formats from:

Liam McLernon

Equality & Policy Officer

Down District Council

24 Strangford Road

Downpatrick

N Ireland

BT30 6SR

Telephone: (028) 44610807

Email: liam.mclernon@downdc.gov.uk

Text Number / Minicom Number: (028) 44610817

9.2 Our equality scheme is also available on our website at

www.downdc.gov.uk

9.3 The following arrangements are in place for the publication in a timely manner of our equality scheme within 3 months of approval 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 seven days.
- Our equality scheme is available on request in alternative formats such as Easy Read, Braille, large print, audio formats (CD, mp3, DAISY) and in minority languages to meet the needs of those not fluent in English.
- We will advise the Down District Disability Forum, Down Diversity in Action Forum, CAPPa and schools located in Down District of our equality scheme within 3 months of approval.

9.4 For a list of our consultees please see Appendix 6 of the revised equality scheme, visit our website at www.downdc.gov.uk or contact Liam McLernon (see contact details on page 5).

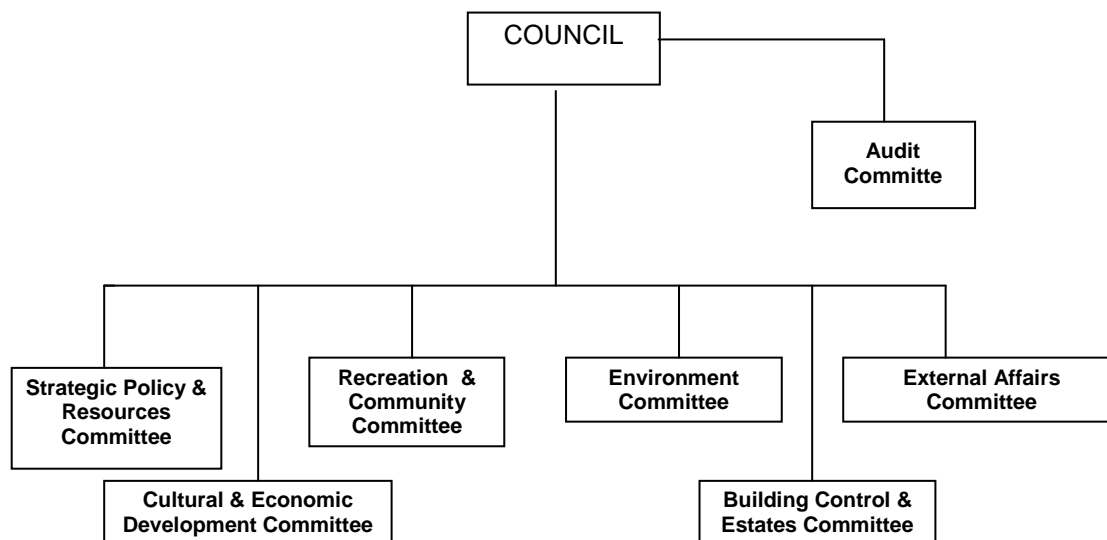
Chapter 10 Review of the Equality Scheme

10.1 As required by Schedule 9 paragraph 8 (3) of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 we will conduct a thorough review of this revised 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 through advertising its existence, placing a copy on the Council's website at www.downdc.gov.uk provision of copies on request, adverts in local newspapers, included in the monthly Council news circulation to community groups, religious groups etc and a copy sent to the Equality Commission.

Appendix 1 – Council Committee Structure



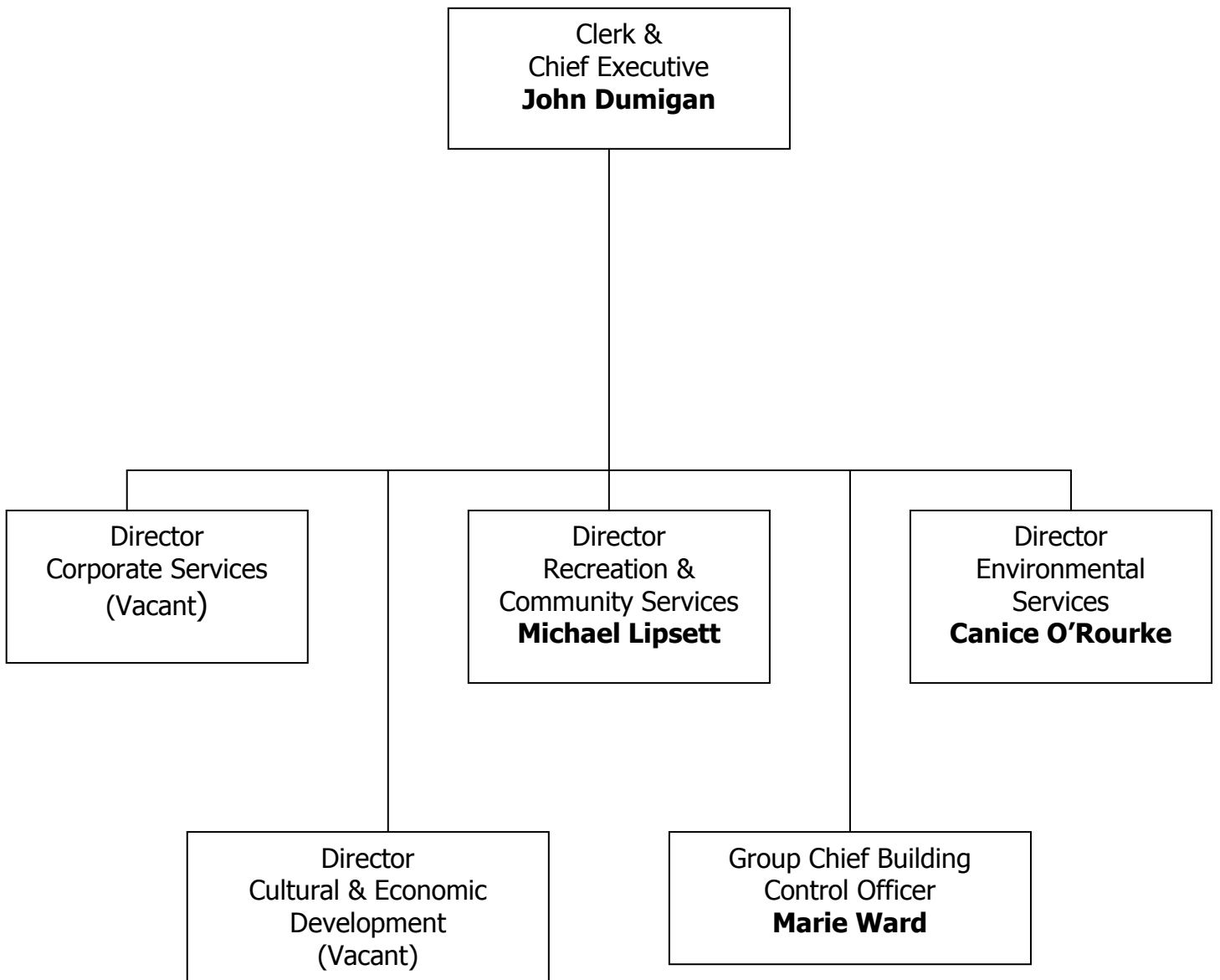
Council consists of 23 Councillors (as listed below)

P Craig	SDLP
D Curran	SDLP
J Doris	SDLP
A McAlennan	SDLP
M MCCarthy	SDLP
C McGrath	SDLP
C O'Boyle	SDLP
E O'Neill	SDLP
P Toman	SDLP
S Burns	Sinn Fein
W Clarke	Sinn Fein
M Coogan	Sinn Fein
L Johnston	Sinn Fein
E Mac Con Midhe	Sinn Fein
G Craig	DUP
W Dick	DUP
W Walker	DUP
R Burges	UUP
W Lyons	UUP
D Patterson	UUP
P Clarke	Alliance
C Enright	Green
T Andrews	Independent

Appendix 2 - Council Management Structure

Down District Council

Management Structure



Appendix 3 - Example groups relevant to Section 75

Category	Example groups
Religious belief	<p>Buddhist; Catholic; Hindu; Jewish; Muslims, people of no religious belief; Protestants; Sikh; other faiths.</p> <p>For the purposes of Section 75, the term "religious belief" is the same definition as that used in the <i>Fair Employment & Treatment (NI) Order</i>¹. Therefore, "religious belief" also includes any <i>perceived</i> religious belief (or perceived lack of belief) and, in employment situations only, it also covers any "<i>similar philosophical belief</i>".</p>
Political opinion ⁱ	Nationalist generally; Unionists generally; members/supporters of other political parties.
Racial group	White (British, Irish, Polish, Roma, Irish Traveller, other white), Black (Caribbean, African, other), Asian (Chinese, Indian sub-continent, other), Mixed ethnic background, or ethnic group
Men and women generally	Men (including boys); Trans-gendered people; Transsexual people; women (including girls).
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 dependants	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 4 – Screening Performa

Down District Council Policy Screening Form

Policy Information

Name of the policy	
Is this an existing, revised or new policy?	
What is it trying to achieve (aims/outcomes)	
Are there any Section 75 categories which might be expected to benefit from the intended policy?	
If so, explain how.	
Who initiated or wrote the policy?	
Who owns and who implements the policy?	

Implementation factors

	Yes	No
Are there any factors which could contribute to/detract from the intended aim/outcome of the policy/decision?		
If yes, are they Financial		
If yes, are they Legislative		
If yes, and they are Other please specify:		

Main stakeholders affected

Who are the internal and external stakeholders (actual or potential) that the policy will impact upon?

	Yes	No
Staff		
Service users		
Other public sector organisations		
Voluntary/community/trade unions		
Other, please specify:		

Other policies with a bearing on this policy

What are they	
Who owns them	

Available evidence

What evidence/information (both qualitative and quantitative) have you gathered to inform this policy? Specify details for relevant Section 75 categories.

Section 75 category	Details of evidence /information

Needs, experiences and priorities

Taking into account the information referred to above, what are the different needs, experiences and priorities of each of the following categories, in relation to the particular policy/decision? Specify details for each of the Section 75 categories

Section 75 category	Details of evidence /information

Screening Questions

1. What is the likely impact on equality of opportunity for those affected by this policy, for each of the Section 75 grounds?

Minor/Major/None

Section 75 category	If Yes, provide details	If No, provide details
Religious belief		
Political opinion		
Racial group		
Age		
Marital status		
Sexual orientation		
Men and women generally		
Disability		
Dependants		

2. Are there opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity for people within the Section 75 equality categories?

Section 75 category	If Yes, provide details	If No, provide details
Religious belief		
Political opinion		
Racial group		
Age		
Marital status		
Sexual orientation		
Men and women generally		
Disability		
Dependants		

3. 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

Good relations category	If Yes, provide details	If No, provide details
Religious belief		
Political opinion		
Racial group		

4. Are there opportunities to better promote good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group?

Good relations category	If Yes, provide details	If No, provide details
Religious belief		
Political opinion		
Racial group		

Additional considerations

Multiple identity

Generally speaking, people can fall into more than one Section 75 category. Taking this into consideration, are there any potential impacts of the policy/decision on people with multiple identities? (For example; disabled minority ethnic people; disabled women; young Protestant men; and young lesbians, gay and bisexual people).

Provide details of data on the impact of the policy on people with multiple identities. Specify relevant Section 75 categories concerned.

Screening Decision

In light of your answers to the previous questions, do you feel that the policy should (please underline one):

1. Not be subject to an EQIA (with no mitigating measures required)
2. Not be subject to an EQIA (with mitigating measures /alternative policies)
3. Not be subject to an EQIA at this time
4. Be subject to an EQIA

If 1. or 2. (i.e. not be subject to an EQIA), please provide details of the reasons why:

If 2. (i.e. not be subject to an EQIA), in what ways can identified adverse impacts attaching to the policy be mitigated or an alternative policy be introduced?

In light of these revisions, is there a need to re-screen the revised/alternative policy? Yes / No. If No, please explain why

If 3. or 4. (i.e. to conduct an EQIA), please provide details of the reasons:

Timetabling and prioritising EQIA

If 3. or 4., is the policy affected by timetables established by other relevant public authorities? YES / NO

If YES, please provide details:

Please answer the following questions to determine priority for timetabling the EQIA. On a scale of 1-3, with 1 being the lowest priority and 3 being the highest, assess the policy in terms of its priority for EQIA.

Priority criterion	Rating (1-3)
Effect on equality of opportunity and good relations	
Social need	
Effect on people's daily lives	
Relevance to a public authority's functions	

Note: The Total Rating Score should be used to prioritise the policy in rank order with other policies screened in for EQIA. This list of priorities will assist you in timetabling the EQIA. Details of your EQIA timetable should be included in the quarterly Section 75 report.

Proposed date for commencing EQIA: _____

Monitoring

Effective monitoring will help identify any future adverse impacts arising from the policy which may lead you to conduct an EQIA, as well as help with future planning and policy development.

Please detail proposed monitoring arrangements below:

Approval and Authorisation

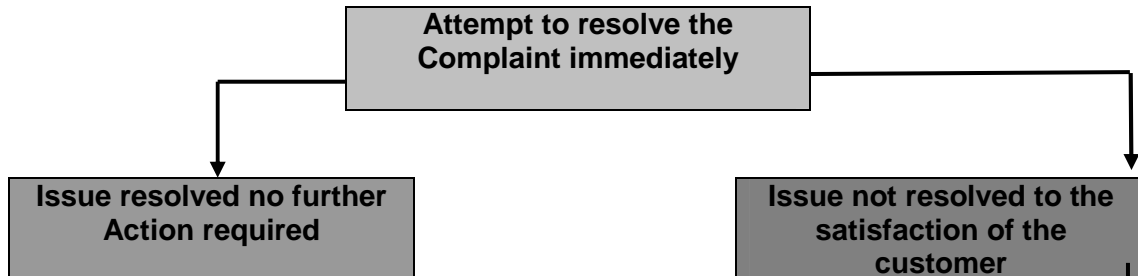
Screened by:	Position/Job Title	Date
Approved by:		

Note: A copy of the Screening Template, for each policy screened should be 'signed off' and approved by a senior manager responsible for the policy, made easily accessible on your website as soon as possible following completion and made available on request.

Appendix 5 – Council Complaints Procedure Flow Chart

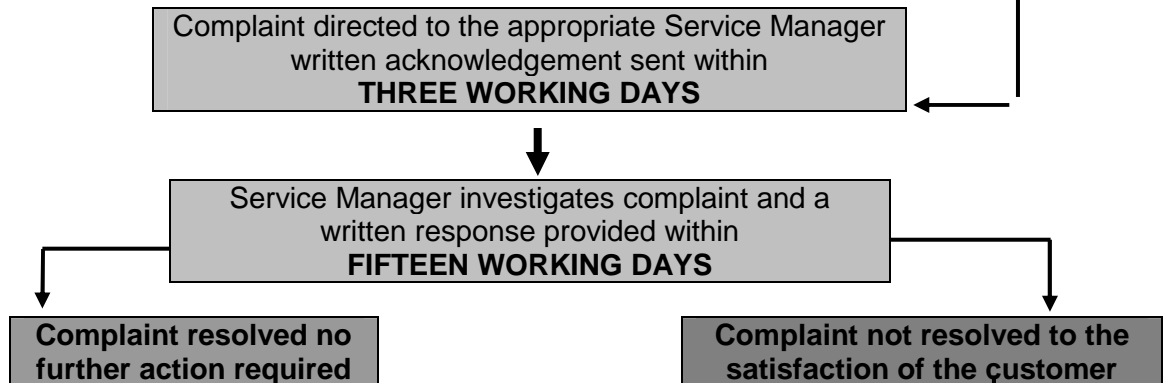
STAGE 1 – Service Level Complaint

This is the first opportunity for a Service to resolve a customer's dissatisfaction, and the majority of complaints will be resolved at this stage, either by the member of staff receiving the complaint or by the supervisor/manager of the Service concerned.



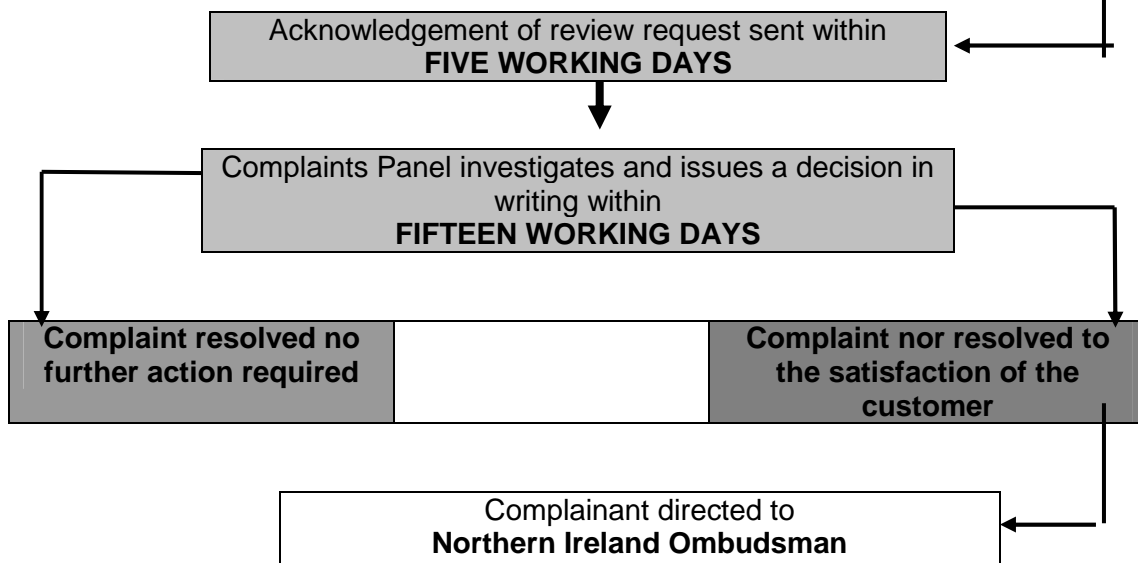
STAGE 2 – Service Level Review

The process for the Service Manager to look into a complaint not resolved at stage 1.



STAGE 3 – Complaints Strategic Level Review

If the Complainant remains dissatisfied with the Council's handling of the complaint it will be reviewed by the Chief Executive (or in his absence one of the Strategic Directors)



Appendix 6 - List of consultees

N I Council for Ethnic Minorities
NI African Cultural Centre
Chinese Welfare Association
Indian Community Centre
Traveller Movement (NI)
Multi-Cultural Resource Centre
Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister
Department for Social Development
Department of Health Social Services and Personal Safety
Department of Agriculture and Rural Development
Department for Regional Development
Department of Finance and Personnel
Department of Education Northern Ireland
Department for Employment and Learning
Department for Culture Arts and Leisure
Department of the Environment
Department of Enterprise Trade and Investment
Department of Justice
Age Concern NI
Help the Aged NI
Barnardos
NSPCC
Children's Law Centre
Save the Children
Child Poverty Action Group (NI)
Youth Council for NI
Carers National Association NI
Gingerbread NI
Rainbow Project
Gay and Lesbian Youth NI
Lesbian Line
Irish Congress of Trade Unions
Transport and General Workers Union
Union of Construction and Allied Trades Union
Green Party
NIPSA
Probation Board for NI
Buddhist centre
NILGOSC
Equality Commission NI
NI Gay Rights Association
NI Women's Aid Federation
Women's Forum NI
Women's Resource and Development Agency
Women's Support Network
Family Planning Association NI
Disability Action
William Keown Trust
NIPPA
Arthritis Care
Mencap
NI Association for Mental Health
British Deaf Association NI
Royal National Institute for the Blind
Royal National Institute for Deaf People (NI)
Downs Syndrome Association
Guide Dogs for the Blind Association
Cedar Foundation
Amnesty International
Rural Development Council for NI
NI Fishery Harbour Authority
Fisheries Conservancy Board for NI
Arts Council for NI
Sports Council for NI
Council for Catholic Maintained Schools
Mental Health Commission for NI
NI Ambulance Service
Health and Safety Agency for NI
Special EU Programmes Board
General Consumer Council for NI
NI Tourist Board
Labour Relations Agency
NI Housing Executive
Foyle, Carlingford and Irish Lights Commission
NIAC

Quakers Religious Society of Friends
 Jehovah's Witnesses
 Progressive Unionist Party (PUP)
 Age Concern Network of Newcastle &
 District
 Age NI
 Annahinchago Community Development
 Association
 Annsborough Community Development
 Forum
 Ardglass Community Centre
 Ardglass Development Association
 Aughlisnafin Community Association
 Aughlisnafin Youth Club
 Ballaghbeg & Ardkeel Residents
 Association Newcastle
 Ballee & District Community Group
 Ballyhornan & District Community
 Association
 Ballykinlar & Tyrella Cross Community
 Association
 Ballylone Flute Band
 Ballylone Rural Development Agency
 Ballynahinch & District Cross Community
 Relations Committee
 Ballynahinch Chamber of Commerce
 Ballynahinch Lions Club
 Ballynahinch Regeneration Ltd
 Ballynahinch / Drumaness / Spa
 Community Group
 Ballynahinch / Drumaness / Spa
 Community Safety
 Ballynoe Youth Club
 Blue Row Residents Association
 Castlewellan
 Bridge Centre Steering Committee
 Bridge Street & Mount Crescent
 Community Association Downpatrick
 Bright Community Association
 Bryansford Village Committee
 Burrenbridge Community Group
 CAPP
 Castlewellan Circular Road Residents
 Group
 Castlewellan Regeneration Ltd
 Cathedral Community Association
 Downpatrick
 Chris Hagen Media Services
 Clough & District Community Association
 Comhaltas

Community Dialogue
 CONNECT
 Cove Women's Group
 Crossgar Community Centre
 Crossgar Community Safety Forum
 Crossgar War Memorial Hall Committee
 Donard Probus Group
 Down Community Arts
 Down Community Health Committee
 Down Community Transport
 Down Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB)
 Down District Home Start
 Down Divisional Youth Office
 Down District Disability Forum
 Down Recorder
 Downpatrick & Co Down Railway Society
 NI Council for Voluntary Action
 Community Relations Council
 Employers Forum on Disability
 Local Government Staff Commission NI
 Social Democratic and Labour Party
 Ulster Unionist Party
 Sinn Fein
 Democratic Unionist Party
 Alliance Party of Northern Ireland
 Northern Ireland Women's Coalition
 (NIWC)
 Fire Authority for NI
 Downpatrick Business Forum
 Downpatrick Churches Together Group
 Downpatrick Probation office
 Downpatrick PSNI
 Downpatrick Soroptimists
 Downpatrick Surestart
 Drumaness & District Community
 Association
 Drumaness Youth Club
 Drumaness Youth, Fishing, Conservation
 and Heritage forum
 Drumaroad & Clanvaraghan Community
 Association
 Drumaroad Community Regeneration Ltd
 Drumlins Resident's Association
 Ballynahinch
 Dundrum Development Association
 Dundrum Village Association
 Dunmore Rural Association
 Dunmore Silver Band
 Wellington Memorial Silver Band

Dunsford Cross Community Resource Centre
Dunwellan Residents Association Newcastle
East Down Rural Community Network
Ecoseeds
Erinagh Road Ballynoe Group
Federation of Women's Institutes
Flying Horse Ward Community Forum
Downpatrick
Frank Rainey Memorial Band
Friends of Clarkill Dam
Friends of the Earth
Gallows Hill Residents Association
Downpatrick
Grange Community Association
Castlewellan
Greenhill YMCA
Harmony Community Trust Glebe House
Hollymount Pipe band
Hillside & Spa Community Association
Hollymount Rural Community Association
Holy Family Centre
Hugh J O'Boyle Training Ltd
Inverbrena Community Association
Inverbrena Community Centre
Karios Centre
Kennedy Square Residents Association
Downpatrick
Kilcoo & Tollymore Regeneration group
Killard Tenants Association, Ballyhornan
Killough Women's Group
Killough Youth & Community Hall
Committee
Killough Youth Club
Killyleagh Community Association
Killyleagh Development Association
Killyleagh Heritage & Safety Forum
Killyleagh Safety Forum
Killyleagh Social Partnership
Killyleagh Sustainable Development Forum
Kilmegan & Aughlisnafin Rural Community
Group
Lecale & Down Historical Society
Lecale Conservation Group
Lecale Gaelic Society (Cumann Gaelach
Leath Chathail)
Lecale Women's Group
Loughinisland & District Community
Association

South Eastern Regional College
Spa Wells Cultural Association
St Malachy's Accordion Band Kilcoo
St Michael's Parish Centre
St Vicent de Paul Society
Station Avenue Residents Association
Castlewellan
Strangford Community Association
Teconnaught Community Association
The Edge
Tollymore Mountain Centre
Tullykin Community Watch
Vianstown Heights Residents Association
Downpatrick
Vicent Centre
Volunteer Now
Well2 Project

Appendix 7 - Timetable for Proposed Measures

Measure	Lead responsibility	Timetable
Section 75 Annual Progress Report	Equality & Policy Officer / Chief Executive	31 August (annually)
Revised Equality Scheme Consultation on draft revised scheme Amendments to draft revised scheme Revised scheme submitted to Equality Commission NI	Equality & Policy Officer Equality & Policy Officer Equality & Policy Officer / Chief Executive	23 August 2011 to 15 November 2011 December 2011 1 February 2012
Equality Action Plan Consultation on draft action plan Finalised action plan published Arrangements for monitoring progress Implementation of action plan	Equality & Policy Officer Equality & Policy Officer Equality & Policy Officer / Senior Management team Equality & Policy officer / Senior Management Team	1 March 2012 – 1 May 2012 8 May 2012 Quarterly review by SMT 8 May 2012
Consultation list reviewed and updated	Equality & Policy Officer	September (annually)
Policy Screening Screening Reports	Equality & Policy Officer / Policy owner Equality & Policy Officer	Council policies are to be reviewed on a 2 year basis. If policy needs to be amended screening takes place. A list of policies screened and the outcome's published quarterly on the Council's website.

Measure	Lead responsibility	Timetable
EQIA timetable	Equality & Policy Officer / Policy owner	EQIA's are carried out using the Equality Commission NI recommendations
Training Council employees	Human Resources / Equality & Policy Officer	Employee training requirements are identified through the annual appraisal process / changes to procedures and statutory requirements. The requirements are scheduled in the Council's annual training programme
Seasonal workers	Human Resources / Equality & Policy Officer	'EqualityMatters' training provided to all new and seasonal employees as part of their induction training.
Accessing access to information and services	Information / service owner	Council will review access to its information and services on an annual basis.
Communication of equality scheme	Equality & Policy Officer	Council will advise of its revised Equality Scheme within 3 months of approval.
Review of equality scheme	Equality & Policy Officer / Chief Executive & Senior Management Team	In line with Council Corporate Plan (life of the Council normally every 4 years)

Appendix 8 - Action Plan / Action Measures

Serving the Community

Objective	Actions	Measures
Provide civic leadership and a cohesive voice for Down District	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Establish a Council Disability Awareness Working Group 2. Continue to support the work of Down Diversity in Action Forum 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Number of issues concerning disabled people identified and addressed. 2. Number of events held each year, to promote diversity either cultural or ethnic numbers participating
Improve services, facilities and customer experience.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Deliver an annual programme to achieve excellent services across all areas of engagement 2. Deliver an annual capital programme of new build, renovation and maintenance of Council managed assets 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Customer feedback and external accreditation of services 2. Ensure full compliance with access and use of facilities by S75 categories.
Contribute to a greener, cleaner environment	Establish state of the art Household Recycling Centres in Downpatrick and Ballynahinch	To further encourage and enable S75 categories to participate in recycling programmes
Establish collaborative partnerships	Develop existing partnerships and establish new ones	Number of capital, sports and community development programmes established through partnerships
Make local areas peaceful, harmonious and safe places	Programme of events aimed at increased participation balanced across social and community boundaries to reduce antisocial behaviour and hate crime	Number of participants, reduced levels of hate crime and antisocial behaviour

Objective	Actions	Measures
Support development of a healthier more active and sustainable community	1. Develop and deliver programmes to increase use of leisure facilities 2. Increase playing field provision 3. Promote community centre, sports hall and fitness suite provision.	} } Increase usage by 3% } }
Improve customer focus, communication and knowledge management	Introduce a new Customer Relations Management system to support improved customer service and responses to complaints	More efficient measurement of use of Council facilities by S75 categories which will assist more targeted and responsive programmes to these groups.

NOTE: - Council will carry out an audit of inequalities across its functions from August 2011 to September 2011 to enable the identification of potential functional areas for further or better discharge of its Section 75 duties. Four key areas will be included in the audit of inequalities:

- Arts & Leisure
- Development
- Corporate Governance
- Environmental Services

Findings from the audit will be included in the action plan which will be reviewed on an annual basis.

Appendix 9 – 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.

Action Measures and Outcomes

Specific measures to promote equality and good relations for the relevant Section 75 and good relations categories, linked to achievable outcomes, which should be realistic and timely.

Adverse Impact

Where a Section 75 category has been affected differently by a policy and the effect is less favourable, it is known as adverse impact. If a policy has an adverse impact on a Section 75 category, a public authority must consider whether or not the adverse impact is unlawfully discriminatory. In either case a public authority must take measures to redress the adverse impact, by considering mitigating measures and/or alternative ways of delivering the policy.

Affirmative Action

In general terms, affirmative action can be defined as being anything consistent with the legislation which is necessary to bring about positive change. It is a phrase used in the Fair Employment and Treatment Order (NI) 1998 to describe lawful action that is aimed at promoting equality of opportunity and fair participation in employment between members of the Protestant and Roman Catholic communities in Northern Ireland.

Article 55 Review

Under the Fair Employment and Treatment (NI) Order 1998, all registered employers must conduct periodic reviews of the composition of their workforces and of their employment practices for the purposes of determining whether members of the Protestant and Roman Catholic communities are enjoying, and are likely to continue to enjoy, fair participation in employment in each employer's concern. These reviews, which are commonly known as Article 55 Reviews, must be conducted at least once every three years.

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, and 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.

Differential Impact

Differential impact occurs where a Section 75 group has been affected differently by a policy. This effect could either be positive, neutral or negative. A public authority must make a judgement as to whether a policy has a differential impact and then it must determine whether the impact is adverse, based on a systematic appraisal of the accumulated information.

Discrimination

The anti-discrimination laws prohibit the following forms of discrimination:

- . Direct Discrimination
- . Indirect Discrimination
- . Disability Discrimination
- . Victimisation
- . Harassment

Brief descriptions of these above terms follow:

Direct Discrimination

This generally occurs where a public authority treats a person less favourably than it treats (or, would treat) another person, in the same or similar circumstances, on one or more of the statutory non-discrimination grounds. A decision or action that is directly discriminatory will normally be unlawful unless: (a) in an age discrimination case, the decision can be objectively justified, or (b) in any other case, the public authority can rely on a statutory exception that permits it – such as a genuine occupational requirement exception; or, a positive action exception which permits an employer to use “welcoming statements” or to take other lawful positive action to encourage participation by under-represented or otherwise disadvantaged groups.

Indirect Discrimination

The definition of this term varies across some of the antidiscrimination laws, but indirect discrimination generally occurs where a public authority applies to all persons a particular provision, criterion or practice, but which is one that has the effect of placing people who share a particular equality characteristic (e.g. the same sex, or religious belief, or race) at a particular disadvantage compared to other people. A provision, criterion or practice that is indirectly discriminatory will normally be unlawful unless (a) it can be objectively justified, or (b) the public authority can rely on a statutory exception that permits it.

Disability Discrimination

In addition to direct discrimination and victimisation and harassment, discrimination against disabled people may also occur in two other ways: namely, (a) Disability-related Discrimination, and (b) failure to comply with a duty to make reasonable adjustments.

(a) Disability-related Discrimination generally occurs where a public authority, without lawful justification, and for a reason which relates to a disabled person's disability, treats that person less favourably than it treats (or, would treat) other people to whom that reason does not (or, would not) apply.

(b) Failure to comply with a duty to make reasonable adjustments:

One of the most notable features of the disability discrimination legislation is that in prescribed circumstances it imposes a duty on employers, service providers and public authorities to take such steps as are reasonable to remove or reduce particular disadvantages experienced by disabled people in those circumstances.

Victimisation

This form of discrimination generally occurs where a public authority treats a person less favourably than it treats (or, would treat) another person, in the same or similar circumstances, because the person has previously exercised his/her rights under the anti-discrimination laws, or has assisted another person to do so. Victimisation cannot be justified and is always unlawful.

Harassment

Harassment generally occurs where a person is subjected to unwanted conduct that is related to a non-discrimination ground with the purpose, or which has the effect, of violating their dignity or of creating for them an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. Harassment cannot be justified and is always unlawful.

Economic Appraisal

An economic appraisal is a systematic process for examining alternative uses of resources, focusing on assessment of needs, objectives, options, costs benefits, risks, funding and affordability and other factors relevant to decisions.

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, and equality impact assessments, monitoring, training and arrangements for ensuring access to information and services.

Good Relations

Although not defined in the legislation, the 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'.

Mainstreaming Equality

The integration of equal opportunities principles, strategies and practices into the every day 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.

Mitigation of Adverse Impact

Where an equality impact assessment reveals that a particular policy has an adverse impact on equality of opportunity, a public authority must consider ways of delivering the policy outcomes which have a less adverse effect on the relevant Section 75 categories; this is known as mitigating adverse impact.

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.

Northern Ireland Statistics & Research Agency (NISRA)

The Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) is an Executive Agency within the Department of Finance and Personnel (DFP). They provide statistical and research information regarding Northern Ireland issues and provide registration services to the public in the most effective and efficient way.

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.

Positive Action

This phrase is not defined in any statute, but the Equality Commission understands it to mean any lawful action that a public authority might take for the purpose of promoting equality of opportunity for all persons in relation to employment or in accessing goods, facilities or services (such as health services, housing, education, justice, policing). It may involve adopting new policies, practices, or procedures; or changing or abandoning old ones. Positive action is not the same as positive discrimination. Positive discrimination differs from positive action in that positive action involves the taking of lawful actions whereas positive discrimination involves the taking of unlawful actions. Consequently, positive action is by definition lawful whereas positive discrimination is unlawful.

Qualitative Data

Qualitative data refers to the experiences of individuals from their perspective, most often with less emphasis on numbers or statistical analysis. Consultations are more likely to yield qualitative than quantitative data.

Quantitative Data

Quantitative data refers to numbers, typically derived from either a population in general or samples of that population. This information is often analysed by either using descriptive statistics, which consider general profiles, distributions and trends in the data, or inferential statistics, which are used to determine 'significance' either in relationships or differences in the data.

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.

Schedule 9

Schedule 9 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 sets out detailed provisions for the enforcement of the Section 75 statutory duties, including an outline of what should be included in an Equality Scheme.

Section 75 Investigation

An investigation carried out by the Equality Commission, under Schedule 9 of the NI Act 1998, arising from the failure of a public authority to comply with the commitments set out in its approved Equality Scheme. There are two types of Commission investigation, these are as follows:

1. An investigation of a complaint by an individual who claims to have been directly affected by the failure of a public authority to comply with its approved Equality Scheme;
2. An investigation initiated by the Commission, where it believes that a public authority may have failed to comply with its approved Equality Scheme.
