

ANNUAL EQUALITY STATEMENT Year end 31 March 2017

NILGOSC's Equality Scheme states that it will report on the progress it has made in the delivery of its Section 75 statutory duties.

Our Commitment

NILGOSC re-affirms its commitment to the fulfilment of its duties under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 in that it will 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;
- Between men and women generally;
- Between persons with a disability and persons without; and,
- Between persons with dependants and persons without.

In addition, without prejudice to its obligations above, NILGOSC shall, in carrying out its functions, have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group.

Promotion of Equality of Opportunity

NILGOSC has demonstrated its commitment to the promotion of equality of opportunity during 2016/17 and the equality agenda continues to be promoted and supported by the most senior levels of the organisation.

The NILGOSC Corporate Plan for 2016/17 included objectives relating to equality and good relations. The Senior Management Team has monitored the implementation of these objectives on a quarterly basis.

Implementation of the Equality Scheme

NILGOSC's Equality Scheme was last approved by the Equality Commission on 25 July 2012. NILGOSC carried out a review of effectiveness in implementing the arrangements under the Equality Scheme in late 2016. A summary report was produced, outlining the results of the findings, and NILGOSC's Equality Scheme was updated for minor changes. The updated Scheme was issued for a 12 week consultation on 9 March 2017.

NILGOSC carried out its duties in relation to the Equality Scheme throughout 2016/17 to ensure that its policies and procedures are fair and lawful. NILGOSC undertook an Audit of Inequalities in 2014/15 to identify any inequalities that exist for those affected by the functions and policies of the pension scheme. The results were used to inform NILGOSC's Equality Scheme Action Plan for 2015 to 2018. A number of the actions set out in the Action Plan 2015-2018 were further progressed during the 2016/17 financial year. Some of the actions that have been taken or that are in progress include:

- In 2015, NILGOSC enrolled all staff onto a CPD accredited e-learning course entitled "Equality and Diversity in the Northern Ireland Workplace". This course continues to be completed by all staff on an annual basis and

any new staff as part of the induction process. All Committee members also completed the course by August 2016.

- NILGOSC's policies have been updated to reflect the Shared Parental Leave arrangements applicable from 5 April 2015. A new Shared Parental Leave Policy was created and this was issued to staff for consultation in March 2017.
- New and revised job descriptions have continued to be updated to reflect equality duties forming part of the responsibilities of posts.
- An accessibility audit of NILGOSC's premises was completed in September 2016. Recommendations are currently being considered for required action where appropriate.
- Following on from the data gathered as part of the Audit of Inequalities, recruitment advertising continues to target underrepresented groups by welcoming applications from males, people with disabilities and Roman Catholics.
- An Alternative Communications leaflet is included in correspondence issued to new members and alongside retirement claim forms. The leaflet includes headline information in alternative formats and languages. As at 31 March 2017, there are 56 individuals who have requested to receive communications from NILGOSC in alternative formats.
- Following an external review by an organisation specialising in communications, the content and design of the Annual Pension Benefit Statements was revised with a view to improving member communications.
- A staff survey regarding Equality and Good Relations was issued during the 2015/16 financial year. The results were communicated in June 2016 and used to help identify actions that could promote improved good relations among staff. This included the formation of a Staff Forum in June 2016.
- Management met on 1 February 2017 to consider and review equality monitoring datasets held and agreed actions for taking forward, to improve the comprehensiveness of the datasets held by NILGOSC.

In line with its Equality Scheme, NILGOSC carried out screening of any new or revised policies for equality impacts during 2016/17 and published quarterly screening reports on the website.

NILGOSC received one equality related complaint in the 2016/17 year relating to the revised Equality Scheme not initially being issued for consultation. There is no formal requirement to issue the Scheme for consultation as the changes were not considered to be substantive. NILGOSC however decided to issue the Scheme for consultation in March 2017 and the complaint was therefore resolved.

NILGOSC continues to provide its publications in alternative formats on request.

Those who require further information about the NILGOSC Equality Scheme or would prefer to receive this document in an alternative format (such as in large print, in Braille, on audio cassette or on computer disc) and/or language, please contact the Equality Officer at:

Address: NILGOSC, Templeton House, 411 Holywood Road, Belfast, BT4 2LP
Telephone: 0845 308 7345
Typetalk: 18001 0845 308 7345 (for people using a textphone)
Fax: 0845 308 7344
Email: equality@nilgosc.org.uk

Copies of the Equality Scheme and this Annual Equality Statement are also available on the Internet at www.nilgosc.org.uk/equality-scheme.