

EQUALITY COMMISSION FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

Public Authority 2010 – 2011 Annual Progress Report on Section 75 of the NI Act 1998 and Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Order (DDO) 2006

This report template includes a number of self assessment questions regarding implementation of the Section 75 statutory duties from **1 April 2010 to 31 March 2011**. This template also includes a number of questions regarding implementation of Section 49A of the DDO from the **1 April 2010 to 31 March 2011**. Please enter information at the relevant part of each section and ensure that it is submitted electronically (by completing this template) and in hardcopy, with a signed cover letter from the Chief Executive or, in his/her absence, the Deputy Chief Executive to the Commission by **31 August 2011**.

In completing this template it is essential to focus on the application of Section 75 and Section 49. This involves progressing the commitments in your equality scheme or disability action plan which should lead to outcomes and impacts in terms of measurable improvement for individuals from the equality categories. Such outcomes and impacts may include changes in public policy, in service provision and/or in any of the areas within your functional remit.

Name of public authority (Enter details below)

STRABANE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Equality Officer (Enter name and contact details below)

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Please indicate whether you would prefer to receive correspondence from the Commission by:

Post

Electronically

S75 Executive Summary

- What were the key policy/service developments made by the authority during this reporting period to better promote equality of opportunity and good relations and what outcomes were achieved?
 - During 2009-2010, the Council became a partner organisation in a £0.5 million project to support people with disabilities (CAWT Community Awareness Programme). During 2010-2011 the project board has agreed to support 10 proposals.
 - As part of its Active Communities programme the Council has increased participation in sport and physical recreation among under-represented groups including women and those with a disability.
 - The Council continues to take affirmative action including the use of a welcoming statement to help address the under-representation of protestant applicant flows.
 - The Council is continuing with its “Future Search” process to address the regeneration of the Strabane District.
 - A Good Relations strategy was developed to cover the period 2011-2014.
 - A revised Disability Action plan was developed and a local Disability Forum was established.
- What are the main initiatives planned in the coming year to ensure the authority improves outcomes in terms of equality of opportunity and good relations for individuals from the nine categories covered by Section 75?
 - The Council will appoint an Officer and an Elected member to become Equality and Diversity Champions for the Council. Both will participate in the initiative organised by the Local Government Staff Commission.
 - A new Equality Scheme will be developed and submitted to the Equality Commission.

- The Council will produce its new Corporate Strategy covering the period 2011-2015.
- The Council will develop and implement a new screening form in line with the Equality Commission guidelines.
- The Council will continue to train its elected members and staff on equality issues.
- Please give examples of changes to policies or practices which have resulted in outcomes. If the change was a result of an EQIA please tick the appropriate box in column 3 and reference the title of the relevant EQIA in the space provided below:

	Outline change in policy or practice which have resulted in outcomes	Tick if result of EQIA
Persons of different religious belief	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affirmative action in place to increase the representation of Protestants 	
Persons of different political opinion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	
Persons of different racial groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	
Persons of different age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	
Persons with different marital status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	
Persons of different sexual orientation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	
Men and women generally	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active Communities Programme in place to increase participation in sport and physical recreation among women. 	
Persons with and without a disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant sporting opportunities and coaching offered as part of our leisure and sports programme. 	
Persons with and without dependants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	

- Title/s of EQIAs referenced:

Section 1: Strategic Implementation of the Section 75 Duties

- Please outline evidence of progress made in developing and meeting equality and good relations objectives, performance indicators and targets in corporate and annual operating plans during 2010-11
- The Council continues to mainstream Equality and Good Relations targets within the Council's business plans and performance management tools.
- Within its current Corporate Strategy the Council includes a customer focused value which states:
"We aim to be a supportive, listening and responsive Council, valuing the well-being of our citizens and promoting equality of opportunity and good relations at all times".
- Specific corporate objectives to promote equality of opportunity and good relations are cascaded down from the corporate plan to departmental business plans and to individual employees through the Personal Development planning process.
- The business plans are developed in the format of a balanced scorecard with specific objectives and performance indicators.

Corporate Objectives for 2010/2011 included:

- To promote equality and good relations.

Measures included:

- Implementation of Good Relations action plan.
- Ratio of policies developed:screened.
- % of people who feel Strabane District Council treats everyone fairly and without discrimination.

The following was achieved:

- 100% of Good Relations action plan.
- Annual screening of 100% of policies.
- 62% of those surveyed feel Strabane District Council treats everyone fairly and without discrimination.

During 2010-2011, the Council developed a new Corporate Strategy covering the period 2011-2015. Within this strategy the Council has identified four main themes common across all its functions and services. The Council's commitment to promoting equality is one of these themes.

Section 2: Screening

- Please provide an update of new/proposed/revised policies screened during the year.

Title of policy subject to screening	Was the <u>F</u>ull Screening Report or the <u>R</u>esult of initial screening issued for consultation? Please enter <u>F</u> or <u>R</u>	Was initial screening decision changed following consultation? <u>Y</u>es/<u>N</u>o	Is policy being subject to EQIA? <u>Y</u>es/<u>N</u>o? If yes indicate year for assessment.
Privacy Policy	R	No	No
Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan	R	No	No
Procurement Policy	R	No	No
Building Control: Guidance notes and Procedures	R	No	No
Environmental Health ISO14001 Procedures	R	No	No
Travel and Subsistence Procedures	R	No	No
Grant Aid Policy	R	No	No
Street Naming and Property Numbering Policy	R	No	No

Section 3: Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA)

- Please provide an update of policies subject to EQIA during 2010-11, stage 7 EQIA monitoring activities and an indicative EQIA timetable for 2011-12

EQIA Timetable – April 2010 - March 2011

Title of Policy EQIA	EQIA Stage at end March 2011 (Steps 1-6)	Outline adjustments to policy intended to benefit individuals, and the relevant Section 75 categories due to be affected.
Council’s disposal of recreational land generally and the lease of land known locally as Vaughan’s Holm in particular	5	

- Where the EQIA timetable for 2010-11 (as detailed in the previous annual S75 progress report to the Commission) has not been met, please provide details of the factors responsible for delay and details of the timetable for re-scheduling the EQIA/s in question.

(Enter text below)

Ongoing EQIA Monitoring Activities April 2010- March 2011

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

- Please outline any proposals, arising from the authority’s monitoring for adverse impacts, for revision of the policy to achieve better outcomes the relevant equality groups:

(Enter text below)

2011-12 EQIA Time-table

Title of EQIAs due to be commenced during April 2011 – March 2012	Existing or New policy?	Please indicate expected timescale of Decision Making stage i.e. Stage 6
None planned		

Section 4: Training

- Please outline training provision during the year associated with the Section 75 Duties/Equality Scheme requirements including types of training provision and conclusions from any training evaluations.
 - The Council continues to provide equality awareness training as part of its induction for new employees.
 - Good Relations training delivered by Trademark was provided to Elected members and employees.
 - Sexual orientation awareness training delivered by Strabane/Lifford LGBT group was provided to employees.
 - A number of employees were trained as Harassment Advisors. This training was delivered by John Kremer, Queens University.
 - In addition, a number of Council employees attended external courses and seminars on equality and good relations issues.

Section 5: Communication

- Please outline how the authority communicated progress on delivery of the Section 75 Duties during the year and evidence of the impact/success of such activities.
 - Equality and Good Relations continues to be discussed at Senior Management team meetings.
 - The Good Relations and Equality Committee continue to meet on a regular basis.
 - A Flags and Emblems Forum has been established and a process for community engagement agreed.
 - A dedicated Equality page is included on the Council's website where reports are available to view or download.

Section 6: Data Collection & Analysis

- Please outline any systems that were established during the year to supplement available statistical and qualitative research or any research undertaken/commissioned to obtain information on the needs and experiences of individuals from the nine categories covered by Section 75, including the needs and experiences of people with multiple identities.

Grant Aid Equality Monitoring

Strabane District Council continues to collect equality data from grant aid recipients. This is based on a questionnaire developed based on best practice guidelines. Questionnaires are completed voluntarily and anonymously by the grant aid recipient and returned to the Council for analysis.

This monitoring has been in place since 2009. The trends will be monitored on an ongoing basis in order to ensure that grant aid is distributed fairly and equitably.

Customer Satisfaction Levels

Every year Strabane District Council undertakes a customer feedback survey to ascertain customer satisfaction about the way we deliver services. Each year residents are asked whether they agree that Strabane District Council treats everyone fairly and without discrimination. In 2010/2011, 62% agreed with this statement, 11% disagreed and 28% neither agreed nor disagreed with this statement or did not know. There has been an increase in the overall perception this year that Strabane District Council treats everyone fairly and without discrimination compared to last year.

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

The monitoring questionnaire used by the Council is based on that recommended by the Local Government Statutory Duty Network which, developed this following the guidance issued by the Equality Commission in 2007.

Section 7: Information Provision, Access to Information and Services

- Please provide details of any initiatives/steps taken during the year, including take up, to improve access to services including provision of information in accessible formats.
 - In accordance with the Equality Scheme, the Council has arrangements in place for providing information in alternative formats. These arrangements are outlined in the Linguistic Diversity Policy. The policy includes a monitoring form to inform the Council of which formats have been requested. The policy continues to be promoted in the local newspapers and in the Council's Snapshot Magazine. The format of the magazine including the font size is based on the guidelines of the RNIB. The Council also subscribes to Browse Aloud Software to assist the visually impaired.
 - The Council continues to develop welcome packs in Polish, Lithuanian, Vidu, Arabic and Hindu.
 - The Council will continue to keep under review the methods for providing information and access to services.

Section 8: Complaints

- Please identify the number of Section 75 related complaints:
 - received and resolved by the authority (including how this was achieved);
 - which were not resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant;
 - which were referred to the Equality Commission.

No complaints received in 2010/2011.

Section 9: Consultation and Engagement

- Please provide details of the measures taken to enhance the level of engagement with individuals and representative groups during the year.
- Please outline any use of the Commission's guidance on consulting with and involving children and young people.

Future Search

In January 2010, Strabane District Council teamed up with Ilex, Derry-Londonderry's urban regeneration company, to help bring a process called "Future Search" to Strabane District. Future Search is a unique planning method, used in communities around the world and proven to produce visible and long-lasting results. During the Future Search process for regenerating Strabane District we consulted and involved a wide range of citizens and other interested parties.

We also launched an online survey and a separate Future Search website, and set up Facebook and Twitter accounts to involve citizens and find out what they wanted for the future of Strabane District. Seven working groups from various sectors were also set up to develop action plans to tackle the main subject areas which need addressing to regenerate Strabane District.

Strabane District Council by ensuring inclusion of Section 75 representation from the outset has enabled people likely to be affected by the policy to participate directly in the development process.

Section 10: The Good Relations Duty

- Please provide details of additional steps taken to implement or progress the good relations duty during the year. Please indicate any findings or expected outcomes from this work.

Good Relations Activities 2010-2011

Flags and Emblems

Co-ordination of a multi-agency Flags and Emblems Forum, including community representation and additional community fora in three areas of the District. Three projects delivered, including two community audits re Flags and Emblems.

Conflict Resolution and Mediation Training

OCN accredited training delivered to community leaders and enhanced potential for agreement achieved.

Hate Crime Campaign

Strabane launch of the Hands Off My Friend third party Hate Crime reporting scheme which is a partnership between Derry, Limavady, Magherafelt and Strabane District Council's, Foyle Multicultural Forum and the PSNI.

Mentoring Programme

Project with the local LGBT Group and PSNI to develop a process and set of actions for future positive engagement with the LGBT community. Delivery of LGBT awareness to Response Teams.

Western Forum

Best practice meetings with other Good Relations Officers from Dungannon, Omagh, Fermanagh and Cookstown Councils.

Good Relations Planning and Audit and Strategy Development

Tendering process and appointment of consultant to undertake the obligatory Good Relation Audit and Strategy Development 2011-2014, in line with the requirements of the Community Relations Unit of OFMDFM.

Grant Aid

Cultural and Hard Issues grant aid awarded to eight groups and eight projects delivered. These include Barron Cultural Association, Strabane and Lifford Women's Centre, North West Traveller Support Group, Strabane Ethnic Community Association, Glenelly Historical Society, Border Arts (x2) and Carebears Cross Community Play Group.

Joint Project with Other Councils/Café Culture Conference

One conference delivered to participants from Omagh, Derry and Strabane District Council areas. Issues explored included ex-Prisoners, Victims of violence, Loyal Orders, Ethnic Minority Communities, GAA and LGBT community.

LGBT Projects/CAPT/Digital Photography/Vincent River Production

Liaison with Communities and Policing in Transition re mentoring project as an example of best practice. Delivery of a digital photography course for local LGBT members. Vincent River LGBT themed production at the Alley Theatre with associated workshop for local community representatives.

LGBT Training for SDC Staff

LGBT training delivered to Council staff by local LGBT group.

Anne Frank Exhibition

Part funding of the Anne Frank exhibition, exploring the Holocaust, at the Alley Theatre and training of tour guides.

Cultural Events at the Alley Theatre/In the Footsteps of Heroes/Mobile/Stagewrite

In line with the action plan deliver of three culturally specific events at the Alley Theatre, with the aim of encouraging hard to reach groups into Council facilities. These included Mobile, a Traveller specific Play, In the Footsteps of Heroes, a play exploring World War I and cross community involvement and Stagewrite Youth Theatre, exploring Good Relations issues through drama with young people.

Travellers/Personal Development/Civic Engagement

Delivery of personal development training to local Traveller women over a 10 week period, including a number of meetings with the Council Chairperson to increase Civic Engagement.

Summer Intervention Project

Delivery of a Summer Programme to children in the District including Good Relations activities, Arts and Sports.

Summer Diversionary Project

Delivery of a Diversionary Project aimed at diverting at risk young people away from Summer tensions in identified areas in the District, including Good Relations Training and outdoor pursuits.

Good Relations and Equality Committee

Quarterly meetings of the multi-agency Committee to oversee the work of Good Relations.

Translation

Contribution to translation costs Council communications to the Gaelscoil in conjunction with Corporate Policy Department.

Community Relations Week/Sharing Campaign

Production and delivery of a Good Relations 'Sharing' campaign in the run up to Community Relations Week. Includes billboards, adshells and telephone booths across the District. Promotional material purchased and promotional leaflets produced for distribution at Community Relations Week events.

- Please outline any use of the Commission's Good Relations Guide.
(Enter text below)

Section 11: New/Revised Equality Schemes

- If the Commission has notified you of its intention to request a new/revised scheme or formally requested a new/revised scheme and associated action plan, please outline below what progress has been made in this reporting period.

The Council has drafted a new Equality Scheme and is intending to go out to consultation in the next couple of weeks.

Section 12: Additional Comments

- Please provide any additional information/comments.

**DISABILITY ACTION PLAN MEASURES
2010-2011**

Action Measure	Expected Outcome	Performance Indicator	Progress
Screen all new policies to assess the significance of the policy on the disability duties.	Better promotion of equality for those with a disability.	All new and revised policies screened for impact on disability duties.	All new policies screened
Provide induction training to all new employees on the Council's Equality Scheme and Disability Action Plan.	Increased awareness of disability issues. Promotion of positive attitudes towards those with a disability.	All new employees trained on disability awareness within 3 months of commencing employment.	New employees receive Equality training including Disability awareness as part of induction
Provide equality and disability awareness training for staff and elected members.	Increased awareness of disability issues. Promotion of positive attitudes towards those with a disability.	50% of elected members and staff received training.	Elected members received Equality Awareness training as part of induction
Arrange regular meetings with recently established local Disability Forum.	Better promotion of equality for those with a disability.	4 meetings having taken place.	Meetings taking place on a regular basis

Action Measure	Expected Outcome	Performance Indicator	Progress
Consult with the local Disability Forum in relation to the development of the Council's new corporate plan.	Better promotion of equality for those with a disability.	Groups consulted with.	Consultation ongoing at present
Increase awareness among staff of the Disability Champion and the Disability in Local Council's initiative.	Better promotion of equality for those with a disability.	Attendance by Disability Champions at relevant courses/events.	Disability Champions attended relevant events
Assist with the delivery of the CAWT Project, (Corporation and Working Together) community awareness programme to enable citizenship for adults with a disability.	Increased awareness and understanding of disability within the community. Improve choice and access for people with a disability to services and facilities.	Action plan developed.	10 Proposals agreed to commence in 2011/2012

Action Measure	Expected Outcome	Performance Indicator	Progress
Increase participation in sport and physical recreation among those with a disability through the Active Communities programme and other sporting initiatives.	Increased participation in sport and physical recreation among those with a disability.	15% of those participating in the Active Communities programme have a disability.	Fully Achieved
Engage with disability groups to make them fully aware of the assisted Bin Lift scheme.	Increased awareness of the assisted Bin Lift scheme.	A review completed of the assisted Bin Lift scheme	Fully Achieved
Provide work experience placements for disabled persons	Better promotion of equality for those with a disability.	3 work placements.	Fully Achieved
Review and report on progress of the Disability Action Plan annually.	Increased awareness of Council's achievements in relation to disability duties.	Annual progress report completed and forwarded to the Equality Commission	Fully Achieved

DISABILITY ACTION ACHIEVED 2009/2010

- The Council participated in the Disability in Local Councils Initiative and appointed an officer and elected member Disability Champions to lead the initiative at Council level.
- Strabane District Council successfully bid to become a partner organisation in a £0.5m project, Co-operation and Working Together (CAWT) Community Awareness Programme to support people with disabilities in the 2009/10 financial year.

Project aim

The overall aim of the Citizenship Project is to enable citizenship for adults with a learning and/or physical and/or sensory disability by creating locally based alternatives to the traditional model of day care which will be developed and delivered in partnership with the individuals themselves, their families and friends and existing local voluntary, community and statutory sector organisations.

Objectives of the project

- Increase awareness and understanding of disability within local communities
 - Support people with a disability to maximise use of the existing infrastructure within their local community
 - Improve choice and enhance access for people with a disability to services and facilities in their local community
 - Create locally based alternatives to traditional models of day care
 - Disseminate the good practice and learning from the project
- External funding was received from Sports Northern Ireland for an Active Communities programme. The aim of this programme is to increase participation in sport and physical recreation among under-represented groups including women and those with a disability.

- The Council's Alley Theatre received the William Keown Trust's coveted Prestige Access Award, highlighting the venues' excellent design, access and service to people with disabilities.