

Revised Equality Scheme for Ards and North Down Borough Council

26 March 2020 – 31 March 2025



Drawn up in accordance with Section 75 and Schedule 9 of the
Northern Ireland Act 1998

This document is available in a range of formats on request.
Please contact us with your requirements (see page 11 for contact
details).

Shirley Poxon
Town Hall, The Castle,
Bangor
BT20 4BT
Tel: 0300 013 3333
07718 159 275 SMS text only
E-mail:
shirley.poxon@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk

Original equality Scheme approved by the Equality Commission for Northern
Ireland on 25 March 2015

Foreword

Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 (the Act) requires public authorities, in carrying out their functions relating to Northern Ireland, 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.

This equality scheme sets out how Ards and North Down Borough Council (the Council) proposes to fulfill its Section 75 statutory duties.

The Council 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.

The Council commits 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.

A communication and training programme will be developed and delivered with the aim of ensuring that all Council employees and board members are made fully aware of this equality scheme and understand the commitments and obligations within it. The Council will develop a programme of awareness raising for its consultees on Section 75 statutory duties and Council commitments in this equality scheme.

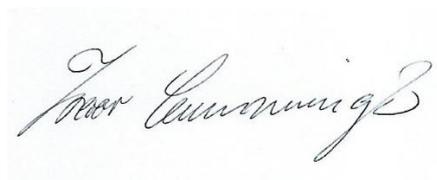
We, the Mayor and Chief Executive are fully committed to effectively fulfilling the Section 75 statutory duties across all Council functions (including service provision, employment and procurement) through the effective implementation of this scheme.

The Council recognises 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. This scheme demonstrates how determined the Council is to ensure there are opportunities, for people affected by its work, to positively influence how it carries out its functions in line with the Section 75 statutory duties.

¹ See section 1.1 of our Equality Scheme.

The scheme also offers the means whereby persons directly affected by what they consider to be a failure, on the Council's part, to comply with our equality scheme, can make complaints.

On behalf of Ards and North Down Borough Council and its employees 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.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mayor Cunningham', written over a light grey rectangular background.

Mayor

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Spencer Reid', written over a light grey rectangular background.

Chief Executive

Date 16 June 2020

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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 Council to comply with two statutory duties:

Section 75 (1)

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

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

Section 75 (2)

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

“Functions” include the “powers and duties” of a public authority². This includes the Council’s employment and procurement functions.

Please see below under “Who we are and what we do” for a detailed explanation of our functions.

How the Council proposes to fulfill the Section 75 duties in relation to the relevant functions of Ards and North Down Borough Council

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

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

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

Who we are and what we do

The roles and functions, of the Council fall within three types:

Direct, Representative and Consultative

- the direct provision of a number of services and facilities,
- the promotion of the arts, tourism, community and economic development,
- the regulation and licensing of certain activities relating to environmental health, consumer protection and public safety,
- a representative role on a number of bodies and boards including Education and Health,
- a consultative role in relation to functions conducted by other Government bodies and agencies on issues such as planning, water, roads and housing.
- an advocacy role for the people of the District

In the performance of the above roles the Council carries out functions in the following areas: (This is not an exhaustive list)

- the provision and maintenance of facilities for recreational, social and cultural activities including leisure centres, community centres, parks, open spaces, sports and playgrounds and places of entertainment
- street cleansing
- waste collection and disposal
- the provision of burial grounds
- the provision of grant aid to support the Arts, community development, good relations and the promotion of tourism and economic development
- the administration and regulation of certain matters relating to the environment, public health and public safety including building control, food safety, statutory nuisance, dangerous buildings, air

pollution, noise pollution, dog control, consumer protection and health and safety

- the licensing and regulation of street trading, places of entertainment, amusement centres, sex establishments, society lotteries, cinemas and petroleum stations
- the making of byelaws and regulation of same
- A wide range of powers and duties placed on the Council by statute.

Powers agreed by the Executive that transferred to local councils in April 2015 and are now delivered as an integral part of the Council services include:

Planning

- Local development plan functions
- Development control and enforcement

Roads

- Off street parking (except Park and Ride)

Urban regeneration and community development

- Functions associated with physical development (e.g. environmental improvement schemes)
- Area based regeneration (such as Neighbourhood Renewal)
- Some community development programmes for the voluntary and community sectors

Community Planning

Housing

- Registration of houses in multiple occupation
- Housing unfitness responsibilities, including repair and demolition notices

Local Economic Development (transfer from Invest NI)

- Start a Business Programme and Enterprise Shows
- Youth Entrepreneurship (such as Prince's Trust and Shell Livewire)
- Social Entrepreneurship
- Investing for Women
- Neighbourhood Renewal funding relating to enterprises initiatives

Local Tourism

- Small scale tourism accommodation development
- Providing business support including business start up advice along with training and delivery of customer care schemes
- Providing advice to developers on tourism policies and related issues

As well as:

- Some elements of the delivery of the EU Rural Development Programme;
- Authority to Spot List to enable Councils to add a building to the statutory list on a temporary basis, subject to ratification by the DoE;
- Authority to draw up local lists of buildings that are of architectural and/or historic interest;
- Local water recreational facilities;
- Local sports to give greater involvement of local government in local sports decisions
- Donaghadee Harbour
- General Power of Competence

These services have, since April 2015 been integrated into the Council services and Committee Structures.

1.4 To enable the Council to provide the above services and perform its other functions, the Council must levy an annual rate and has the power to: -

- acquire and dispose of land;
- borrow money;
- employ staff; and
- procure goods and services.

1.5 The Council provides its services through the employment of approximately 1 000 employees who are full time, part time permanent and casual employees, dependant on the services they provide.

1.6 The Council carries out its functions through a range of Council Committees and Working Groups.

Chapter 2 Ards and North Down Borough Council's arrangements for assessing compliance with the Section 75 duties (Schedule 9 4. (2) (a))

2.1 Some of the arrangements used to assess compliance with the Section 75 statutory duties are outlined in other relevant parts of this equality scheme. Details of the Council's consultation process is located in chapter 3, monitoring arrangements, assessment of the impact of policies and publication arrangements in chapter 4, staff training in chapter 5, access to information in chapter 6, the Council's complaints procedure in chapter 8, and publication and annual Review of the Council's Equality Scheme in chapters 9 and 10.

In addition, the following arrangements are in place to assist in assessing Council compliance:

Responsibilities and reporting

2.2 Ards and North Down Borough Council is committed to the fulfilment of our Section 75 obligations in all parts of our work.

2.3 Responsibility for the effective implementation of our equality scheme lies with the Chief Executive, through the Council's management structure. The Chief Executive is accountable to the 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 Shirley Poxon at the addresses given below, who will respond to you as soon as possible:

Town Hall, The Castle,
Bangor
BT20 4BT
Tel: 0300 013 3333
07718 159 275 SMS text only
E-mail:
shirley.poxon@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk

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

2.6 Employees' job descriptions and performance plans reflect their contributions to the discharge of the Section 75 statutory duties and implementation of the equality scheme, where relevant. The personal performance plans are subject to appraisal in the annual performance review.

2.7 The Council prepares an annual report on the progress it has made on implementing the arrangements set out in this equality scheme to discharge its Section 75 statutory duties (Section 75 annual progress report).

The Section 75 annual progress report will be sent to the Equality Commission by 31 August each year and will follow any guidance on annual reporting issued by the Equality Commission.

Progress on the delivery of Section 75 statutory duties will also be included in our (organisational) annual report.

2.8 The latest Section 75 annual progress report is available on the Council's website:

www.ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk

or by contacting:

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Town Hall, The Castle,
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shirley.poxon@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk

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

2.9 Ards and North Down Borough Council will liaise closely with the Equality Commission to ensure that progress on the implementation of our equality scheme is maintained.

2.10 The Council is committed to developing an action plan to help promote and mainstream equality of opportunity and good relations throughout the organisation.

Quarterly progress reports will be submitted to the Council to inform them on the progress which has been made enacting the action plan.

Further, the Council is committed to undertaking regular, relevant and timely consultation on its actions and progress.

Action plan/action measures

2.11 Ards and North Down Borough Council will develop an action plan to promote equality of opportunity and good relations. This action plan, when developed, will be set out in Appendix 7 to this equality scheme.

2.12 The action measures that will make up the action plan will be relevant to Council 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.

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

2.14 The Council will develop action plans for a period of between one and five years in order to align them with corporate and business planning cycles. Implementation of the action measures will be incorporated into the business planning process.

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.

2.15 Input from, and consultation with, stakeholders on the Councils action plan, which will be developed by 30 June 2020, will be sought before it is sent to the Equality Commission and thereafter when reviewing the plan as per 2.16 below.

2.16 We will monitor our progress on the delivery of our action measures annually and update the action plan as necessary to ensure that it remains effective and relevant to our functions and work.

2.17 Ards and North Down Borough Council 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.

2.18 Once finalised, our action plan will be available from the Council's website www.ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk

A hard copy of the action plan, or versions of it in alternative formats where a specific need has been identified may be obtained by contacting:

Shirley Poxon
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Bangor
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E-mail:
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Chapter 3 Ards and North Down Borough Council's 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 The Council recognises the importance of consultation in all aspects of the implementation of its statutory equality duties. The Council will consult on this equality scheme, action measures, equality impact assessments and other matters relevant to the Section 75 statutory duties.

3.2 Consultations will be carried out in accordance with the principles 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, the Equality Commission, representative groups of Section 75 categories, individual residents, other public authorities, voluntary and community groups, our staff and their trades unions and such other groups who have a legitimate interest in the matter, whether or not they have a direct economic or personal interest.

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, a targeted approach to the consultation will be undertaken 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. The Council will engage with affected individuals and representative groups to identify how best to consult or engage

with them and will ask consultees what their preferred consultation methods are and will give consideration to these. Methods of consultation could include:

- Face-to-face meetings
- Focus groups
- Written documents with the opportunity to comment in writing or alternative formats, according to need
- Questionnaires
- Information/notification by email with an opportunity to opt in/opt out of the consultation
- Internet discussions
- Telephone consultations or
- Online surveys.

This list is not exhaustive. Other additional methods of consultation more appropriate to key stakeholders and the matter being consulted upon may be developed.

3.2.3 The Council will consider the accessibility and format of every method of consultation used in order to remove barriers to the consultation process. Specific consideration will be given as to how best to communicate with people with disabilities (in particular people with learning disabilities), minority ethnic communities and children and young people. Account will be taken 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)*.

Ards and North Down Borough Council is committed to achieving effective two-way communication with ratepayers and members of the public living outside the Borough. In recognition of the increasing communication methods and the range of differing needs and preferences of consultees, we will ensure the use of a range of communication channels and alternative formats to enable access to information, and thus mitigate the opportunity that some sections of the public might not enjoy equality of opportunity in accessing information made available by the Council. Information will be made available, on request, in alternative formats, in a timely manner, usually within 5 working days. We will ensure that such consultees have equal time to respond.

3.2.4 Specific training is provided to those facilitating consultations to ensure that they have the necessary skills to communicate effectively with consultees.

3.2.5 To ensure effective consultation with consultees⁶ 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 following:

- Issue a press release when the Equality Scheme is approved by the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland;
- Inform all consultees of how to access a copy of the final Equality Scheme and Action Plan within one month of approval by the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland in a manner suitable to each consultees' needs;
- Facilitate a meeting at least once annually with the Council's Consultative Panel on Equality and Good Relations and consultees who have a particular interest in the actions contained within each year's annual review to assist Council officers review progress on the Action Plan; the Council will inform employees and Members of Council and members of The Consultative Panel on Equality and Good Relations of changes to the Equality Scheme by:
 - Quarterly Reports to Council;
 - Reports to Senior Management team for dissemination to relevant officers;
 - Briefings and presentations at meetings
 - Training sessions
- Convene a meeting of the Chief Executive, Directors and Heads of Service within the Council at least once annually to review progress on the Action Plan and plan for the 12 months ahead.

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

⁶ Please see Appendix 3 for a list of our consultees.

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 commitments⁷.

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 The Council is conscious of the fact that affected individuals and representative groups may have different needs. As such, appropriate measures will be taken to ensure full participation in any meetings that are held. Consideration will be given, for example, to the time of day, the appropriateness of the venue, in particular whether it can be accessed by those with disabilities, how the meeting is to be conducted, the use of appropriate language, whether a signer and/or interpreter is necessary, and whether the provision of childcare and support for other carers is required.

3.2.9 All relevant information will be made available to consultees in appropriate formats to ensure meaningful consultation. This includes detailed information on the policy proposal being consulted upon and any relevant quantitative and qualitative data. In addition, all responses will be accepted in alternative formats, according to need.

3.2.10 In making any decision with respect to a policy adopted or proposed to be adopted, the Council will take into account any assessment and consultation carried out in relation to the policy.

⁷ Please see below at 4.27 to 4.31 for details on monitoring.

3.2.11 Consultation feedback to consultees will be provided 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 consultees is included in this equality scheme at Appendix 3. It can also be obtained from our website at

www.ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk

or by contacting

Shirley Poxon
Town Hall, The Castle,
Bangor
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shirley.poxon@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk

3.4 The consultation list is not exhaustive and is reviewed on an annual basis to ensure it remains relevant to our functions and policies.

The Council welcomes enquiries from any person/s or organisations wishing to be added to the list of consultees. Please contact Shirley Poxon (details above) 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.

Consultations carried out by the Council will be timely and meaningful, using a variety of methods including consultative panels, in line with best principles.

Chapter 4 **Ards and North Down Borough Council's 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, the Council will 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 Ards and North Down Borough Council uses the tools of **screening** and **equality impact assessment** to assess the likely impact of a policy on the promotion of equality of opportunity and good relations. In carrying out these assessments we will relate them to the intended outcomes of the policy in question and will also follow Equality Commission guidance:

- the guidance on screening, including the screening template, as detailed in the Commission's guidance '*Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 – A Guide for Public Authorities (April 2010)*' and
- on undertaking an equality impact assessment as detailed in the Commission's guidance '*Practical guidance on equality impact assessment (February 2005)*'.

Screening

4.4 The purpose of screening is to identify those policies that are likely to have an impact on equality of opportunity and/or good relations.

4.5 Screening is completed at the earliest opportunity in the policy development/review process. Policies which we propose to adopt will be subject to screening prior to implementation. For more detailed strategies or policies that are to be put in place through a series of stages, we will screen at various stages during implementation.

4.6 The lead role in the screening of a policy is taken by the policy decision maker who has the authority to make changes to that policy. However, screening will also involve other relevant team members, for example, equality specialists, those who implement the policy and staff members from other relevant work areas. Where possible we will include key stakeholders in the screening process.

4.7 The following questions are applied to all our policies as part of the screening process:

- What is the likely impact on equality of opportunity for those affected by this policy, for each of the Section 75 equality categories? (minor/major/none)
- Are there opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity for people within the Section 75 equality categories?
- To what extent is the policy likely to impact on good relations between people of a different religious belief, political opinion or racial group? (minor/major/none)
- Are there opportunities to better promote good relations between people of a different religious belief, political opinion or racial group?

4.8 In order to answer the screening questions, we gather all relevant information and data, both qualitative and quantitative. In taking this evidence into account we consider the different needs,

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

4.9 Completion of screening, taking into account our consideration of the answers to all 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 mitigation⁸ 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 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, the Council 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 Ards and North Down Borough Council.

4.11 If 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 Ards and North Down Borough Council.

⁸ 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 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 Ards and North Down Borough Council.

4.13 As soon as possible following the completion of the screening process, the screening template, signed off and approved by the senior manager responsible for the policy, will be made available on our website

www.ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk

and on request by contacting

Shirley Poxon
Town Hall, The Castle,
Bangor
BT20 4BT
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07718 159 275 SMS text only
E-mail:
shirley.poxon@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk

4.14 If a consultee, including the Equality Commission, raises a concern about a screening decision based on supporting evidence, we will review the screening decision.

4.15 Our screening reports are published quarterly [see below at 4.20 - 4.22 and 4.23 for details].

Equality impact assessment

4.16 An equality impact assessment (EQIA) is a thorough and systematic analysis of a policy, whether that policy is formal or informal, and irrespective of the scope of 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, the Council 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 The Council will make publicly available the results of assessments (screening and EQIA) of the likely impact of 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 Ards and North Down Borough Council over the three-month period
- A statement of the aim(s) of the policy/policies to which the assessment relates
- Consideration given to measures which might mitigate any adverse impact
- Consideration given to alternative policies which might better achieve the promotion of equality of opportunity
- Screening decisions, i.e.:
 - whether the policy has been ‘screened in’ for equality impact assessment.
 - whether the policy has been ‘screened out’ with mitigation or an alternative policy proposed to be adopted.

- whether the policy has been ‘screened out’ without mitigation or an alternative policy proposed to be adopted.
- Where applicable, a timetable for conducting equality impact assessments
- A link to 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 assessments (screening reports and completed templates, the results of equality impact assessments) will be made available on the Council’s website

www.ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk

and by contacting:

Shirley Poxon
Town Hall, The Castle,
Bangor
BT20 4BT
Tel: 0300 013 3333
07718 159 275 SMS text only
E-mail:
shirley.poxon@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk

4.25 In addition to the above, screening reports (electronic link, hard copy or in relevant alternative formats on request) which include all policies screened over a 3-month period are also sent directly to all consultees on a quarterly basis.

4.26 The Council 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 in delivering 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, Ards and North Down Borough Council follows guidance from the Office of the Information Commissioner and the Equality Commission.

4.28 The Council monitors any adverse impact on the promotion of equality of opportunity of policies we have adopted. It is 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 that have been established to monitor the impact of policies and identify opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity and good relations are:

- The collection, collation and analysis of existing relevant primary quantitative and qualitative data across all nine equality categories on an ongoing basis
- The collection, collation and analysis of existing relevant secondary sources of quantitative and qualitative data across all nine equality categories on an ongoing basis
- An audit of existing information systems within one year of approval of this equality scheme, to identify the extent of current monitoring and take action to address any gaps in order to have the necessary information on which to base decisions
- Undertaking or commissioning new data if necessary.

4.30 If over a two year period monitoring and evaluation show that a policy results in greater adverse impact than predicted, or if opportunities arise which would allow for greater equality of opportunity to be promoted, we will ensure that the policy is revised to achieve better outcomes for relevant equality groups.

4.31 We review our EQIA monitoring information on an annual basis. Other monitoring information is reviewed:

- The Council records alternative format requests to enable efficient monitoring of the needs of the service users to take place. Details of these requests will be kept and reviewed on an annual basis.
- All completed job applications for positions in Council have to have a monitoring form attached. This data is collated and compiled by the Human Resources Section's Monitoring Officer for submission to the Equality Commission on a regular basis.
- Customer satisfaction questionnaires carried out by Council, where appropriate, will include Section 75 monitoring questions. These questionnaires are reviewed as and when they are carried out.
- The Human Resources Section operates a file management system that can store, update and analyse the data on

employees. This system provides valuable data on the profile of employees and applicants.

- Any group awarded a Council administered grant is required to provide monitoring data in relation to their project as well as those the grant was targeting. This information will be reviewed by the awarding section and reviewed annually.
- Complaints are reviewed on a regular basis to ensure issues raised by stakeholders are addressed.
- The Annual Report to the Equality Commission includes an update on monitoring action undertaken for EQIA's, and the results.
- Results from monitoring are taken into account by the Council when annually reviewing the action plan and drafting new actions.
- Processes are in place for each section to review the data it collects at point of use.
- For other programmes surveys and monitoring/evaluation forms are issued as appropriate and reviewed at least annually.

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 As monitoring of Council EQIA's is contained within the Council's Annual Report to the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland the information is available on the Council website, and on request in hard copy or alternative formats, where each Annual

Report is made available following its ratification by Council and after being forwarded to the Equality Commission.

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

Chapter 5 Ards and North Down Borough Council's Employee training (Schedule 9 4. (2) (e))

Commitment to employee 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 The Chief Executive wishes to positively communicate the commitment of Ards and North Down Borough Council to the Section 75 statutory duties, both internally and externally.

To this end, we have introduced an effective communication and training programme for all employees and will ensure that our commitment to the Section 75 statutory duties is made clear in all relevant publications.

Training objectives

5.3 Ards and North Down Borough Council has drawn up a detailed training plan for its employees which aims to achieve the following objectives:

- to raise awareness of the provisions of Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, our equality scheme commitments and the particular issues likely to affect people across the range of Section 75 categories to ensure that our staff fully understand their role in implementing the scheme
- to provide employees involved in the assessment of policies (screening and EQIA) with the necessary skills and knowledge to do this work effectively
- to provide employees 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 employees involved in consultation processes with the necessary skills and knowledge to do this work effectively
- to provide employees involved in the implementation and monitoring of the effective implementation of the Ards and North Down Borough Council equality scheme with the necessary skills and knowledge to do this work effectively.

Awareness raising and training arrangements

5.4 The following arrangements are in place to ensure all employees and Elected Members are aware of and understand our equality obligations.

- We will develop a summary of this equality scheme and make it available to all staff;
- We will provide access to copies of the full equality scheme for all employees; ensure that any queries or questions of clarification from staff employees are addressed effectively;
- Employees and Members in the Ards and North Down Borough Council will receive a briefing on this equality scheme within two months of the approval of the scheme;
- The Section 75 statutory duties form part of induction training for new employees;
- Focused training is provided for key employees within Ards and North Down Borough Council who are directly engaged in taking forward the implementation of our equality scheme commitments (for example those involved in research and data collection, policy development, service design, conducting equality impact assessments, consultation, monitoring and evaluation);
- Where appropriate, training will be provided to ensure employees are aware of the issues experienced by the range of Section 75 groups; and
- When appropriate and on an ongoing basis, arrangements will be made to ensure employees are kept up to date with Section 75 developments.

Training in Section 75 is provided in house or outsourced as appropriate. Ards and North Down Borough Council offer the following training opportunities for all Council employees and Council Members.

□ Induction Training is available to all new employees and new Council Members. The session on Section 75 duties and responsibilities is half an hour long and introduces participants to Section 75 of The Northern Ireland Act 1998, and how the two duties relate to their roles and responsibilities within Council. It also includes a brief look at Disability Legislation.

- Diversity Training. This training is included within the Equality and Section 75 training which is provided to Council employees.

- Screening Council Policies and Equality Impact Assessments. This is a Practical Workshop that is provided in house or outsourced, as appropriate. It takes officers through the screening and EQIA process using practical examples of Council policies they are aware of or that are being introduced by Council. It includes sourcing and exploring quantitative and qualitative data sources and the value of this information to ensure screening is both meaningful and valuable.

- An awareness training session will be made available to employees, where needs are identified in specific service provision areas.

- Accessible Written Communications is provided by Council officers to identify that access to information is a powerful tool that enables people to access services as well as informing people about Council facilities and services. For people with a disability or whose first language is not English these can also be a barrier to accessing facilities and services we take for granted. This 2-hour awareness training provides guidance on different types of disabilities. The training offers those present suggestions on how to communicate Council information to and from disabled people; how to make information available in alternative formats and how to deal with correspondence in a language that is not English.

- A Diversity Awareness booklet has been written by officers with some relevant information for all employees in relation to the needs of those accessing the range of Council services. The booklet is issued to all employees at induction and referenced in all training sessions on diversity.

In order to share resources and expertise, Ards and North Down Borough Council will, where possible, work closely with other bodies and agencies in the development and delivery of training.

Monitoring and evaluation

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

- We evaluate the extent to which all participants at each session of a 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 are reviewed at the end of each session.
- Employees attending equality or good relations training courses are required to complete a post course evaluation questionnaire, the results of which are analysed, and a summary report produced at least annually. These post course questionnaires are used to update and revise courses accordingly. The summary will include the number of employees trained and the departments they work within.
- As part of the commitment to continuous employee development courses in relation to Ards and North Down Borough Council delivering on their Equality Scheme will be updated as necessary to ensure the needs of the organisation, employees, Members of Council, members of the Consultative Panel on Equality and Good Relations, those being consulted with, ratepayers, residents and those receiving Council services are met. These courses will be updated as and when required but will be reviewed at least annually.
- The training needs of all employees are discussed at employee review meetings at least annually and met through Council policies and schedules or through other external providers if required.

Chapter 6 Ards and North Down Borough Council's arrangements for ensuring and assessing public access to information and services we provide (Schedule 9 4. (2) (f))

6.1 Ards and North Down Borough Council 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 The Council is aware that some groups will not have the same access to information as others.

In particular:

- People with sensory, learning and communication 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, information is available in alternative formats on request and through discussion with the requestor. Where the exact request cannot be met, we will ensure a reasonable alternative is provided.

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

Ards and North Down Borough Council liaises with representatives of young people, minority ethnic organisations and people with a disability and takes account of existing and developing good practice.

The Council will respond to requests for information in alternative formats, where reasonably practicable, within 5 working days.

The Council will take appropriate steps to tailor any information to the needs of differing groups such as children and young people.

The Communication Policy provides employees with guidance on how to provide information to the range of Section 75 groups, including children and young people, people from minority ethnic groups, people with a learning disability and people with one or more physical disabilities within Northern Ireland for whom English is not their first language.

The Council can arrange to provide documents in a variety of formats, as required.

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

6.5 The Council is committed to ensuring effective communication, both internal and external, with its stakeholders. In recognising the growing range of communications channels and the differing needs and preferences of different groups, the Council will use a range of communications channels to enable wide access to information, to mitigate the risk that some sections of the public might not enjoy equality of opportunity in accessing information provided by the Council.

To ensure the methods and timeliness of the range of methods is appropriate to meet users' requirements Council will regularly monitor the uptake of each communication method and requests for additional methods of communication.

The Council's consultees will be asked to provide information on best practice for communicating with those they represent.

Employees will be advised of the range of communication methods and of the appropriateness to meet particular needs.

Access to services

6.6 Ards and North Down Borough Council is committed to ensuring that all services are fully accessible to everyone in the community across the Section 75 categories.

The Council also adheres to the relevant provisions of current anti-discrimination legislation.

6.7 The Council is involved in a variety of initiatives to ensure that information about its services are accessible to all Section 75 groups. This information includes meeting the needs of specific users and is available on the Council's website in a range of different formats as requested.

A bulky refuse collection service is provided for those who are unable to access the Amenity Sites and an assisted refuse collection service is provided for those unable to present their bin for collection due to a disability.

A Buddycard Scheme operates within the Council to encourage participation by those with a disability who would otherwise be unable to access the services and facilities.

All buildings, open spaces and playgrounds are audited regularly to ensure accessibility to services and facilities is suitable and their users have access to this information at a range of outlets. Access includes physical access, the availability of loop systems, quiet areas, booking of interpreters and the availability of accessible toilet facilities as well as access to information. Access audit information is provided on Council's website through the services of AccessAble and is updated annually.

The website is also available for users in Browsealoud and in a range of font sizes. The Council also has the facility for BSL Sign Video for all users and is available in the main reception areas of Council facilities.

Ards and North Down Borough Council has partnered with an organisation called SignVideo. SignVideo gives individuals who are hearing impaired or deaf that use BSL independence, by allowing them to make telephone calls confidently to Council services through fully qualified interpreters. This service is free for users and represents a new approach to BSL communication by the Council. Calls can be made via a videophone, laptop, PC, smartphone or tablet, enabling deaf BSL users to have equal access to Council services. In addition to the web-based service, tablets installed with the Sign Video software, are located at four main Council facilities.

Assessing public access to information and services

6.8 Ards and North Down Borough Council monitor annually across all our functions, in relation to access to information and services, to ensure equality of opportunity and good relations are promoted.

6.9 The quarterly reports detail requests for Council information in accessible formats, documents that have been translated into English or an ethnic minority language and the positive action measures taken to provide information in alternative formats in the previous three-month period.

6.10 The Council will advertise the availability of the range of alternative formats in all communications it publishes and in particular all public consultation documents. To ensure Council continues to meet the changing demands of service users in relation to the range of alternative formats Council will invite consultees to inform Council officers of any changes to the current range of alternative formats that would benefit them or those they represent on an on-going basis. Council will ensure that information on Council facilities and services is made available at a wide range of locations throughout the Borough.

6.11 The uptake of the range of available alternative formats will be monitored annually, reported in the Annual Report to the Equality Commission and the availability of the range revised as necessary.

Chapter 7 Timetable for measures Ards and North Down Borough Council 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 above at 2.11 – 2.18.

Chapter 8 Ards and North Down Borough Council's complaints procedure (Schedule 9 10.)

8.1 Ards and North Down Borough Council are 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 the Council has failed to comply with its approved equality scheme should contact:

Shirley Poxon
Town Hall, The Castle,
Bangor
BT20 4BT
Tel: 0300 013 3333
07718 159 275 SMS text only
E-mail:
shirley.poxon@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk

Complaints will be accepted in the format that best meets the complainants needs.

8.4 Receipt of complaints will be acknowledged within five working days of a complaint being made

8.5 Ards and North Down Borough Council will carry out an internal investigation of the complaint and will respond substantively to the complainant within one (1) month of the date of receiving the letter of complaint. Under certain circumstances, if the complexity of the matter requires a longer period, the period for response to the complainant may be extended to two (2) months.

In those circumstances, the complainant will be advised of the extended period within one month of making the complaint.

8.6 During this process the complainant will be kept fully informed of the progress of the investigation into the complaint and of any outcomes.

8.7 In any subsequent investigation by the Equality Commission, Ards and North Down Borough Council will co-operate fully, providing access in a timely manner to any relevant documentation that the Equality Commission may require.

Similarly, Ards and North Down Borough Council will co-operate fully with any investigation by the Equality Commission under subparagraph 11 (1) (b) of Schedule 9 to the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

8.8 Ards and North Down Borough Council will make all efforts to implement promptly and in full any recommendations arising out of any Commission investigation.

Chapter 9 Publication of Ards and North Down Borough Council's equality scheme (Schedule 9 4. (3) (c))

9.1 Ards and North Down Borough Council equality scheme is available free of charge in print form and alternative formats from:

Shirley Poxon
Town Hall, The Castle,
Bangor
BT20 4BT
Tel: 0300 013 3333
07718 159 275 SMS text only
E-mail:
shirley.poxon@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk

9.2 Our equality scheme is also available on our website at:
www.ardsandnorthdown.gov.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:

- The Council will make all reasonable efforts to communicate widely the existence and content of our equality scheme. This may include press releases, prominent advertisements in the press, the internet and direct mail shots to groups representing the various categories in Section 75.
- We will email a link to our approved equality scheme to our consultees on our consultation lists. Other consultees without e-mail will be notified by letter that the scheme is available on request. We will respond to requests for the equality scheme in alternative formats in a timely manner, usually within five (5) working days.
- this equality scheme is available on request in alternative formats such as Braille, large print, audio formats (CD, mp3, DAISY) and in minority languages to meet the needs of those for whom English is not their first language.
- An easy read version of the Council's equality scheme will be produced to ensure people with a learning disability,

ethnic minorities and children and young people have the same access to the equality scheme.

- A summary of the Equality Scheme will be written and made available to all Council Members, employees, members of the Council's Consultative Panel on Equality and Good Relations, consultees and made available in a range of formats for anyone who should request a copy. It will also be made available on Council's website. The summary document will be made available to encourage engagement with Council on issues of Section 75.

9.4 For a list of our stakeholders and consultees please see Appendix 3 of the equality scheme, visit our website at www.ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk or contact

Shirley Poxon
Town Hall, The Castle,
Bangor
BT20 4BT
Tel: 0300 013 3333
07718 159 275 SMS text only
E-mail:
shirley.poxon@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk

Chapter 10 Review of Ards and North Down and Ards Borough Council's equality scheme

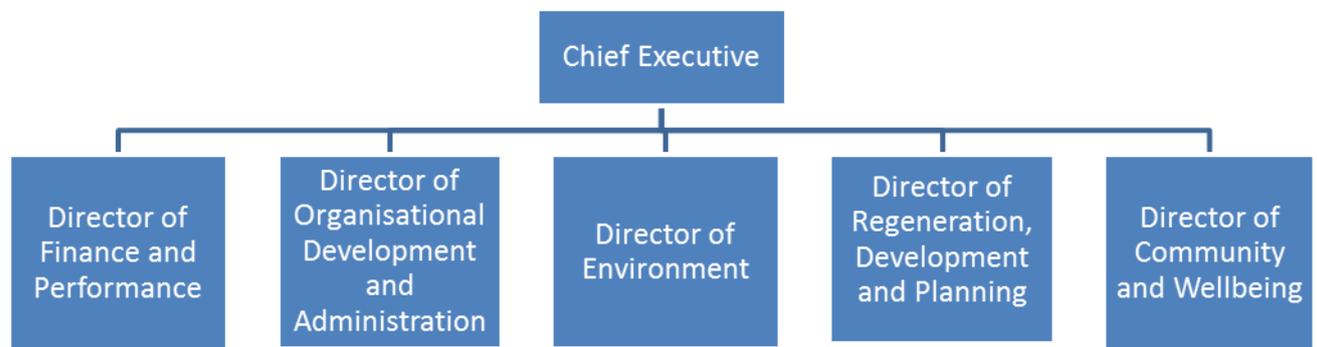
(Schedule 9 8. (3))

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 made available to the public by publication on the Council's website, with consultees notified of the link by email, in hard copy or appropriate alternative format, to the Council's consultees on Equality and Good Relations, to consultees and sent to the Equality Commission.

Appendix 1 Organisational 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> ⁹ . 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 ¹⁰	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.

⁹ 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.*”

¹⁰ *ibid*

Appendix 3 List of consultees (Schedule 9 4. (2) (a))

This consultation list is not exhaustive and will be reviewed on a bi-annual basis to ensure it remains relevant to Council functions and policies.

This list is as per all organisations that requested to be retained as a consultee in October 2019 and since that date. Where a topic of particular interest to an organisation/individual is being consulted upon, these organisations/individuals will be contacted.

North Down Community Network
Positive Futures
Guide Dogs for the Blind
ARC NI
Ards Community Network
Bahai Council for Northern Ireland
British Deaf Association
Bloomfield Community Association
Breezemount Community Association
Royal National Institute for the Blind
Action Mental Health
Chrysalis Women's Centre
Ballygowan Seniors
Parkinsons UK NI
Chinese Welfare Association
Disability Matters
Eastend Community Association
Church of Ireland
Down's Syndrome Association
Foras na Gaeilge
Aware NI
NSPCC
Home Start
Disability Action
Indian Community Centre
Association of Chief Officers of Voluntary Organisations
Action Cancer
Action MS
Arts and Disability Forum
AGE NI
Age Sector Platform
Committee on the Administration of Justice

Carers NI
Cedar Foundation
Children's Law Centre
Children in Northern Ireland
Commissioner for Older people Northern Ireland
Employers for Disability
IMTAC
Men's Advisory Project Northern Ireland
Millisle District and Community Association
NIPSA
Northern Ireland Tourist Board
Queerspace
Rathgill Community Association
Rural Development Council for Northern Ireland
Equality Coalition
The Link Centre
Ulster Farmers Union
Ulster Scots Agency
Victim Support NI
UNISON
Women's Resource and Development Agency
UNISON
Equality Commission Northern Ireland
Kilcooley Forum
MS Society
SENSE
Alzheimer's Association NI
Women's Support Network
Northern Ireland Women's European Platform
Omnibus Partnership
Portaferry Collective
NIPSA
Redburn and Loughview
Country Down Rural Community Network
Belfast Butterfly Club
Whitehill Community Association
Workers party of Northern Ireland
West Winds Social Cultural Institution
Rural Action Northern Ireland
Beechfield Residents
Cedar Foundation

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

Measure	Lead responsibility	Timetable
<p>Annual Review</p> <p>Section 75 Annual Progress Report [2.7]</p>	Chief Executive	31 August (annually)
<p>Quarterly Reports</p> <p>Quarterly reports to Council [2.10]</p>	Compliance Officer (Equality and Safeguarding)	March, June, September and December annually
<p>Action plan</p> <p>Consultation on draft action plan [2.15]</p> <p>Finalised action plan published [2.18]</p> <p>Arrangements for monitoring progress in place [2.16]</p>	<p>Compliance Officer (Equality and Safeguarding)</p> <p>Compliance Officer (Equality and Safeguarding)/Chief Executive</p> <p>Compliance Officer (Equality and Safeguarding)</p>	<p>February – June 2020</p> <p>August 2020</p> <p>August 2020</p>
<p>Consultation</p> <p>Consultation list reviewed and updated [3.4]</p>	Compliance Officer (Equality and Safeguarding)	November 2019 (bi-annually)

<p>Screening</p> <p>Screening Reports [4.15]</p>	<p>Compliance Officer (Equality and Safeguarding)</p>	<p>Quarterly in January, April, July and October</p>
<p>EQIA's</p> <p>EQIA timetable [4.16]</p>	<p>Compliance Officer (Equality and Safeguarding)</p>	<p>As determined by Ards and North Down Borough Council reports</p>
<p>Monitoring</p> <p>Review of monitoring information [4.31]</p> <p>Publication of monitoring information [4.33;4.34]</p>	<p>Compliance Officer (Equality and Safeguarding)</p> <p>Compliance Officer (Equality and Safeguarding)</p>	<p>31 August (annually)</p> <p>31 August (annually)</p>

<p>Training</p> <p>Development of summary scheme [5.4]</p> <p>Focussed training [5.4]</p> <p>Update training [5.4]</p> <p>Development of overall training programme [5.5]</p> <p>Evaluation of training [5.6]</p>	<p>Compliance Officer (Equality and Safeguarding)</p> <p>Compliance Officer (Equality and Safeguarding)/Human Resources</p>	<p>January 2015/updated April 2020</p> <p>From January 2015</p> <p>Annually from January 2015</p> <p>On review of overall training programme (annually)</p> <p>Upon completion of each training session</p>
<p>Information Access</p> <p>Assessing access to information and services [6.9]</p>	<p>Compliance Officer (Equality and Safeguarding)</p>	<p>Review quarterly March, June, September and December annually</p>

<p>Publication</p> <p>Communication of equality scheme [9.3]</p> <p>Notification of consultees [9.3]</p>	<p>Compliance Officer (Equality and Safeguarding)/Communications Officer</p> <p>Compliance Officer (Equality and Safeguarding)/Communications Officer</p>	<p>Within 3 months of approval by Equality Commission</p> <p>Within 3 months of approval by Equality Commission</p>
<p>Review of Scheme</p> <p>Review of equality scheme [10.1]</p>	<p>Compliance Officer (Equality and Safeguarding)</p>	<p>Within 5 years of approval by Equality Commission and every 5 years thereafter.</p> <p>Consultees informed within 2 months of approval by Ards and North Down Borough Council</p>

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.

Affirmative Action

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

Article 55 Review

Under the Fair Employment and Treatment (NI) Order 1998, all registered employers must conduct periodic reviews of the composition of their workforces and of their employment practices for the purposes of determining whether members of the Protestant and Roman Catholic communities are enjoying, and are likely to continue to enjoy, fair participation in employment in each employer's concern.

These reviews, which are commonly known as Article 55 Reviews, must be conducted at least once every three years.

Audit of inequalities

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

Consultation

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

Council of Europe

The Council of Europe, based in Strasbourg, covers virtually the entire European continent, with its 47 member countries. Founded on 5 May 1949 by 10 countries, the Council of Europe seeks to develop throughout Europe common and democratic principles based on the European Convention on Human Rights and other reference texts on the protection of individuals.

Desk Audit

An audit of a draft Equality Scheme to ensure that the scheme conforms with the requirements on form and content as detailed in the Commission's Guidelines (the Guide).

Differential impact

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

Discrimination

The anti-discrimination laws prohibit the following forms of

discrimination:

- direct discrimination;
- indirect discrimination;
- disability discrimination;
- victimisation; and
- harassment.

Brief descriptions of these above terms follow:

Direct discrimination:

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

Indirect discrimination:

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

Disability discrimination:

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

(a) *Disability-related discrimination* generally occurs where a public

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

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

Victimisation:

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

Harassment:

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

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Economic Appraisal

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

Equality impact assessment

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

Equality of opportunity

The prevention, elimination or regulation of discrimination between people on grounds of characteristics including sex, marital status, age, disability, religious belief, political opinion, dependants, race and sexual orientation. The promotion of equality of opportunity entails more than the elimination of discrimination. It requires proactive measures to be taken to secure equality of opportunity between the categories identified under Section 75.

Equality scheme

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

Good relations

Although not defined in the legislation, the Equality Commission has agreed the following working definition of good relations: 'the growth of relations and structures for Northern Ireland that acknowledge the religious, political and racial context of this society, and that seek to promote respect, equity and trust, and embrace diversity in all its forms'.

Mainstreaming equality

The integration of equal opportunities principles, strategies and practices into the everyday work of public authorities from the outset. In other words, mainstreaming is the process of ensuring that equality considerations are built into the policy development process from the beginning, rather than being bolted on at the end. Mainstreaming can help improve methods of working by increasing a public authority's accountability, responsiveness to need and relations with the public. It can bring added value at many levels.

Mitigation of adverse impact

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

Monitoring

Monitoring consists of continuously scrutinising and evaluating a policy to assess its impact on the Section 75 categories. Monitoring must be sensitive to the issues associated with human rights and privacy. Public authorities should seek advice from consultees and Section 75 representative groups when setting up monitoring systems. Monitoring consists of the collection of relevant information and evaluation of policies. It is not solely about the collection of data, it can also take the form of regular meetings and reporting of research undertaken. Monitoring is not an end in itself but provides the data for the next cycle of policy screening.

Northern Ireland Act

The Northern Ireland Act, implementing the Good Friday Agreement received Royal Assent on 19 November 1998. Section 75 of the Act created the statutory equality duties.

Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission

A statutory body established under Section 68 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, which works to ensure that the human rights of everyone in Northern Ireland are fully protected in law, policy and practice.

Northern Ireland Statistics & Research Agency (NISRA)

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

OFM/DFM

The Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister is responsible for providing advice, guidance, challenge and support to other NI Civil Service Departments on Section 75 issues.

PAFT

The Policy Appraisal and Fair Treatment (PAFT) Guidelines constituted the first non-statutory attempt at mainstreaming equality in Northern Ireland in January 1994. The aim of the PAFT Guidelines was to ensure that issues of equality and equity informed policy making and activity in all spheres and at all levels of government. PAFT has now been superseded by Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

Policy

The formal and informal decisions a public authority makes in relation to carrying out its duties. Defined in the New Oxford English Dictionary as 'a course or principle of action adopted or proposed by a government party, business or individual'. In the context of Section 75, the term **policies** covers all the ways in which a public authority carries out or proposes to carry out its functions relating to Northern Ireland. Policies include unwritten as well as written policies.

Positive action

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

Qualitative data

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

Quantitative data

Quantitative data refers to numbers, typically derived from either a population in general or samples of that population. This

information is often analysed by either using descriptive statistics, which consider general profiles, distributions and trends in the data, or inferential statistics, which are used to determine 'significance' either in relationships or differences in the data

Screening

The procedure for identifying which policies will be subject to equality impact assessment, and how these equality impact assessments will be prioritised. The purpose of screening is to identify the policies which are likely to have a minor/major impact on equality of opportunity so that greatest resources can be devoted to improving these policies. Screening requires a systematic review of existing and proposed policies.

Schedule 9

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

Section 75

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 Action plan/action measures

Equality Action Plan will be available in August 2020

The Equality Action Plan will be developed from the equality screening programme and Inequalities Audit. It will have a 12-week consultation period once it is agreed by Ards and North Down Borough Council and will be finalised and available from August 2020.