

Equality scheme for Northern Ireland Museums 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 on 028 90550215 or
by emailing info@nimc.co.uk***



***Northern Ireland Museums Council
6, Crescent Gardens
Belfast
BT7 1NS***

Approved by the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland on 24th April 2013

Foreword

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

In our equality scheme we set out how the Northern Ireland Museums 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 staff and board members are made fully aware of our equality scheme and understand the commitments and obligations within it.

We, Lexie Scott, Chair of NIMC, and Chris Bailey, Director of NIMC, are fully committed to effectively fulfilling our Section 75 statutory duties across all our functions (including service provision, employment and procurement) through the effective implementation of our equality scheme.

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 that we are determined to ensure there are opportunities for people affected by our work to positively influence how we carry out our functions in line with our Section 75 statutory duties. It also offers the means whereby persons directly affected by what they consider to be a failure on our part to comply with our equality scheme can make complaints.

¹ See section 1.1 of our Equality Scheme.

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

Lexie Scott
Chair of NIMC Board

Chris Bailey
Director

Date

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Chapter 1 Introduction

Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998

1.1 Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 (the Act) requires the Northern Ireland Museums Council (NIMC) to comply with two statutory duties:

Section 75 (1)

In carrying out our functions relating to Northern Ireland we are required to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between

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

Section 75 (2)

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

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

How we propose to fulfil the Section 75 duties in relation to the relevant functions of the NIMC:

1.2 Schedule 9 4. (1) of the Act requires NIMC as a designated public authority to set out in an equality scheme how it proposes to fulfil the duties imposed by Section 75 in relation to its relevant functions. This equality scheme is intended to fulfil that statutory requirement. It is both a statement of our arrangements for fulfilling the Section 75 statutory duties and our plan for their implementation.

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

1.3 The Northern Ireland Museums Council is committed to the discharge of its Section 75 obligations in all parts of our organisation. We will commit the necessary available resources in terms of people, time and money to ensure that the Section 75 statutory duties are complied with and that our equality scheme can be implemented effectively.

Who we are and what we do

1.4 By the nature of its work and its ethos NIMC is committed to the promotion of equality of opportunity, good relations and diversity.

NIMC's overall aim is to support local museums across Northern Ireland in maintaining and improving their standards of collections care and public service. It pursues this aim through a series of objectives, set out in the Council's Corporate Plan 2011-15, which are:

Collections Care, Management and Use

To improve the standards of collections care and management across local museums

To assist museums in the development of their collections

To support research on museum collections

Developing Audiences

To raise the profile of museums

To assist museums to gain a better understanding of the needs of their visitors and users

To enhance public access to museums and their collections

Education and Learning

To support learning in museums across Northern Ireland

To provide training and opportunities for continuous professional development for museum staff

Infrastructure and Resources

To manage the Museum Accreditation Scheme

To provide advocacy, support and guidance for local museums

To enhance the resource base for the sector

To undertake research in support of the sector

Governance and Accountability

To manage the Council in an effective, efficient and sustainable manner

To be open and accountable in managing public money and resources

Established in 1993, the Northern Ireland Museums Council is constituted as a company limited by guarantee (without share capital) and has charitable status. For policy and administrative purposes, the Council is classified as an executive non-departmental public body and is an arm's-length body of the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure. It is governed by a Board of Directors comprising Ministerial nominees, representatives from District Councils, voluntary and independent museums, the Northern Ireland Museum Curators Group, the universities and the National Museums Northern Ireland.

The Council is the principal advocate for the sector and the lead body for the development and support of local museums in Northern Ireland. NIMC is the conduit for the government's support of non-national museums and as such receives funding from the Northern Ireland Assembly, through the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure. It also provides information and guidance on associated policy matters to government.

The work of the Council supports the Northern Ireland Museums Policy, launched by the Minister for Culture, Arts and Leisure in March 2011, and which maps the way forward for museums over the next ten years.

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

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.

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 NIMC Director. The Director is accountable to the Board of the Northern Ireland Museums 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 us at the address given below and we will respond to you as soon as possible:

Northern Ireland Museums Council
6, Crescent Gardens
Belfast, BT7 1NS
Tel: 028 90550215
E-mail: info@nimc.co.uk

2.5 Objectives and targets relating to the statutory duties will be integrated into our strategic and operational business plans³.

2.6 Employees' job descriptions and performance plans reflect their contributions to the discharge of the Section 75 statutory

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

duties and implementation of the equality scheme, where relevant. The personal performance plans are subject to appraisal in the annual performance review.

2.7 NIMC will prepare 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 the Section 75 statutory duties will also be included in our annual report.

2.8 The latest Section 75 annual progress report is available on the equality section of our website www.nimc.co.uk or by contacting:

Northern Ireland Museums Council
6, Crescent Gardens
Belfast, BT7 1NS
Tel: 028 90550215
E-mail: info@nimc.co.uk

2.9 The Northern Ireland Museums Council will liaise closely with the Equality Commission to ensure that progress on the implementation of our equality scheme is maintained.

2.10 NIMC has developed an action plan to promote equality of opportunity and good relations. This action plan is set out in Appendix 6 below.

Action plan/action measures

2.11 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. The audit of inequalities will gather and analyse information across the Section 75

categories⁴ to identify the inequalities that exist for our service users and those affected by our policies⁵.

2.12 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.

2.13 We will develop any action plans for a period of between one and five years in order to align them with our corporate and business planning cycles.

2.14 We will seek input from our stakeholders and consult on our action plan before we send it to the Equality Commission.

2.15 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.

2.16 NIMC will inform the Commission of any changes or amendments to our action plan and will also include this information in our Section 75 annual progress report to the Commission. Our Section 75 annual progress report will incorporate information on progress we have made in implementing our action plans/action measures.

2.17 When finalised, our action plan will be available on the Equality Section of our website at www.nimc.co.uk

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

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

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

Chapter 3 Our arrangements for consulting

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

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

3.1 We recognise the importance of consultation in all aspects of the implementation of our statutory equality duties. We will consult on our equality scheme, action measures, equality impact assessments and other matters relevant to the Section 75 statutory duties.

3.2 We are committed to carrying out consultation in accordance with the following principles (as contained in the Equality Commission's guidance '*Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 – A Guide for Public Authorities (April 2010)*')

3.2.1 All consultations will seek the views of those directly affected by the matter/policy, whether or not they have a direct economic or personal interest. They may include bodies such as the Equality Commission, representative groups of Section 75 categories, other public authorities, voluntary and community groups, our staff and, where appropriate their trades unions, and such other groups who have a legitimate interest in the matter, whether or not they have a direct economic or personal interest.

Initially all consultees (see Appendix 3), as a matter of course, will be notified (by email or post) of the matter/policy being consulted upon to ensure they are aware of all consultations. Thereafter, to ensure the most effective use of our and our 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 engage with affected individuals and representative groups to identify how best to consult or engage

with them. We will ask our consultees what their preferred consultation methods are and will give consideration to these.

We may develop other additional methods of consultation more appropriate to key stakeholders and the matter being consulted upon.

Methods of consultation could include:

- face-to-face meetings;
- focus groups;
- written documents with the opportunity to comment in writing;
- questionnaires;
- information/notification by email with an opportunity to opt in/opt out of the consultation;
- internet discussions; or
- telephone consultations.

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

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

Information will be made available, on request, in alternative formats⁶, in a timely manner. We will ensure that such consultees have sufficient time to respond.

3.2.4 NIMC will ensure that specific training is available to those facilitating consultations to ensure that they have the necessary skills to communicate effectively with consultees.

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

3.2.5 To ensure effective consultation with consultees⁷ on Section 75 matters, we will develop a programme of awareness raising on the Section 75 statutory duties and the commitments in our equality scheme by undertaking the awareness raising and training arrangements as set out in Chapter 5.

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 commitments⁸.

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, the need for childcare or support for carers, and whether a signer and/or interpreter is necessary.

3.2.9 We will make all relevant information available to consultees in appropriate formats to ensure meaningful consultation. This

⁷ Please see Appendix 3 for a list of our consultees

⁸ Please see below at 4.27 to 4.31 for details on monitoring.

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. The feedback is provided in formats suitable to consultees. (Please see also 6.3)

3.3 A list of our consultees is included in this equality scheme at Appendix 3. It can also be obtained from our website at

www.nimc.co.uk

or by contacting

Northern Ireland Museums Council
6, Crescent Gardens
Belfast, BT7 1NS
Tel: 028 90550215
E-mail: info@nimc.co.uk

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 NIMC to provide your contact details and have your areas of interest noted or have your name/details removed or amended. Please also inform us at this stage if you would like information sent to you in a particular format or language.

Chapter 4 **Our arrangements for assessing, monitoring and publishing the impact of policies**

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

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

4.1 In the context of Section 75, 'policy' is very broadly defined and it covers all the ways in which we carry out or propose to carry out our functions in relation to Northern Ireland. In respect of this equality scheme, the term policy is used for any (proposed/amended/existing) strategy, policy initiative or practice and/or decision, whether written or unwritten and irrespective of the label given to it, eg, 'draft', 'pilot', 'high level' or 'sectoral'.

4.2 In making any decision with respect to a policy adopted or proposed to be adopted, we take into account any assessment and consultation carried out in relation to the policy, as required by Schedule 9 9. (2) of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

4.3 The Northern Ireland Museums 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 appropriate 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 relevant information and data, both qualitative and quantitative. In taking this evidence into account we consider the different needs,

experiences and priorities for each of the Section 75 equality categories. Any screening decision will be informed by this evidence.

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

1. the policy has been 'screened in' for equality impact assessment.
2. the policy has been 'screened out' with mitigation⁹ 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 NIMC.

4.11 If our screening concludes that the likely impact of a policy is 'major' in respect of one, or more, of the equality of opportunity and/or good relations categories, we will normally subject the policy to an equality impact assessment. This screening decision will be 'signed off' by the appropriate policy lead within the Council.

⁹ Mitigation – Where an assessment (screening in this case) reveals that a particular policy has an adverse impact on equality of opportunity and / or good relations, a public authority must consider ways of delivering the policy outcomes which have a less adverse effect on the relevant Section 75 categories.

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 NIMC.

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.nimc.co.uk

and on request by contacting.

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6, Crescent Gardens
Belfast, BT7 1NS
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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 will be published quarterly [see below at 4.20 - 4.22 and 4.23 for details].

Equality Impact Assessment

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

4.17 Once a policy is screened and screening has identified that an equality impact assessment is necessary, we will carry out the

EQIA in accordance with Equality Commission guidance. The equality impact assessment will be carried out as part of the policy development process, before the policy is implemented.

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

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

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

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

What we publish

4.20 Screening reports

These are published quarterly. Screening reports detail:

- All policies screened by the NIMC over the three month period.
- A statement of the aim(s) of the policy/policies to which the assessment relates.
- A brief description of the policy.
- 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 outcome, i.e.:
 - whether the policy has been ‘screened in’ for equality impact assessment.
 - whether the policy has been ‘screened out’ with mitigation or an alternative policy proposed to be adopted.
 - whether the policy has been ‘screened out’ without mitigation or an alternative policy proposed to be adopted.

- Where applicable, a timetable for conducting equality impact assessments
- A link to the completed screening template(s) on our website

4.21 Screening templates

For details on the availability of our screening templates please refer to 4.13.

4.22 Equality impact assessments

EQIA reports are published once the impact assessment has been completed. These reports include:

- A statement of the aim of the policy assessed.
- Information and data collected.
- Details of the assessment of impact(s).
- Consideration given to measures which might mitigate any adverse impact.
- Consideration given to alternative policies which might better achieve the promotion of equality of opportunity.
- Consultation responses.
- The decision taken.
- Future monitoring plans.

How we publish the information

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

Where we publish the information

4.24 The results of our assessments (screening reports and completed templates, the results of equality impact assessments) are available on our website

www.nimc.co.uk

and also by contacting:

Northern Ireland Museums Council
6, Crescent Gardens
Belfast, BT7 1NS
Tel: 028 90550215
E-mail: info@nimc.co.uk

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 is also sent directly to all consultees on a quarterly basis.

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

Our arrangements for monitoring any adverse impact of policies we have adopted on equality of opportunity
(Schedule 9 4. (2) (c))

4.27 Monitoring can assist us to deliver better public services and continuous improvements. Monitoring Section 75 information involves the processing of sensitive personal data (data relating to the racial or ethnic origin of individuals, sexual orientation, political opinion, religious belief, etc). In order to carry out monitoring in a confidential and effective manner, NIMC 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 the nine equality categories on an ongoing basis

- The collection, collation and analysis of existing relevant secondary quantitative and qualitative data across the 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 consider 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 reviewed 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 on an ongoing basis.

Our arrangements for publishing the results of our monitoring (Schedule 9 4. (2) (d))

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 The Section 75 annual progress report will be made available on our website and hard copies will be provided on request

4.35 All information published is accessible and can be made available in alternative formats on request. Please see below at 6.3 for details.

Chapter 5 Staff training

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

Commitment to staff training

5.1 We recognise that awareness raising and training play a crucial role in the effective implementation of our Section 75 duties.

5.2 Our Director wishes to positively communicate the commitment of NIMC 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. NIMC will draw up a detailed training plan for its staff which will aim to achieve the following objectives.

- to raise awareness of the provisions of Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act, our equality scheme commitments and the particular issues likely to affect people across the range of Section 75 categories to ensure that our staff fully understand their role in implementing the scheme.
- to provide those staff involved in the assessment of policies (screening and EQIA) with the necessary skills and knowledge to do this work effectively.
- to provide those staff who deal with complaints in relation to compliance with our equality scheme with the necessary skills and knowledge to investigate and monitor complaints effectively.
- to provide those staff involved in consultation processes with the necessary skills and knowledge to do this work effectively.
- to provide those staff involved in the implementation and monitoring of the effective implementation of the DCAL equality scheme with the necessary skills and knowledge to do this work effectively.

Awareness raising and training arrangements

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

- We will provide access to copies of the full equality scheme to all staff and answer any queries or questions from staff.
- The NIMC staff and Board will receive a briefing on this equality scheme within 6 months of its approval
- The Section 75 statutory duties form part of the induction training of new staff.
- Where appropriate, training will be provided to staff to ensure that they become aware of issues surrounding the Council's Section 75 duties

5.5 In order to share resources and expertise, NIMC will, where possible, work closely with other bodies and agencies in the development and delivery of training. Training and awareness raising programmes will, where, relevant, be developed in association with the appropriate Section 75 groups and our staff.

Monitoring and evaluation

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

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

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

(Schedule 9 4. (2) (f))

6.1 NIMC is committed to ensuring that the information we disseminate and the services we provide are fully accessible to all parts of the community in Northern Ireland. We keep our arrangements under review to ensure that this remains the case.

6.2 We are aware that some groups will not have the same access to information as others. In particular:

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

Access to information

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

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

NIMC will liaise with representatives of young people, people with disabilities and minority ethnic organisations and take account of existing and developing good practice.

We will respond to requests for information in alternative formats in a timely manner.

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

6.5 We will also provide information through our website.

Access to services

6.6 NIMC is committed to ensuring that all of our services are fully accessible to everyone in the community across the Section 75 categories. NIMC also adheres to the relevant provisions of current anti-discrimination legislation.

6.7 NIMC will continue promote its services in order to ensure a widespread uptake across the Section 75 categories.

Assessing public access to information and services

6.8 We will monitor, on an annual basis, all of our functions in relation to access of information and services, to ensure equality of opportunity and the promotion of good relations.

6.9 This will be carried out when reviewing our functions and services as part of our Annual Progress Report to the Equality Commission.

Chapter 7 Timetable for measures we propose in this equality scheme

(Schedule 9 4. (3) (b))

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

Chapter 8 Our complaints procedure (Schedule 9 10.)

8.1 NIMC is responsive to the views of members of the public. We will endeavour to resolve all complaints made to us.

8.2 Schedule 9 paragraph 10 of the Act refers to complaints. A person can make a complaint to a public authority if the complainant believes he or she may have been directly affected by an alleged failure of the authority to comply with its approved equality scheme.

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

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

Director
Northern Ireland Museums Council
6, Crescent Gardens
Belfast, BT7 1NS
Tel: 028 90550215
E-mail: dir@nimc.co.uk

8.4 NIMC has a three stage complaints procedure, as follows:

Stage I

All complaints received by NIMC will be recorded and dealt with initially by the Director, who will carry out an internal investigation on the matter. The Director will respond to the complainant within seven days, stating either the findings of the investigation or acknowledging receipt of the complaint and giving the date by which NIMC will respond to the complainant in full. This will be no

more than 28 days. The correspondence will also detail the second and third stages of the NIMC complaints procedure.

Stage II

Should the response received under Stage I not satisfy the complainant, NIMC will review the concerns further. This will be led by the Chairman, who will respond to the complainant within 28 days. This will constitute the final response of NIMC on the matter. The complainant will be informed that if s/he feels that the matter has not been satisfactorily resolved, s/he may pursue the complaint further through the offices of the Ombudsman for N. Ireland or the Equality Commission.

Stage III

Any complaint which reaches this stage must be regarded as a serious matter and will be considered by the Board directly. NIMC will co-operate fully with the offices of the Ombudsman or the Commission.

8.5 In any subsequent investigation by the Equality Commission, NIMC will co-operate fully, providing access in a timely manner to any relevant documentation that the Equality Commission may require.

Similarly, NIMC 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.

8.6 NIMC will make all efforts to implement promptly and in full any recommendations arising out of any Commission investigation.

Chapter 9 Publication of our equality scheme

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

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

Northern Ireland Museums Council
6, Crescent Gardens
Belfast, BT7 1NS
Tel: 028 90550215
E-mail: info@nimc.co.uk

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

www.nimc.co.uk

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

- We will make every effort to communicate widely the existence and content of our equality scheme. This may include press releases, prominent advertisements in the press, the internet and direct mail shots to groups representing the various categories in Section 75.
- We will email a link of NIMC's approved equality scheme to our S75 consultees. 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.
- 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.

9.4 For a list of our Section 75 consultees please see Appendix 3 of the equality scheme or visit the equality section of our website at

www.nimc.co.uk

or contact us using the details above.

Chapter 10 Review of our equality scheme

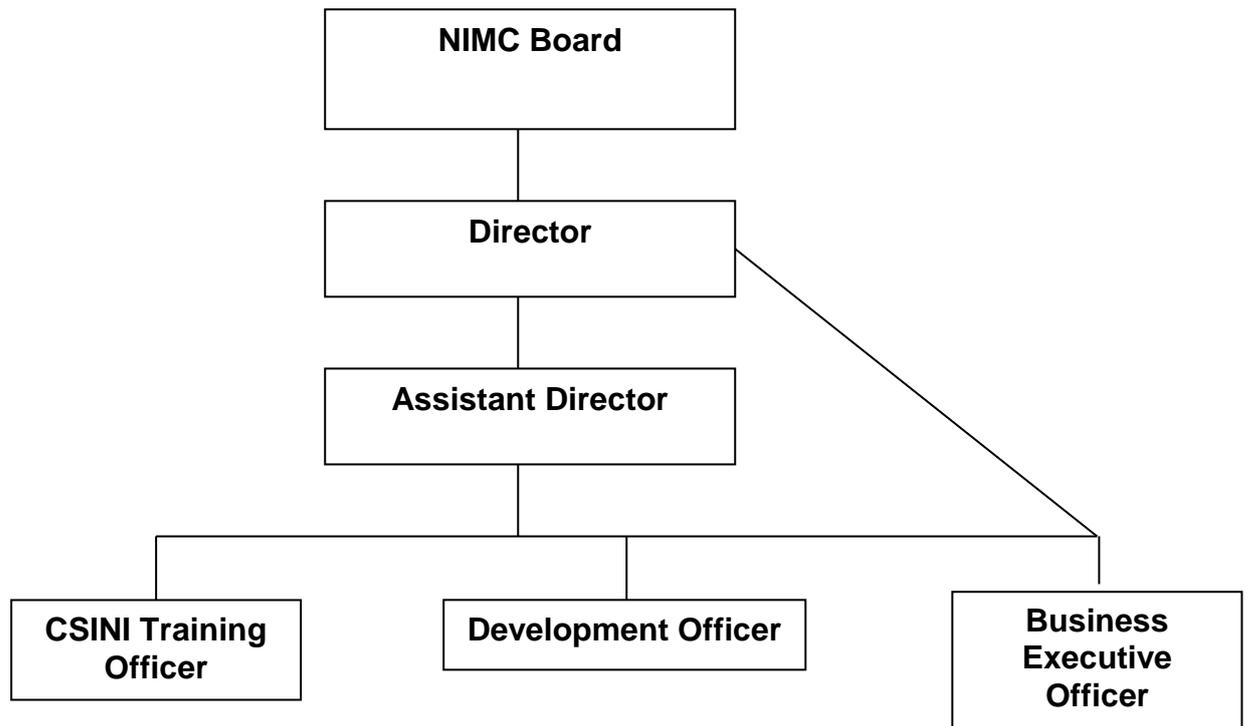
(Schedule 9 8. (3))

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

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

10.2 In undertaking this review we will follow any guidance issued by the Equality Commission. A report of this review will be sent to the Equality Commission and made available on our website

Appendix 1 NIMC Organisation chart



Appendix 2 Example groups relevant to the Section 75 categories for Northern Ireland purposes
Please note, this list is for illustration purposes only, it is not exhaustive.

Category	Example groups
Religious belief	Buddhist; Catholic; Hindu; Jewish; Muslims, people of no religious belief; Protestants; Sikh; other faiths. 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> ¹⁰ . 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> ”.
Political opinion ¹¹	Nationalist generally; Unionists generally; members/supporters of other political parties.
Racial group	Black people; Chinese; Indians; Pakistanis; people of mixed ethnic background; Polish; Roma; Travellers; White people.
Men and women generally	Men (including boys); Trans-gendered people; Transsexual people; women (including girls).
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.

¹⁰ See Section 98 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, which states: “*In this Act...“political opinion” and “religious belief” shall be construed in accordance with Article 2(3) and (4) of the Fair Employment & Treatment (NI) Order 1998.*”

¹¹ *ibid*

Appendix 3

List of Consultees (Schedule 9.4 (2) (a))

Religious Belief

Archdiocese of Armagh
Association of Baptist Churches in Ireland
Bahai Faith
Belfast Hebrew Congregation
Belfast Islamic Centre
Church of Ireland Board for Social Responsibility
Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints
Free Presbyterian Church
Methodist Church in Ireland
Potala Kadampa Buddhist Centre
Presbyterian Church in Ireland
Religious Society of Friends
Ulster Temple Church

Political Opinion

Alliance Party
Democratic Unionist Party
Green Party
Progressive Unionist Party
Sinn Fein
Social and Democratic Labour Party
Traditional Unionist Voice
Ulster Unionist Party

Racial Group

Al-Nisa Association
An Munia Tober
Artsekta Ltd
Chinese Welfare Association
Embrace
Indian Community Centre
Migrant Workers Support Network
Multi-Cultural Group
Multi-Cultural Resource Centre
Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities
Northern Ireland Muslim Family Association
Polish Association NI

Men and Women Generally

Belfast and Lisburn Women's Aid
Derry Well Women
Family Planning Association NI
Federation of Women's Institutes NI
Fermanagh Women's Network
Newry and Mourne Women
Northern Ireland Women's Aid Federation
The Men's Project
The Women's Centre
Women's Forum Northern Ireland
Women's Resource and Development Agency
Women's Support Network

Marital Status

Mediation Northern Ireland
AccordNI
Relate Northern Ireland

Age

Age NI
Barnardo's Northern Ireland
Challenge for Youth
Children in Northern Ireland
Children's Law Centre
Early Years
Girl Guiding Ulster
Include Youth
National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children
Northern Ireland Youth Forum
NUS USI
Playboard
Save the Children
University of the 3rd Age Foyle
Youth Council for Northern Ireland
Youth Link Northern Ireland

Disability

Action Cancer
Action on Hearing Loss
ADAPT NI
Arthritis Care NI
Arts and Disability Forum

Autism NI
British Deaf Association (NI)
Cedar Foundation
Disability Action
Down and Lisburn Carers Forum
Downs Syndrome Association
Epilepsy Action Northern Ireland
MENCAP
MS Society
NI Dyslexia Association
NI Union of Supported Employment
North West Forum of People with Disabilities
Northern Ireland Association for Mental Health
Northern Ireland Chest Heart and Stroke Association
Northern Ireland ME Association
Open Arts
PHAB NI
Praxis Care
Royal National Institute for the Blind

Dependents

Carers Northern Ireland
Cause for Mental Health
Gingerbread
Newry and Mourne Carers
Praxis Care
Stroke Association NI

Sexual Orientation

Belfast Butterfly Club
Cara Friend
Coalition on Sexual Orientation
Foyle Friend
Gay and Lesbian Youth NI
Queerspace
Rainbow Project

Education

Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education
Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta
Council for Catholic Maintained Schools
Governing Bodies Association NI
Queen's University

University of Ulster
British Council
Workers' Education Association
Open College Network
Association of Northern Ireland Colleges
Ulster People's College
Belfast Education and Library Board
North-Eastern Education and Library Board
South-Eastern Education and Library Board
Southern Education and Library Board
Western Education and Library Board

Equality, Community and Voluntary Organisations

Bryson House
Community Relations Council
Confederation of Community Groups
Equality Commission
Labour Relations Agency
NIACRO
Northern Ireland Anti-Poverty Network
Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People
Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action
Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission
Rural Community Network
Rural Development Council
Volunteer Now

Local Councils

Antrim Borough Council
Ards Borough Council
Armagh City and District Council
Ballymena Borough Council
Ballymoney Borough Council
Banbridge District Council
Belfast City Council
Carrickfergus Borough Council
Castlereagh Borough Council
Coleraine Borough Council
Cookstown District Council
Craigavon Borough Council
Derry City Council
Down District Council
Dungannon and South Tyrone Borough Council

Fermanagh District Council
Larne Borough Council
Limavady Borough Council
Lisburn City Council
Magherafelt District Council
Moyle District Council
Newry and Mourne District Council
Newtownabbey Borough Council
North Down Borough Council
Omagh District Council
Strabane District Council

Departments

Department of Agriculture and Rural Development
Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure
Department of Education
Department of Employment and Learning
Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment
Department of Environment
Department of Finance and Personnel
Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety
Department of Justice
Department of Regional Development
Department of Social Development
Northern Ireland Office
Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister

Appendix 4 Timetable for measures proposed
(Schedule 9 4.(3) (b))

Measure	Lead responsibility	Timetable
Section 75 Annual Progress Report [2.7]	Director	31 August (annually)
Consultation on draft action plan [2.14]	Director	September – December 2011
Finalised action plan published [2.17]	Director	January 2012
Arrangements for monitoring progress on delivery of action plan [2.15]	Director	31 August (annually)
Consultation list reviewed and updated [3.4]	Director	August (annually)
Screening Timetable [4.5]	Director	Ongoing
Screening Reports [4.15]	Director	Quarterly
EQIA Timetable [4.16]	Director	Ahead of consultation exercise
Review of EQIA monitoring information [4.31]	Director	August (annually)

Publication of monitoring information [4.33;4.34]	Director	August (annually)
Development of training programme [5.3]	Director	August (annually)
Circulation and briefing of NIMC Board and Staff [5.4]	Director	Within 6 months of scheme approval
Update training [5.4]	Director	Annually
Evaluation of Training [5.6]	Director	Following provision of training
Assessing access to information and services	Director	Ongoing
Communication of Equality Scheme [9.3]	Director	Ongoing
Notification of approved scheme to consultees [9.3]	Director	Within 6 months of scheme approval
Review of equality scheme [10.1]	Director	Within 5 years

Appendix 5 Glossary of terms

Action Plan

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

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.

Audit of Inequalities

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

Consultation

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

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.

Equality impact assessment

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

Equality of opportunity

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

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

Equality Scheme

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

Good Relations

Although not defined in the legislation, the 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."

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.

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.

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.

Section 75

Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act provides that each public authority is required, in carrying out its functions relating to Northern Ireland, to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between:-

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

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

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 Equality 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 Equality Commission, where it believes that a public authority may have failed to comply with its approved equality scheme.

Appendix 6



Northern Ireland Museums Council

Section 75

DRAFT ACTION PLAN

2011-2015

INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 As recommended in the Equality Commission Guide on Section 75 the Northern Ireland Museums Council has taken a systematic look at its functions and how they relate to the promotion of equality of opportunity and of good relations for our service users and those affected by our policies.
- 1.2 The NIMC Audit of Section 75 Inequalities which forms the first component of this action plan informs the actions contained therein.
- 1.3 The final Action Plan submitted to the Equality Commission will be published on the internet with copies sent to all who responded to the consultation. It is understood that the Commission will not consider the content of the action plan as part of the approval process for equality schemes and therefore the action plan which follows will not form part of the approved equality scheme.
- 1.4 The Action Plan will be monitored annually with an update provided to the Equality Commission and posted on line with the Council's Annual Progress Report on Section 75.
- 1.5 Responsibility for monitoring and review of the Action Plan will rest with the Council's Director.



Northern Ireland Museums Council

Audit of Inequalities

Introduction

In April 2010 the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland published new guidance, *Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998: A Guide for Public Authorities*. This states that all public authorities are now required to produce an Equality Scheme, with an associated Action Plan. The Action Plan should be informed by an audit of inequalities relating to relevant functions of a public authority. The Plan should also contain measures that aim to promote equality of opportunity and good relations and set out related performance indicators and timescales.

The Northern Ireland Museums Council is one of the designated public authorities and is required to submit a revised Equality Scheme by 1st November 2012. The Equality Commission has taken a phased approach in the call for revised schemes, with the first tranche comprising the Government Departments. As a consequence, the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure undertook an audit of inequalities on its main functional areas, including museums, in 2010. While NIMC supported this process through sharing the relevant data it holds about the sector, the Department also commissioned some further research and brought together salient information from other sources. As a consequence a notable body of intelligence is available and has been drawn upon by the Northern Ireland Museums Council in the preparation of this audit of inequalities.

Functions of NIMC

The Council's mission is to support local museums in Northern Ireland in maintaining and improving their standards of collections care and public service. It does not operate any museum. Its work is informed by the *Northern Ireland Museums Policy* which sets out the vision, priorities and goals for the development of the sector over the next ten years. The implementation of the *Northern Ireland Museums Policy* is the responsibility of the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure, and as an Arm's Length Body of that Department NIMC's work contributes to the objectives of the policy. The goals of this policy are corralled under four headings – Developing Audiences, Education and Learning, Collections Development, Care, Management and Use, and Infrastructure, Investment and Resources. NIMC's Corporate Plan 2011-15 and its annual Business Plans are structured around these four headings and consequently they will form the main functional areas for the Council from now on.

Evidence Base

By way of identifying inequalities regarding NIMC's functions, as far as Section 75 groups are concerned, the Council has drawn upon various generic data sets, research and survey findings as well as sector specific sources. The latter includes:

Ref.	Report/Source	Availability
A	Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure: Digest of Statistics for Museums in Northern Ireland (2011).	www.dcalni.gov.uk
B	Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure: Experience of Museums in Northern Ireland (2011).	www.dcalni.gov.uk
C	Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure: Experience of Museums in Northern Ireland (2010).	www.dcalni.gov.uk
D	NIMC: Museum Accessibility Audit – Update (2010 – in partnership with ADAPTNI)	unpublished
E	NIMC: Marketing Northern Ireland’s Museums (2009)	www.nimc.co.uk
F	NIMC: Learning within Northern Ireland’s Museums (2008)	www.nimc.co.uk
G	NIMC: Mapping Trends in Northern Ireland’s Museums (2007)	www.nimc.co.uk
H	Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency: Young Persons Behaviour and Attitudes Survey (2007)	www.csu.nisra.gov.uk
I	Museums Libraries and Archives: Digest of Statistics for Museums, Libraries and Archives (2005)	http://www.lboro.ac.uk
J	NIMC: Attitudes and Perceptions of Northern Ireland’s Black and Minority Ethnic Populations Towards Museums (2005)	unpublished
K	NIMC: Museum Accessibility Audit (2004 – in partnership with ADAPTNI)	unpublished
L	NIMC: Museums Survey (2004)	www.nimc.co.uk
M	NIMC: Mapping Trends in Northern Ireland’s Museums (2002)	www.nimc.co.uk

Analysis

In analysing the data and findings of available material and reports, the following factors were identified as pointing to possible inequalities or barriers to the equality of opportunity amongst the Section 75 Groups. The sources used to formulate the observations and comments presented below are indicated by a Reference letter that corresponds to the same in the table above. Where possible the finding is compared with the broader context or trends identified elsewhere.

Finding	Comparator	Observation/Comment
Gender		
<p>A similar proportion of males and females said that they had visited a museum in the previous year, 32% and 31% respectively in 2009-10, and 25% and 26% respectively in 2008-09 Source: A, B</p> <p>The proportions of both male and female museum visitors responding to the 2009-10 Continuous Household Survey significantly increased from 2008-09 to 2009-10 Source: B</p>	<p>The proportion of male/female museum visitors identified in a 2005 MORI poll was 43% to 56% Source: I</p> <p>The proportion of male/female within the Northern Ireland population in 2001 was 49% to 51%</p>	<p>There is little evidence of any significant gender inequality amongst museum visitors in Northern Ireland when the profile is compared with trends elsewhere and the make-up of the general population.</p>

Disability

Of the 14 factors identified as encouraging people to visit museums more often, 'Easier access in/around the building' was ranked 11th in the 2009-10 Continuous Household Survey, with 4% of people citing this factor. This rose to 7% amongst museum visitors with a limiting, longstanding illness.
Source: B

In the 2008-09 Continuous Household Survey the ranking was the same, with the equivalent percentages being 2% and 5%.
Source: C

While a third of museums in Northern Ireland had undertaken an audit of the physical barriers to access in 2001, all museums had done so by the end of 2006.
Source: E

By 2010, amongst the 38 local museums in Northern Ireland, 17 required physical access audit updates, 11 required audits due to significant changes to the building and 10 had no previous access audit.
Source: D

In 2007 four of the 38 museums were unable to provide toilet facilities for disabled patrons, compared with 8 in 2001.
Source: G

A third of Northern Ireland's museums provide an induction loop system.
Source: G

While notable progress in addressing the physical access barriers at museums has been made in recent times, there is still some significant work to be done in this regard.

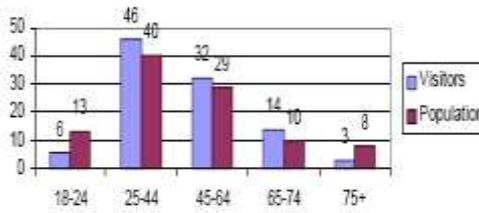
There is a need to update the data on the barriers to physical access to museums to inform the planning of any subsequent alterations to the building.

Alterations to improve access for people with disabilities can also improve access for other S75 groups – notably those with and without dependents, and older people.

Age

The following table illustrates the profile of museum attendees in 2004

Age Group (%) of visitors against population (18+)



Age Group	Visitors (%)	Population (%)
18-24	6	13
25-44	46	40
45-64	32	29
65-74	14	10
75+	3	8

Source: L

In England, the proportion of museum visitors in the 16-24 and the 65+ age groups was significantly lower when compared with the proportion of these age groups within the overall population of England
Source: I

In England the proportion of adult/child visitors to

The lower attendance by people from the 16-24 and 65+ age groups is not a feature unique to Northern Ireland.

There is an upward trend in the number of people in the 16-24 and 65+ age groups attending museums.

In analysing the data of The Continuous Household Survey 2008-09 the Department of

<p>A significantly lower proportion of respondents within the 2009-10 Continuous Household Survey aged 65 and over said that they had visited a museum during the last year Source: B</p> <p>Respondents to the Continuous Household Survey 2008-09 aged 16-24 were the least likely age group to have attended a museum. Source: C</p> <p>The proportion of respondents to the Continuous Household Survey, across all age groups, who had visited a museum in the year prior to the survey, had significantly increased between 2008-09 and 2009-10. There were notable increases in the 16-24 and 65+ age groups. Source: B</p> <p>Amongst the 16-24 age group the five main factors which would encourage more frequent visits to a museum were: exhibitions on a subject of interest; more information; more time; cheaper admission charges; and special events. A quarter of this age group said 'nothing' in response to the question. Amongst the 65+ age group the same five factors were cited, but at a much lower rate, and 49% of this group gave the response, 'nothing' In addition this age group also cited transport and someone to go with as influential factors. Source: B</p> <p>Between 2001 and 2007 the number of visits to museums in Northern Ireland by school children rose from 164,000 to 170,858. As a proportion of overall visits, visits by school pupils dropped from 20% to 17.6% Source: G</p> <p>Almost two thirds (66%) of pupils had been to a museum in Northern Ireland in 2006, and 44% of these pupils visited it as a part of a trip organised by school. 88% generally enjoyed their last visit to a museum Source: H</p> <p>For the 11-16 age group the five main factors which discourage a visit to a museum are: lack of interest; lack of time; not enough activities for young</p>	<p>museums was 70%/30% in 2005 Source: I</p> <p>In 2006, 21 out of the 38 Accredited museums in Northern Ireland were 'free entry'. Source: G</p>	<p>Culture, Arts and Leisure concluded that the lower proportion of those aged 65 and over visiting museums may be due to health and mobility issues.</p> <p>In citing that time constraint was a significant reason for non-use or a barrier to attendance by the under 24 age groups, it might be concluded that other activities and interests are the cause of the lower usage rates by these age groups.</p> <p>Lack of awareness and a paucity of information about events and activities at museums would appear to notable reasons for non-attendance.</p> <p>There appears to be a misperception that cost is a barrier to participation, given the wide-spread availability of museum services that are free at the point of use.</p> <p>Given the trends within the children of school-going age, there would be merit in further developing the opportunities for this group to participate in museum-related activity.</p> <p>And given the findings amongst the 16-24 and 65+ age groups, further promotional information is required.</p>
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<p>people; costs too much; and, the perception that it would not be enjoyable. Source: H</p>		
Dependants		
<p>In 2008-09 the percentage of museum visitors not having a limiting longstanding illness was 28%, compared with 18% of respondents with a limiting longstanding illness Source: C</p> <p>In 2009-10 the respective figures on longstanding illness were 34% and 24% Source: B</p> <p>Between 2001 and 2006 the number of museums providing facilities for changing and feeding infants rose from 17 to 21. Source: G</p>		<p>While the proportion of people with and without a limiting longstanding illness may have altered over the period, significantly fewer people with a limiting longstanding illness are visiting museums.</p>
Sexual orientation		
<p>In analysing the data of The Continuous Household Survey 2008-09 the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure found the base number of respondents declared as 'same sex couple' was 'too small'.</p>		<p>No meaningful data is available regarding the use of museums broken down by people's sexual orientation.</p>
Marital status		
<p>In analysing the data of The Continuous Household Survey 2008-09 the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure found the following percentages of respondents who had visited a museum in the last 12 months (against 26% of all respondents)</p> <p>Married 31% Cohabiting 20% Single 21% Widowed 13% Divorced 21% Separated 20%</p> <p>It concluded the "Although there are differences in the different categories of marital status, these differences could be due to other factors." Source: DCAL <i>Section 75 Audit of Inequalities</i> Feb 2011.</p>	<p>In England the breakdown of museum visitors by household data in 2003-04 was as follows: Two parent family 27% Two adults 28% Single Person 14% Lone parent 4% Other 27%</p> <p>In 2001 the proportion of the Northern Ireland over-16 population, by marital status, was as follows Single 33.1% Married/Remarried 51.2%</p>	<p>The relative size of the CHS respondents when broken down by marital status, against the total number of respondents mirrors the breakdown by marital status across the whole population.</p> <p>While there is a statistical variance between the baseline of all respondents and some categories of marital status, these could, as suggested, be due to various other factors.</p> <p>There is little evidence of any significant inequality on the grounds of marital status amongst museum visitors in Northern Ireland when the profile is compared with trends</p>

	Separated 3.8% Divorced 4.1% Widowed 7.8%	elsewhere and the make-up of the general population.
Religious Belief		
<p>The CHS 2009-10 found that a significantly higher proportion of Protestant respondents (33%) than Catholic respondents (28%) stated that they had visited a museum in the last 12 months. And that amongst those declaring another religion, or none, the proportion was 41%. Source: B</p> <p>The equivalent proportions in the previous year were, Protestant – 28%, Catholic – 21% and Other/None – 32% Source: C</p>		<p>Commenting upon the findings of the Continuous Household Surveys, DCAL stated that “The difference in community backgrounds is likely to lessen and lose its significance with the re-opening of the Ulster Museum, which has shown in the past to have a similar number of visitors from both communities.”</p> <p>The assumption of a future trend based upon past performance would need to be monitored to ensure that it is accurate.</p>
Political opinion		
		No meaningful data is available regarding the use of museums broken down by people’s political opinion.
Racial group		
<p>NIMC research found that amongst minority ethnic communities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 67% had (and 33% had not) recently visited a museum • 83% of those surveyed were satisfied with their visit, 6% were not and 11% made no comment • The barriers to visiting a museum included lack of time, lack of interest, lack of information, the cost and access to transport. 3.5% of those surveyed indicated that museums were for ‘white people’. <p>A notable finding of the associated interviews was that museums were sometimes inaccurate in their description of artefacts from other cultures. Source: J</p>	<p>The CHS 2009-10 found that nearly 75% of all respondents had visited a museum during their lifetime. Source: B</p> <p>The CHS 2009-10 reported a satisfaction rating of 60% amongst respondents. Source: B</p> <p>The main factors that would encourage respondents to visit museum more often included; exhibitions of interest, more time, more information, cheaper admission prices, access to transport. Source: B</p>	<p>From the information available it would appear that while museum visits were undertaken by a lower proportion of people from minority ethnic communities, when compared with the general population, the satisfaction rating amongst such visitor was higher than the norm.</p> <p>In the main the perceived barriers precluding participation for minority ethnic communities paralleled those for the majority ethnic community.</p> <p>Museums need to undertake further engagement with people from minority ethnic</p>

		<p>backgrounds to address specific concerns about interpretation of objects and representation within collections.</p> <p>Further substantive research is required to estimate the levels of engagement of and attitudes amongst minority ethnic communities towards museums in Northern Ireland.</p>
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EQUALITY ACTION PLAN 2011-2015

Corporate Objective	Targeted S75 Group	Action Measure	Timescale	Indicator/Outcome	Associated Research
Infrastructure and Resources Developing Audiences	Disability Dependents Age	<i>Advance Access Audits of Museums</i> upon securing the necessary resources	2012	Local museums will have been audited on physical and intellectual access	CHS, Museum Accessibility Audit – Update
Infrastructure and Resources Developing Audiences	All	Review and overhaul NIMC web site	2012	Improve the quality and targeting of, and access to, information on Northern Ireland's museums	CHS, Marketing Northern Ireland's Museums
Infrastructure and Resources	All	<i>Conduct Museum Mapping</i> surveys	2011 and 2015	Improve monitoring data and progress of service improvements at museums	CHS
Governance & Accountability	Disabled	Implement Disability Action Plan	2011-15	Increase participation by people with disabilities	Museum Accessibility Audit – Update