

# The Charity Commission for Northern Ireland



## Public Authority Statutory Equality and Good Relations Duties Annual Progress Report 2015-16

Contact: Aubrey McCrory

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Section 75 of the NI Act 1998 and Equality Scheme</li></ul>	Name: The Charity Commission for Northern Ireland Telephone: 028 3832 0220 Email: admin@charitycommissionni.org.uk
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and Disability Action Plan</li></ul>	As above X

Documents published relating to our Equality Scheme can be found at:

<https://www.charitycommissionni.org.uk/about-us/equality/>

Signature:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Aubrey McCrory", is enclosed in a rectangular box.

**This report has been prepared using a template circulated by the Equality Commission.**

**It presents our progress in fulfilling our statutory equality and good relations duties, and implementing Equality Scheme commitments and Disability Action Plans.**

**This report reflects progress made between April 2015 and March 2016.**

## **PART A – Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and Equality Scheme**

### **Section 1: Equality and good relations outcomes, impacts and good practice**

- 1** In 2015-16, please provide **examples** of key policy/service delivery developments made by the public authority in this reporting period to better promote equality of opportunity and good relations; and the outcomes and improvements achieved.

*Please relate these to the implementation of your statutory equality and good relations duties and Equality Scheme where appropriate.*

The year 2015/16 was another one of significant progress for the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland (the Commission) with over 2,600 charities being added to the register of charities, and a public consultation on a suite of guidance to assist charity trustees comply with the new accounting and reporting regulations which came into operation on 1 January 2016.

During the year, a range of policies and guidance documents were developed. A full list is available at Appendix 2. All policy and guidance developments involved a written analysis of the policy's effects on equality of opportunity, good relations and the disability duties.

We held a range of events across this period and, at every one, we made sure accessibility needs were considered in advance and also invited feedback from participants. [Equality Scheme 3.2] For example, we delivered 26 registration workshops with a range of organisations including those whose beneficiaries are drawn from one or more of the Section 75 categories including AgeNI, the Orange Community Network and the Squirrels.

The internal system which enables the Commission to monitor the implementation of the equality scheme and action plan and to monitor our response to charities and members of the public has been fully implemented and maintained. This consists of a monthly review of equality being undertaken by all programme and project teams and a quarterly report on equality sent to the Senior Management Team (SMT). The quarterly report includes a list of policies developed in the quarter, screening decisions and information on any screening that has been undertaken, with rationale posted on the website. In Quarter 1 2015/16 these reports provided a link to the equality screening in question. However, operational pressures introduced a delay in publication and it was decided to revert to the previous system. Individual screening reports are now made available on request.

Due to the nature of its work the Commission has limited opportunities to promote good relations on the basis of differing political opinion. However, the Commission does this through using language

respectfully, for example, referring to Derry/Londonderry in its communications. We also ensure that events are organised in a variety of venues, across a geographical spread. In 2015/16 we produced guidance for charities on campaigning in the run up to the European Referendum due in June and publicised the guidance on 'charities and politics' to assist organisations with local and national elections.

Finally, the work of the Commission in promoting public trust and confidence in charities, through the creation of an accessible and transparent register of charities, is a very positive step in helping to promote equality of opportunity and good relations more broadly. By the end of the year 2015/16, over 2,300 organisations working with specific S75 groups as well as those generally promoting equality and human rights were listed on the register of charities. For example by year end there were just over 300 charities registered whose purposes included the promotion of religious or racial harmony, or equality and diversity. This information is freely available to members of the public and other stakeholders through a search of the online register of charities.

No investigation has been opened by the Commission on the basis of an equality ground being breached, however, issues concerning equality categories can be an aspect of the concerns reported to the Commission. For example when investigating whether a decision to close a facility for people with disabilities had been properly made, the focus of the Commission's investigation is the governance of the charity. When deciding to launch an investigation consideration is given to equality categories and the need for any reasonable adjustments. For example, self-regulatory guidance was provided to one charity which took into account the learning disability of some of the trustees.

The accountability of charities on the register was further improved through the commencement of the full annual reporting programme and the publication of the first set of charity accounts on the register of charities. When consulting on guidance on the accounting and reporting requirements the Commission added a specific question seeking stakeholder views on the potential impact on members of the different section 75 categories.

### **Outcomes and Improvements achieved**

The Commission continues to develop its regulatory functions beyond registration and investigations. The process of annual reporting to the Commission has begun and monitoring and compliance functions are increasing.

In this context, we can point to overwhelmingly positive feedback from events and training held as endorsing our efforts to be an open and accessible organisation. We have received no complaints in line with our equality scheme in this period. Our internal training for staff attracted 100% positive feedback in terms of empowering staff to

understand more about the role of equality in the workplace in terms of good relations and equality of opportunity.

Through the regular equality assurance undertaken at project and programme teams we have ensured that all decision making has been evidence based and resulted in no negative impacts on individuals or organisations as a result of a S75 characteristic.

We have continued to use the feedback received from a voluntary post-registration questionnaire to monitor stakeholder experience of the accessibility of our services. In 2015/16 we received over 500 responses to the questionnaire.

Through this questionnaire we gathered the following information:

- 47% of respondents were female and 51% male with a small percentage choosing not to state their gender.
- 69% of respondents were aged 46 or over, 29% aged 26-46, while 2% of respondents were aged 16-25 years.
- 6% of respondents identified themselves as having a disability and, of those:
  - o 73% stated that their disability is physical
  - o 7% stated that they have a visual impairment
  - o 20% stated that they have a hearing disability
  - o 1 individual stated that they have a learning disability
  - o 20 % stated that they have a progressive health condition
  - o 15% stated they have a mental health issue
  - o 27% identified themselves as having multiple disabilities.

In accordance with the integrated Equality Scheme approved in April 2013, the Commission will continue to take forward the action plan which sets out the main initiatives designed to promote equality of opportunity, good relations, positive attitudes towards people with disabilities, and the participation of people with disabilities in public life.

In keeping with our commitment to explore and develop routes of engagement and other possible sources of information that could provide an evidential base for our decision-making the Commission is:

- continuing to prepare a written analysis for new policies and guidance stating their effects on equality of opportunity, good relations and the disability duties as part of the screening form
- continuing to provide training for staff on the equality and disability duties including as part of induction for new or temporary staff

- continuing to analyse feedback from stakeholders and participants at Commission events and training.

In the coming year we will continue to seek advice and guidance from the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland.

In June 2015 the Commission was delighted to publish new Equality guidance for charities. The guidance provides an overview of key aspects of equality legislation which may affect charities, including in terms of how they meet the public benefit requirement and how they deliver their services. There is information about equality obligations, exceptions for charities and the rules that govern the use of exceptions. We would like to acknowledge the assistance we received from the Equality Commission in producing this guidance. In the guidance, we signpost charities to the Equality Commission. The Commission anticipates that this guidance will assist charities in meeting their equality obligations and, therefore, in promoting equality of opportunity and good relations more generally.

PART A

- 2 Please provide **examples** of outcomes and/or the impact of **equality action plans/** measures in 2015-16 (*or append the plan with progress/examples identified*).

Appendix 1 sets out the Commission's equality action plan, performance indicators and progress against them.

PART A

**3** Has the **application of the Equality Scheme** commitments resulted in any **changes** to policy, practice, procedures and/or service delivery areas during the 2015-16 reporting period? (*tick one box only*)

X Yes  No (go to Q.4)  Not applicable (go to Q.4)

Please provide any details and examples:

In 2015/16 we contracted for the development of a new and more accessible online registration tutorial which included the addition of subtitles.

Additionally, we ensured that staff took two A3 copies of relevant materials to training events. [Equality Scheme 3.2]

In 2015/16 a session was delivered to front line staff on the Department for Social Development Code of Courtesy relating to the use of the Irish language or Ulster-Scots. This identified the benefit of a Commission specific Code of Courtesy which has now been programmed into policy development plans.

During a consultation on guidance on accounting and reporting guidance, the Commission learned from another regulator's experience, and added a question seeking views on the possible impact on persons with a particular section 75 characteristic.

**3a** With regard to the change(s) made to policies, practices or procedures and/or service delivery areas, what **difference was made, or will be made, for individuals**, i.e. the impact on those according to Section 75 category?

Please provide any details and examples:

The subtitled video offers assistance to individuals with a hearing impairment, or older persons, who may be applying for charity registration. Additionally, it may be of assistance to individuals with particular learning difficulties for whom written information in plain English is preferable to a purely audio presentation of information. Since the tutorial was made available, and information could be recorded, approximately 26% of views of the online tutorial were of the subtitled version.

By taking A3 copies of relevant materials to training events we anticipate the needs of attendees who have not made us aware of any visual impairment but who may prefer materials in a larger font size.

In making plans for the development of a Commission specific Code of Courtesy we can be confident that we will have a clearer statement of what the Commission can and cannot do in corresponding with individuals who prefer to use Irish or Ulster Scots.

PART A

In seeking the views of stakeholders on possible impacts on individuals with a section 75 characteristic we may be able to incorporate learning into drafting of policies and guidance going forward.

**3b** What aspect of the Equality Scheme prompted or led to the change(s)? *(tick all that apply)*

As a result of the organisation's screening of a policy *(please give details):*

X As a result of what was identified through the EQIA and consultation exercise *(please give details):*

Reviewing the consultation documentation of another charity regulator led to the inclusion of the question in our own consultation documentation on potential impact on individuals with a section 75 characteristic.

X As a result of analysis from monitoring the impact *(please give details):*

Requests for applications to be submitted in the Irish language, and feedback that the DSD Code of Courtesy does not mention registration applications, led the Commission to conclude that a Commission specific Code of Courtesy would be desirable.

X As a result of changes to access to information and services *(please specify and give details):*

Requests for sign language interpreters at training events, which were provided, alerted us to the need to subtitle the video of the online application process.

Other *(please specify and give details):*

## **Section 2: Progress on Equality Scheme commitments and action plans/measures**

### **Arrangements for assessing compliance (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 2)**

**4** Were the Section 75 statutory duties integrated within job descriptions during the 2015-16 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

Yes, organisation wide



PART A

- Yes, some departments/jobs
- No, this is not an Equality Scheme commitment
- No, this is scheduled for later in the Equality Scheme, or has already been done
- Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

The Commission has included roles and responsibilities relating to the Section 75 statutory duties in a range of posts. During the year the Commission took forward a range of HR policy developments with the recognised trade union and 'on boarded' HR Connect. Plans for a staff Code of Conduct including Section 75 will be progressed in 2016/17.

5 Were the Section 75 statutory duties integrated within performance plans during the 2015-16 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

- Yes, organisation wide
- Yes, some departments/jobs
- No, this is not an Equality Scheme commitment
- No, this is scheduled for later in the Equality Scheme, or has already been done
- Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

Some members of staff, for example the Policy and Research Officer, have Section 75 statutory duties integrated within their performance plans. Section 75 statutory duties form an integral part of the Commission's Corporate and Business plans. Staff are involved in the development and review of the Commission's plans through staff days and staff sessions throughout the year. At induction all staff are also alerted to the importance of these duties to the work of the Commission.

In the 2015-16 reporting period were **objectives/ targets/ performance measures** relating to the Section 75 statutory duties **integrated** into corporate plans, strategic planning and/or operational business plans? *(tick all that apply)*

- Yes, through the work to prepare or develop the new corporate plan
- Yes, through organisation wide annual business planning

PART A

- Yes, in some departments/jobs
- No, these are already mainstreamed through the organisation's ongoing corporate plan
- No, the organisation's planning cycle does not coincide with this 2015-16 report
- Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

Corporate objective 6.2 (e): Deliver the Equality Scheme and Action Plan commitment to equality and good relations. Actions: (i) Ongoing promotion and consideration of equality and good relations obligations in policy making. (ii) Implement and approved integrated equality scheme and action plan.

**Equality action plans/measures**

**7** Within the 2015-16 reporting period, please indicate the **number** of:

Actions completed:  Actions ongoing:  Actions to commence:

Please provide any details and examples (*in addition to question 2*):

See Appendix 1 attached

**8** Please give details of changes or amendments made to the equality action plan/measures during the 2015-16 reporting period (*points not identified in an appended plan*):

N/A

**9** In reviewing progress on the equality action plan/action measures during the 2015-16 reporting period, the following have been identified: (*tick all that apply*)

- Continuing action(s), to progress the next stage addressing the known inequality
- Action(s) to address the known inequality in a different way
- Action(s) to address newly identified inequalities/recently prioritised inequalities
- Measures to address a prioritised inequality have been completed

**Arrangements for consulting (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 3)**

PART A

- 10** Following the initial notification of consultations, a targeted approach was taken – and consultation with those for whom the issue was of particular relevance: *(tick one box only)*

All the time                       Sometimes                       Never

- 11** Please provide any **details and examples of good practice** in consultation during the 2015-16 reporting period, on matters relevant (e.g. the development of a policy that has been screened in) to the need to promote equality of opportunity and/or the desirability of promoting good relations:

We applied information from a previous consultation on interim reporting guidance to the plan for consultation on a suite of guidance to accompany the full accounting and reporting regulations which came into operation in January 2016. For example, we ensured colour coding of consultation documents for ease of reference by all stakeholders.

- 12** In the 2015-16 reporting period, given the consultation methods offered, which consultation methods were **most frequently used by consultees**: *(tick all that apply)*

- 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/out of the consultation
- Internet discussions
- Telephone consultations
- Other *(please specify)*:

Please provide any details or examples of the uptake of these methods of consultation in relation to the consultees' membership of particular Section 75 categories:

We do not have specific information correlating uptake of methods of consultation with consultees' membership of particular Section 75 categories.

The Commission's registration workshops have an almost 50:50 attendance rate of males and females.

PART A

**13** Were any awareness-raising activities for consultees undertaken, on the commitments in the Equality Scheme, during the 2015-16 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

Yes                       No                       Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

**14** Was the consultation list reviewed during the 2015-16 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

Yes                       No                       Not applicable – no commitment to review

**Arrangements for assessing and consulting on the likely impact of policies (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 4)**

<https://www.charitycommissionni.org.uk/about-us/equality/>

**15** Please provide the **number** of policies screened during the year *(as recorded in screening reports)*:

26
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**16** Please provide the **number of assessments** that were consulted upon during 2015-16:

0	Policy consultations conducted with <b>screening</b> assessment presented.
0	Policy consultations conducted <b>with an equality impact assessment (EQIA)</b> presented.
0	Consultations for an <b>EQIA</b> alone.

**17** Please provide details of the **main consultations** conducted on an assessment (as described above) or other matters relevant to the Section 75 duties:

Consultation on the suite of guidance developed by the Commission to accompany the introduction of full accounting and reporting requirements for charities.

**18** Were any screening decisions (or equivalent initial assessments of relevance) reviewed



During 2015-16 the Commission received 22 requests for reasonable adjustments. This is a decrease from the previous year. These included requests for sign language interpreters and adjustments for those with sensory impairments or a physical disability. The Commission believes that responding to these requests has decreased potentially adverse impacts on a range of stakeholders. More details are available under question 26.

- 23** Please provide any details or examples of monitoring that has contributed to the availability of equality and good relations information/data for service delivery planning or policy development:

Feedback is gathered from Commission events such as workshops and information events. These record 89% satisfaction with accessibility of these events. This information informs planning for service delivery and, the Commission believes, ensuring the accessibility of events increases our impact on good relations and equality. Feedback is also gathered from a post-registration survey which is undertaken on a voluntary basis when an application for charity registration is completed. Details from this survey are available under question 26.

#### **Staff Training (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 5)**

- 24** Please report on the activities from the training plan/programme (section 5.4 of the Model Equality Scheme) undertaken during 2015-16, and the extent to which they met the training objectives in the Equality Scheme.

The Commission fulfilled its equality scheme training commitment by providing an in-house training session for staff which focused on good relations and equality in the workplace. Two sessions were held on 21 October 2015 and 11 November 2015 and 100% of staff attended.

Staff had earlier attended an internal training session (23 June 2015) on new Equality guidance for charities. The Commission produced this guidance for charity trustees on the relevance of equality legislation in Northern Ireland on them in their role as service providers.

The statutory equality, good relations and disability duties form part of the induction training for new staff.

The Policy and research officer and finance and administration manager attended training on section 75 and the disability duties delivered by the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland at Equality House on 6 May 2015.

The policy and research officer and finance and administration manager attended training on the Public Sector equality duties with the Equality

Commission for Northern Ireland on 6 November 2015.

The policy and research officer participated in a roundtable discussion on the financial abuse of older people at the Commissioner for Older Persons office on 24 November 2015.

A training session was delivered to the administration team to assist them in answering calls which are not in English. This training will be rolled out to other staff in Quarter 1 of the new financial year.

- 25** Please provide any examples of relevant training shown to have worked well, in that participants have achieved the necessary skills and knowledge to achieve the stated objectives:

Incorporating a session on equality and the Commission's Equality Scheme commitments into the induction training has helped raise awareness of equality issues generally and, combined with annual training, has resulted in staff proactively offering adjustments to charity trustees and contacts with whom they are working.

#### **Public Access to Information and Services (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 6)**

- 26** Please list **any examples** of where monitoring during 2015-16, across all functions, has resulted in action and improvement in relation **to access to information and services**:

The Commission deals primarily with organisations rather than individuals, however, where we do deal with individuals, the Commission ensures all materials, information and events are accessible. In our communications we also ask to be informed of any special circumstances and a process is in place to deal with requests for information in alternative formats. During 2015 -2016 the Commission received 22 requests for special circumstances and dealt with these on a case by case basis providing a range of adjustments including: sign language interpreters, face-to-face meetings, additional persons accompanying applicants to workshops. The provision of additional guidance with links to the online system addressed the needs of some clients who initially asked for a paper application form.

Between 1 April 2015 and 31 March 2016, we received over 500 responses to an online questionnaire which was available to be completed on a voluntary basis by those who had submitted an online registration application.

Of those respondents, 16% were aged 66 years and over, with a further 26% being in the 56-65 years age bracket. A broadly equal percentage of men and women completed the survey, 47% compared with 51% (a small percentage preferred not to answer this question). 30 respondents indicated that they have a disability. 6 of those respondents found the online registration system to be 'very difficult' or 'fairly difficult' to use,

with 14 rating it instead as 'very easy', 'fairly easy' or 'neither easy nor difficult'.

12 individuals indicated that English is not their first language. One of those individuals found the online registration system to be 'very difficult to use'. Of the others who answered this question, they rated the system as either 'fairly easy' to use or 'neither easy nor difficult'.

We will continue to monitor this information as more is gathered to take feedback on board and identify where we can opportunities to improve the ease with which the online system can be accessed and used.

The Commission considered a query regarding submission of accounts in Irish and identified that accounts must be submitted in English as this is the working language of the Commission but that accounts may be dually submitted and published in English and another language. This decision will be reviewed and may change if a proposed Irish Language Bill is further progresses.

Other special circumstances which were brought to the attention of the Commission included:

The Commission also developed and published Access to information guidance, which sets out how the Commission meets its obligations under the Data Protection Act 1998, Freedom of Information 2000 and Environmental Regulations 2004. This document also sets out how people can request information from the Commission where this information is not already available on the Commissions website.

### **Complaints (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 8)**

**27** How many complaints **in relation to the Equality Scheme** have been received during 2015-16?

Insert number here:

0
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Please provide any details of each complaint raised and outcome:

N/A

### **Section 3: Looking Forward**

**28** Please indicate when the Equality Scheme is due for review:

The Equality Scheme is due for review in 2017.



PART A

- 29** Are there areas of the Equality Scheme arrangements (screening/consultation/training) your organisation anticipates will be focused upon in the next reporting period? *(please provide details)*

The Commission intends to focus on developing a Code of Courtesy to set out its approach to organisations that want to correspond with the Commission in Irish or in Ulster Scots.

- 30** In relation to the advice and services that the Commission offers, what **equality and good relations priorities** are anticipated over the next (2016-17) reporting period? *(please tick any that apply)*

- Employment
- Goods, facilities and services
- Legislative changes
- Organisational changes/ new functions
- Nothing specific, more of the same
- Other (please state):

PART B

**PART B - Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (as amended) and Disability Action Plans**

**1. Number of action measures for this reporting period that have been:**

Fully achieved

Partially achieved

Not achieved

**2. Please outline below details on all actions that have been fully achieved in the reporting period.**

2 (a) Please highlight what **public life measures** have been achieved to encourage disabled people to participate in public life at National, Regional and Local levels:

Level	Public Life Action Measures	Outputs <sup>i</sup>	Outcomes / Impact <sup>ii</sup>
National <sup>iii</sup>			
Regional <sup>iv</sup>			
Local <sup>v</sup>			

2(b) What **training action measures** were achieved in this reporting period?

	Training Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
1			

PART B

2			

2(c) What Positive attitudes **action measures** in the area of **Communications** were achieved in this reporting period?

	Communications Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
1			
2			

2 (d) What action measures were achieved to ‘**encourage others**’ to promote the two duties:

	Encourage others Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
1			
2			

2 (e) Please outline **any additional action measures** that were fully achieved other than those listed in the tables above:

	Action Measures fully implemented (other than Training and specific public life	Outputs	Outcomes / Impact

PART B

	measures)		
1			
2			

3. Please outline what action measures have been **partly achieved** as follows:

	Action Measures partly achieved	Milestonesvi / Outputs	Outcomes/Impacts	Reasons not fully achieved
1				
2				

4. Please outline what action measures **have not been achieved** and the reasons why.

	Action Measures not met	Reasons
1		
2		

PART B

5. What **monitoring tools** have been put in place to evaluate the degree to which actions have been effective / develop new opportunities for action?

(a) Qualitative

(b) Quantitative

6. As a result of monitoring progress against actions has your organisation either:

- made any **revisions** to your plan during the reporting period or
- taken any **additional steps** to meet the disability duties which were **not outlined in your original** disability action plan / any other changes?

Please select

If yes please outline below:

	Revised/Additional Action Measures	Performance Indicator	Timescale
1			
2			
3			
4			

PART B

5			
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7. Do you intend to make any further **revisions to your plan** in light of your organisation's annual review of the plan? If so, please outline proposed changes?

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<sup>i</sup> **Outputs** – defined as act of producing, amount of something produced over a period, processes undertaken to implement the action measure e.g. Undertook 10 training sessions with 100 people at customer service level.

<sup>ii</sup> **Outcome / Impact** – what specifically and tangibly has changed in making progress towards the duties? What impact can directly be attributed to taking this action? Indicate the results of undertaking this action e.g. Evaluation indicating a tangible shift in attitudes before and after training.

<sup>iii</sup> **National** : Situations where people can influence policy at a high impact level e.g. Public Appointments

<sup>iv</sup> **Regional**: Situations where people can influence policy decision making at a middle impact level

<sup>v</sup> **Local** : Situations where people can influence policy decision making at lower impact level e.g. one off consultations, local fora.

<sup>vi</sup> **Milestones** – Please outline what part progress has been made towards the particular measures; even if full output or outcomes/ impact have not been achieved.