



Youth Council for Northern Ireland

EQUALITY SCHEME

Northern Ireland Act 1998
Section 75 of the
Statutory Equality Obligations

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FOREWORD

In accordance with Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, the Youth Council is required to develop and implement an Equality Scheme, promoting equality of opportunity, and good community relations when it is carrying out its statutory functions.

The Youth Council is fully committed to the fulfilment of its statutory duties under the legislation. This Equality Scheme sets out how it proposes to do so.

We will ensure that all members and officials of the Youth Council are aware of our statutory duties and we will take the lead within the Youth Council in the implementation of this Equality Scheme.

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David Guilfoyle
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

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Máire Young
CHAIRPERSON

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Youth Council for Northern Ireland was set up in April 1990 by the Youth Service (Northern Ireland) Order 1989, following a review of the Youth Service in 1985/86.
- 1.2 The Youth Council advises the Minister, Education and Library Boards and other bodies on the development of the youth service. Among other tasks, this legislation directs the Council to:
- assess and pay grant to headquarter voluntary youth organisations;
 - encourage cross-community activity by the youth service;
 - encourage the provision of facilities for the youth service and facilities which are especially beneficial to young persons;
 - encourage and assist the co-ordination and efficient use of the resources of the youth service.
- 1.3 Other core activities of the Youth Council include:
- conducting research into the youth service and youth issues;
 - facilitating curriculum development within the youth service;
 - co-ordination of training for youth workers within the service;
 - co-ordination of youth exchange bursaries and study tours;
 - increasing awareness of European Union (EU) programmes and influencing EU policies.
- 1.4 It should be noted that the Youth Council does not normally provide direct services to individuals.
- 1.5 The Youth Council consists of a Chairman, Vice-Chairman and 13 members who are appointed by the Minister of Education, following public advertisement and a selection process.
- 1.6 Section 75(1) of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 ('the Act') requires that the Youth Council "*shall in carrying out its functions relating to Northern Ireland, have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity:*
- a. *between persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status or sexual orientation;*
 - b. *between men and women generally;*
 - c. *between persons with a disability and persons without; and*
 - d. *between persons with dependants and persons without."*

- 1.7 In addition, without prejudice to its obligation above, section 75(2) requires that the Council shall, in carrying out its functions relating to Northern Ireland, *“have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group”*.
- 1.8 Schedule 9 to the Act requires the Council to set out in an Equality Scheme how it proposes to fulfil the duties imposed by section 75. This Scheme is intended to fulfil that statutory requirement.
- 1.9 For the purposes of this Scheme, the Council has defined a “policy” as being “any decision taken as to how the Council should execute all its functions, powers and duties relating to Northern Ireland, both statutory and non-statutory”, and includes legislation, Schemes and codes of practice. Included within this definition are the recruitment of staff, the delivery and development of services and the procurement of services, goods and equipment. It is recognised that “formal” and “informal” policies are present in all public bodies.
- 1.10 The Youth Council’s Chief Executive is responsible for ensuring that the decisions of the Council are implemented, the day to day management of the organisation, and for ensuring the organisation works effectively in accordance with government policy and public service values. The Director is also the Council’s Accounting Officer and in that capacity is responsible for the effective and efficient use of resources and the maintenance of appropriate standards of financial accountability. The Director will ensure that the necessary resources, including staff, time and finance, are allocated so that the statutory duties are complied with and the Equality Scheme drawn up and implemented effectively, on time.
- 1.11 The Youth Council’s Chief Executive will ensure that there are effective internal arrangements in place to ensure that the statutory duties are effectively complied with and for monitoring and reviewing progress. (The details are set out later in this document.)
- 1.12 The Chief Executive will further ensure the development and delivery of a planned programme of communication and training on the Equality Scheme.

2. COMPLIANCE ISSUES

- 2.1 The Council senior management team is comprised of three Directors, each responsible for specific areas of the Council's work, reporting to the Chief Executive. The Chief Executive has a responsibility to the Council to ensure that the Council fully complies with this Scheme. Each member of the senior management team is responsible to the Chief Executive for ensuring that activities in their own work areas are fully compliant with the Scheme. Mr A Dempster, one of the Directors, is the Council's Equality Officer and has operational responsibility for the Scheme. He is the point of contact for issues relating to the Scheme, and can be contacted at:

The Youth Council for Northern Ireland
Forestview
Purdy's Lane
Belfast BT8 7AR

Tel: 028 9064 3882
Fax: 028 9064 3874
E-mail: adempster@youthcouncil-ni.org.uk

- 2.2 The Council shall screen all new policy proposals in accordance with the arrangements set out in Chapter 6.
- 2.3 No policy proposal will be presented to the Council unless it has been screened and, if appropriate, impact assessed. This rule will be subject only to very limited exceptions; for example an exception would be justified in circumstances of considerable urgency. However, in these cases, a subsequent screening and, if necessary, impact assessment will be carried out as soon as possible.
- 2.4 The Council will carry out a systematic review of all its existing policies to determine whether the equality of opportunity dimension and good relations is central to any of them. The timetable for this is set out in Chapter 10.
- 2.5 Objectives and targets relating to the statutory obligations will be integrated into the Council's strategic and annual business plans. These will be reflected at all levels of strategic planning within the organisation, including staff objectives and annual business plans. Progress by all staff on meeting objectives, including those relating to the statutory duties, will be monitored and reported upon to the Chief Executive on a quarterly basis. Staff performance will be monitored and reviewed through performance review arrangements. A formal report of progress each year will be included in the Youth Council's Annual Report.

- 2.6 With regard to the promotion of good relations, the Youth Council has already made a commitment to this goal through its involvement in an interagency project - JEDI: joined in equity, diversity and interdependence. This will necessitate the allocation of Council resources and staff time to a review of the Council's existing policies, and new policies, in order to ensure that the principles of equity, diversity and interdependence permeate all aspects of the Council's work.

In addition to the groups identified in Appendix B, consideration will also be given to the needs and interests of minority ethnic groups, including Irish Travellers.

Details of the Council's programme of work are included in Section 10.

- 2.7 The Council will prepare an annual statement reviewing the progress which has been made during the preceding year to promote equality of opportunity and good relations. This statement will be sent to the Equality Commission to assist it in compiling its own Annual Report as required by sub paragraph 5 (1) (b) of Schedule 8 to the Act.

The Council will liaise with the Equality Commission with a view to ensuring progress is maintained.

- 2.8 The Council will communicate to and train its staff on the requirements of the statutory obligations and how they can be implemented.

3. CONSULTATION

- 3.1 The Council will consult with the Equality Commission and the Community Relations Council, as appropriate, on any issue which it believes to be relevant to the fulfilment of its statutory obligations and it will take account of any proposals from those bodies arising from such consultation.
- 3.2 The Council will also consult with such public sector and affected groups as are relevant, both in regard to promoting equality of opportunity and good relations. The Council will consult with bodies listed in Appendix A in relation to Section 75 duties, screening and the Scheme itself, but affected groups only (under Section 75) will be consulted on Equality Impact Assessment. This list is not exhaustive and may be amended in the light of experience.
- 3.3 The Council will also consult with young people who may be affected by the Council's policies.
- 3.4 The Council will work with groups and individuals representative of the Section 75 categories in order to identify how best to obtain their views. Innovative approaches to consulting will be considered. It is recognised that there will be different means of consulting appropriate for different groups, and it will be important to establish the basis for dialogue and engagement during the life of this Scheme.
- 3.5 The Council will commence consultation as early as possible. Normally, consultations will be initiated through the publication of written proposals. The Council will aim to provide a consultation period of at least 8 weeks. Where it has not been possible to comply with this requirement, the Council will monitor and keep under review such circumstances and justify its actions in the Council's Annual Review. However, recognising the timescales involved in groups organising their own consultations, the Council will endeavour to maximise this consultation period.

In consulting on any matter to which this Scheme relates, the Council may also use any of the following methods:

- letter;
- attitude surveys of service users and potential service users;
- press releases and advertisements;
- internet;
- public meetings;
- standing or ad hoc consultative fora;
- consultative panels;

- direct invitation to groups;

- questionnaires.
- 3.6 The Council will ensure that there are no barriers to the consultation process. Information will be available on request in accessible formats such as braille, disk and audio cassette, and in minority languages to meet the needs of those who are not fluent in English. The Council will ensure that systems are put in place to ensure that such information is available in accessible formats, in a timely fashion, in order to ensure the highest level of inclusivity in any policy making decisions.
- 3.7 The Council acknowledges the importance of full participation in any meetings that are held as part of the consultation process. In organising all such meetings the Council will give specific consideration to the following:
- the time of day when the meeting is held;
 - the appropriateness of the venue;
 - the accessibility of the language and the format of the information;
 - the provision of childcare;
 - the provision of interpretation (including sign language).
- 3.8 To facilitate meaningful consultation, the Council will make, where available, all relevant quantitative and qualitative data as part of the consultation process, including any commissioned consultants reports. The Council considers it particularly important that sufficient, timely and appropriate information is provided to enable groups and individuals to consider the full implications of proposals and will take steps to ensure this.
- 3.9 The Council will ensure that training is provided for those engaged in the consultation exercise to ensure effective communication with consultees.
- 3.10 The Council will adopt specific approaches in its consultations with young people which have been developed through its substantive experience of facilitating such consultations and its research into the participation by young people in decision-making processes within Northern Ireland. The Council's publication "*Seen and Heard? Consulting and involving young people within the public sector*" sets out in detail the guidance which the Council will adopt in its consultations with young people.

The Council also acknowledges that consultations with young people must also be adapted to be appropriate to the age range of those consulted.

4. PUBLIC ACCESS TO INFORMATION

- 4.1 The Council is committed to effective communication with the public. It recognises that there is a risk that some sections of the public will not enjoy equality of opportunity in accessing information provided by the Council. There are 4 particular risk areas:
- people with sensory and learning disabilities may have particular difficulties with information in print;
 - members of ethnic minority groups, who are not fluent in English, may have difficulties with information provided only in English;
 - some local newspapers are read predominantly by members of only one community;
 - young people may be unfamiliar with some of the terminology and use of language in present public sector publications.
- 4.2 The Council will produce summaries of this Equality Scheme in more user-friendly language, including those appropriate to various groupings such as young people, those with learning disabilities, poor literacy skills. The Council will approach affected groups to assist with this task. A summary will be made available in minority languages to meet the needs of those not fluent in English.
- 4.3 The Council will ensure that information is available on request in accessible formats such as braille, disk and audio cassette, and in minority languages to meet the needs of those who are not fluent in English. The Council will ensure that systems are put in place to ensure that such information is available in accessible formats, in timely fashion. The Council will monitor and review access to its information and services.
- 4.4 With a view to ensuring public access to the Council's premises, the Council will maintain a welcoming and neutral environment. Due regard will be given to the relevant provisions of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.
- 4.5 In disseminating information through the local press, the Council will ensure that press statements and public advertisements are accessible to both main communities, and endeavour to have them published in other literature specific to constituent groups.
- 4.6 Following submission to the Equality Commission, this Scheme will be available in print form and accessible formats, free on request, from the Council's offices at Forestview, Purdy's Lane, Belfast, BT8 7AR. It can also be accessed from the Council's website at www.youthcouncil-ni.org.uk. The Council will issue a press statement when the Scheme is approved by the Equality Commission.

A copy of the approved Scheme will be sent to all those who responded to the consultation and specific consideration will be given to how best to communicate the Scheme to young people and those with learning disabilities.

5. MONITORING

5.1 Knowledge of the impact of its policies on the different groups within section 75 categories will be of assistance in assessing progress towards equality of opportunity. Within one year of approval of this Scheme, the Council will assess the extent of existing monitoring and the scope for extending it to meet the new obligations imposed by the Act. In addition to the value of any further information required for assessing progress towards equality of opportunity and public access to Council information and services, the review will also take account of the following factors:

- resource implications;
- readiness of the public to supply information;
- availability of proxy measures.

5.2 In some cases an equality impact assessment may identify an anticipated differential adverse impact on particular groups within the section category. Assuming that no alternative policy is feasible, steps will be taken, wherever possible, to mitigate such anticipated adverse impact. The Council may, in these circumstances, commission special monitoring to confirm the extent of the adverse impact and/or the success of any mitigating measures. Information collected in this special monitoring will be taken into account in any future review of the policy.

5.3 In conducting monitoring, the Council may use the following data sources:

- views of young people;
- information from government departments;
- comparable information from Great Britain or other European states;
- census;
- labour force survey;
- continuous household survey;
- internet group data;
- statutory agencies;
- deprivation studies and other appropriate indices;
- published research reports;
- community views.

This list is not exhaustive.

The Council will review, on an annual basis, the results of monitoring. If 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, the Council will ensure that the policy is revised.

- 5.4 The Council will make publicly available the outcome of any monitoring undertaken in relation to paragraphs 5.1 and 5.2 above. This material will be accessible on the Council's website. It will also be available in printed form and in alternative formats through a request in writing to the Council's Equality Officer. The availability of such reports will be publicised through press releases and on the Council's website. The Council will directly inform bodies listed at Appendix A when this material is available.

6. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

- 6.0 For the purposes of this Scheme, the Youth Council has defined a “policy” as being any “decision” taken as to how the Youth Council should fulfil its functions both statutory and non statutory (other than individualised decision taking) and included unwritten as well as written policies. In conducting its business, the Youth Council has a statutory duty to implement policies from external sources, namely the Department of Education. It is the Youth Council’s view that, where it is required to implement a policy by another public authority, the implications of that policy on equality of opportunity and good relations should be addressed by the source through a process of consultation with the Council.
- 6.2 However, when a policy promulgated by another public authority allows the Council discretion on how it is to be implemented, it would be the Council’s responsibility to take into account, and address, the possible effects any implementation decision might have with regard to its Section 75 duties.

7. THE EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT DUTY

- 7.1 The policy impact assessment duty is contained in paragraph 4(2)(C) of Schedule 9 of the Act. This requires the Youth Council to state, in this Scheme, its arrangements for:
- assessing; and
 - consulting
- on the likely impact, (on the promotion of equality of opportunity), of current or proposed Council policies. That statement is set out in this Chapter.

Screening

- 7.2 The Youth Council is carrying out a systematic review of all its existing and proposed policies.
- 7.3 In fulfilling its statutory obligations the Youth Council intends to adopt a four stage approach:-

Stage 1 - Screening of Policies

Stage 2 - Timetable for setting priorities

Stage 3 - Consultation

Stage 4 - Detailed report in the Annual report to the Equality Commission.

7.4 Stage I - Screening of Policies

The purpose of screening, in relation to a particular policy, is to consider whether or not the policy, in practice, has the potential to significantly affect the prospects for success or failure in relation to one or more of the equality of opportunity promotional duties. The Council will take care that the policy headings used are sufficiently specific that they do not mask several policies. That issue should be separately considered in the context of each of the equality of opportunity promotional duties. In considering the issue, in relation to any such duty, due regard should be paid to the following questions:

1. Is there any evidence of higher or lower participation or uptake by different groups?
2. Is there any evidence that different groups have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to the particular policy issue?
3. Is there an opportunity to promote equality of opportunity between the relevant groups, either by altering the policy, or by working with others, in Government, or the larger community, in the context of the policy?

The Council also acknowledges that other dimensions exist, such as urban/ rural, which should be recognised during this exercise.

4. Have the consultations held with relevant groups, organisations or individuals indicated that policies of that type create problems specific to any relevant group?

If the answer to any of the criteria set out above is positive, consideration will be given to whether to subject the policy to an equality impact assessment. The Council considers that not all its policies require a detailed Equality Impact Assessment to be undertaken and believes that only those policies which may present a significant risk to the statutory duty in section 75 (1) of the Act to “have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity” should be subject to such detailed assessment.

The Council recognises that there may not be sufficient information available with regard to participation by some groupings listed in Appendix B. In these instances the Council will seek to include these policies for Impact Assessment.

7.5 Stage 2 - Timetable for setting priorities

Having screened its policies as outlined in Stage 1 and identified which policies it believes should be subjected to full assessment (taking into consideration the comments contained in paragraph 7.1 above), the Youth Council proposes to prioritise these impact assessments.

In determining priority the Youth Council will consider the following factors:

- social need;
- effect on people’s daily lives;
- effect on economic, social and human rights;
- scale of expenditure incurred by the policy;
- responses received from groups and individuals during the screening stage.

The Council will pay particular attention to these responses in this prioritisation exercise.

7.6 Stage 3 - Consultation

The Youth Council will carry out stages 1 and 2 within 6 months of submitting its Scheme to the Equality Commission. It will then consult with the organisations listed at Appendix A on the results of the screening and its time tabling prioritisation exercise.

7.7 Stage 4 - Report of the screening exercise

The Youth Council will prepare a detailed Report of the screening and consultation exercise in its annual report to the Equality Commission. Policies to be subjected to impact assessment will be detailed in the Screening Report.

The report will detail the policies proposed by those consulted as appropriate for impact assessment which have not been so included and why, and details of those consulted. The timescale arrived at for Equality Impact Assessment following consultation will be included in the Report of the screening exercise.

Any new policies will be screened for fuller impact assessment using the criteria identified at paragraph 7.4 above.

The methodology which will be used for an equality impact assessment is set out below.

7.8 Overview of the Impact Assessment Process

The impact assessment process should include each of the following stages:

1. Consideration of available data and research
2. Consultation in the context of the assessment
3. Consideration of methods to mitigate any adverse impacts of the policy proposals
4. Consideration of alternatives to the relevant policy (or proposed policy)

7.9 Considering available data and research

At this stage of the impact assessment process, due account should be taken of each of the following:

1. The outcome of any relevant monitoring
2. Any available data and/or research which is likely to be helpful in assessing any impact of the proposed policy in the context of any of the equality of opportunity promotional duties.
3. The need for sensitivity and confidentiality in relation to some data that may be required in respect of some policies affecting certain recognised groups (see Appendix B).

7.10 In some new circumstances, it may be thought appropriate to commission new data, and/or new research, for the purpose of facilitating impact assessment. In other cases, it will be essential to do so where significant gaps exist in the available data.

7.11 Consultation - Impact Assessment

7.11.1 Impact assessment consultation will be carried out in accordance with good practice, any relevant legal requirements and the general principles set out in Chapter 3.

7.11.2 The Youth Council will use such methods of consultation as it considers to be best suited to facilitating effective consultation, in all the circumstances of the particular policy, in light of guidance received from relevant umbrella bodies. In some circumstances, it may be thought appropriate to facilitate consultation through:

- represented press releases;
- prominent advertisements in the press; and/or
- direct invitation to groups and individuals, particularly young people, likely to be interested in and able to represent interests and views which would be inadequately represented;
- standing or ad hoc consultative fora.

7.11.3 For each policy the public sector and non-governmental organisations to be consulted will be drawn from Appendix A. In addition any other bodies, groups or individuals who in the opinion of the Youth Council are directly interested in the policy will be consulted. It will be normal practice for the Youth Council to consult young people during this process.

7.11.4 The outcome of any impact assessment consultation will be brought to the attention, in writing, of the relevant decision maker(s).

7.12 Assessment of Impacts

7.12.1 The Youth Council acknowledges that relevant, reliable and up-to-date information is essential but that this alone does not provide reasons or explanations for differences. Consequently, the Youth Council will use the data from its information gathering process outlined above, to determine whether there is or is likely to be a differential impact, whether direct or indirect, upon the relevant group(s).

7.12.2 If an adverse effect on the relevant categories can be identified, the Youth Council will take legal advice on whether the policy is unlawfully discriminatory, taking into account that some policies are intended to increase equality of opportunity by requiring or permitting affirmative or positive action, or action to redress disadvantages.

7.12.3 Acting on legal advice, the Youth Council will decide how it can ensure that it is acting within the law.

7.12.4 In keeping with the Equality Commission's guidance, where a policy is found not to be unlawful, the Youth Council will consider how to respond in light of the adverse impact identified. The guidance suggests that if the policy is intended specifically to address the needs of a particular group, it may well be justifiable, indeed necessary, in order to promote the equality of opportunity of that group. If this is not the case, the Youth Council will consider whether there are any alternative measures which would achieve the desired aim without the differential impact identified.

7.13 Mitigation

7.13.1 If the policy (or proposed policy) seems likely to have the effect of creating or broadening any relevant inequality of opportunity, the Youth Council is under a duty, as part of the impact assessment process, to consider measures to mitigate any such adverse impacts.

7.13.2 In considering mitigation, the following two questions should be addressed:

1. Is it possible to lessen the severity of the relevant adverse impact within the policy (or proposed policy) as originally formulated?
2. If it not possible to do so, or if it is decided not to do so, consideration will be given to whether there is any other remedy which can be provided to the relevant group.

7.13.3 The consideration of mitigation, and the conclusions arrived at in the course of that consideration, will be documented.

7.14 Alternatives

7.14.1 As part of the process of assessing the impact of any particular policy (or proposed policy), consideration will be given to any alternative policies which might be a better means of carrying out any of the relevant equality of opportunity promotional duties.

7.14.2 Such alternative policy options will be considered separately in relation to each of the equality of opportunity promotional duties and only if either of the conditions below exist:

- there is currently a significant inequality of opportunity between people within the relevant groups; or
- there is reason to believe that the policy (or proposed policy), if left unaltered, may lead to significant inequalities of opportunity.

7.14.3 The consideration of alternative options, and the conclusions arrived at in the course of that consideration will be documented.

7.15 Consideration

In making any decision on a current or proposed policy, the Youth Council will take into account any relevant impact assessment and the outcome of the associated consultation. This is a statutory requirement under paragraph 9(2) of Schedule 9.

7.16 Publicity

The results of every Impact Assessment will be published and the availability of such reports will be publicised in local print media. Reports will also be accessible on the Youth Council's website. The Council will directly inform bodies listed at Appendix A when this material is available. The Council will also make these reports available on request in accessible formats such as braille, disk and audio cassette, and in minority languages to meet the needs of those who are not fluent in English. Specific consideration will be given to how best to communicate information to young people and those with disabilities.

Each report will contain the following information:

1. The aims of the relevant policy (or proposed policy)
2. Details of any consideration given by the Youth Council to mitigation
3. Details of any consideration given by the Youth Council to alternative policies
4. Details of those consulted during the Impact Assessment.

7.17 Monitoring

The Youth Council is committed to monitoring the impact of current and new policies in order to find out its effect on the relevant group(s). The availability of this monitoring information will be publicised. If the monitoring and evaluation shows that the policy results in greater adverse impact than predicted, or if opportunities arise which would allow for greater equality of opportunity to be promoted, the Youth Council will ensure that the policy is subsequently revised.

8. TRAINING

- 8.1 The Youth Council is committed to the development and provision of an effective communication and training programme on the content of its Equality Scheme.
- 8.2 Following receipt of further guidance on training, the Council will draw up a planned programme of its delivery in line with the Equality Commission's published guidelines and advice. The key objectives of this training plan will be:
- to prepare a detailed training plan for all of the Council's staff and members over the five year period to which the Equality Scheme refers, which will aim to achieve the objectives outlined below;
 - to raise awareness of current anti-discrimination legislation in Northern Ireland, including the provision of Section 75, Schedule 9 and Section 76 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. This should include an explanation of the duties and their implications for all employees;
 - to provide those employees involved in the screening of policies with the necessary skills and knowledge to do this work effectively;
 - to provide those employees involved in the equality impact assessment of policies with the necessary skills and knowledge to do this work effectively.
 - to provide those employees who deal with complaints in relation to the implementation of the Council's Scheme with the necessary skills and knowledge to investigate and monitor complaints effectively;
 - to provide those employees involved in the consultation process with the necessary skills and knowledge to do this work effectively;
 - to provide those employees involved in the implementation and monitoring of the Council's Equality Scheme with the necessary skills and knowledge to do this work effectively;
 - to provide more focused training for specialist staff;
 - to evaluate the extent to which all participants in this training programme have acquired the necessary skills and knowledge to achieve each of the above objectives.

This training will be developed in consultation with the affected groups.

- 8.3 Within one year of the approval of the Scheme, all staff and Council members will be trained in the Equality Scheme. All new staff and newly appointed Council members will be informed of the requirements of Section 75 in their induction training. The Council will also supply copies of this Scheme to all Council members and staff. The Chief Executive will demonstrate his personal commitment to implementation of the Equality Scheme by publishing the Scheme and engaging in consultation/communication with external groups.

9. COMPLAINTS

9.1 The Youth Council will monitor complaints that it has not complied with this Scheme. These complaints should be directed, in the first instance, to the Council's Chief Executive. The Council will provide reasonable assistance to minimise any significant factor which would impede the complainant in presenting their case. It is also acceptable for someone to write on behalf of the complainant. The Youth Council will acknowledge the complaint within 3 working days, and then investigate the complaint or give the complainant reasons for not investigating it. Where the Youth investigates the complaint it will seek to provide a substantive response to a complaint normally within one month from the date of receipt of the complaint, in the format preferred by the complainant.

9.2 In responding to the complainant, the Council will inform him/her of the procedure for pursuing the complaint further with the Equality Commission. The Youth Council will co-operate fully in any subsequent investigation by the Equality Commission, and provide access to any relevant documentation which the Commission may require.

9.3 Complaints should be sent to:

The Chief Executive
Youth Council for Northern Ireland
Forestview
Purdy's Lane
Belfast BT8 7AR

Tel: 028 9064 3882

Fax: 028 9064 3874

E-mail: dguilfoyle@youthcouncil-ni.org.uk

10. SUMMARY ACTION PLAN AND TIMETABLE

10.1 Paragraph 4(3)(b) of Schedule 9 of the Act provides that the Youth Council's Scheme must state the Council's timetable for measures proposed in the Scheme. That timetable is set out in this Chapter.

10.2 The following timetable summarises the measures which the Youth Council proposes to take during the five years following the commencement of the Equality Scheme.

Year 1: July 2000 - June 2001

- Scheme published
- Training programme commences and is ongoing
- Screening of all existing policies and new draft policies
- Submission to Equality Commission of Report on Screening Exercise
- Review existing policies with regard to promotion of good relations
- Review of monitoring arrangements
- Review of arrangements for providing information to the public

Year 2: July 2001 - June 2002

- Implementation of Scheme continues
- Impact Assessments to commence
- Screening of new draft policies
- Review new policies with regard to promotion of good relations
- Submission of Annual Report to Equality Commission (January 2002)

Year 3: July 2002 - June 2003

- Implementation of Scheme continues
- Screening of new draft policies
- Impact Assessments (when required)
- Review new policies with regard to promotion of good relations
- Submission of Annual Report to Equality Commission (January 2003)

Year 4: July 2003 - June 2004

- Implementation of Scheme continues
- Screening of new draft policies
- Impact Assessments (when required)
- Review new policies with regard to promotion of good relations
- Submission of Annual Report to Equality Commission (January 2004)

Year 5: July 2004 - June 2005

- Implementation of Scheme continues
- Screening of new draft policies
- Impact Assessments (when required)
- Review new policies with regard to promotion of good relations
- Submission of 5 yearly review to Equality Commission

11. FIVE YEARLY REVIEW

The Youth Council is committed to conducting a formal review of the Scheme within 5 years of its approval by the Equality Commission, following guidance which the Commission will develop on this task. A report of the review will be forwarded to the Equality Commission and also made public.

ORGANISATIONS CONSULTED ON THE COUNCIL'S DRAFT SCHEME

Action Mental Health
Age Concern NI
Agricultural Research Institute of NI
Alliance Party
Altnagelvin Hospitals Health & Social Services Trust
Antrim Borough Council
Ards Borough Council
Armagh & City District Council
Armagh and Dungannon Health & Social Services Trust
Army Cadet Force Association
Arts Council of Northern Ireland
Ballymena Borough Council
Ballymoney Borough Council
Banbridge District Council
Baptist Union of Ireland
Barnardos
Belfast City Council
Belfast Education and Library Board
Belfast Hebrew Congregation
Belfast Islamic Centre
Belfast Travellers' Education and Development Group
Boys' and Girls' Clubs NI
Boys' Brigade NI District
Business in the Community
CaraFriend
Carrickfergus Borough Council
Castlereagh Borough Council
Cathog
Catholic Guides of Ireland
Causeway Health & Social Services Trust
Child Care NI
ChildLine NI
Children's Law Centre
Chinese Welfare Association
Church Lads' and Girls' Brigade
Church of Ireland Youth Department
Church of Ireland
Congregational Union of Ireland
Coalition on Sexual Orientation
Coleraine Borough Council

Committee on the Administration of Justice
Community Relations Council
Confederation of British Industry
Contact Youth Counselling and Information Service
Cookstown District Council
Corrymeela Community
Council for Catholic Maintained Schools
Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment
Counteract
Craigavon Area Hospital Group Trust
Craigavon Borough Council
Criminal Justice Service - NIO
Department for Regional Development
Department of Agriculture and Rural Development
Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure
Department of Education
Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety
Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment
Department of Finance and Personnel
Department of Higher and Further Education, Training and Employment
Department of Social Development
Department of the Environment
Department of Youth and Children's Work (Methodist Church)
Derry City Council
Disability Action
Down District Council
Duke of Edinburgh's Award
Dungannon & South Tyrone Borough Council
Eastern Health and Social Services Board
Elim Pentecostal Church
Enterprise Ulster
Equality Commission
Fermanagh District Council
Foyle Health & Social Services Trust
Free Presbyterian Church of Ulster
Future Voices
General Consumer Council for NI
Gingerbread Northern Ireland
Girls' Brigade NI Division
Green Park Healthcare Trust
Guardian Ad Litem Agency
Guide Association
Health and Safety Executive NI
Health Promotion Agency for NI

Help the Aged NI
Homefirst Community Trust
Indian Community Centre
Inland Revenue NI
Institute of Directors
Irish Congress of Trade Unions NI Committee
IVS
Labour Relations Agency
Larne Borough Council
LEDU
Limavady Borough Council
Lisburn Borough Council
Magherafelt District Council
Making Belfast Work
Mater Hospital
Mencap in NI
Moyle District Council
Multi-Cultural Group - Windsor Women's Centre
Multi-Cultural Resource Centre
National Council of YMCAs of Ireland
National Lottery Charities Board NI
Newry & Mourne Health & Social Services Trust
Newry and Mourne District Council
Newtownabbey Borough Council
Nexus Institute
NI Council for the Curriculum, Examinations & Assessment
NIPPA
North and West Belfast Health & Social Services Trust
North Down Borough Council
North Eastern Education and Library Board
Northern Health & Social Services Council
Northern Health and Social Service Board
Northern Ireland African Cultural Centre
Northern Ireland Ambulance Service
Northern Ireland Blood Transfusion Service
Northern Ireland Certificate Office
Northern Ireland Chamber of Commerce and Industry
Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities
Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education
Northern Ireland Court Service
Northern Ireland Deaf Youth Association
Northern Ireland Gay Rights Association
Northern Ireland Growth Challenge
Northern Ireland Housing Executive

Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission
Northern Ireland Mediation Centre
Northern Ireland Museums Council
Northern Ireland Public Service Alliance
Northern Ireland Tourist Board
Northern Ireland Unionist Party
Northern Ireland Women's Aid Federation
Northern Ireland Women's Coalition
Northern Ireland Women's European Platform
Northern Ireland Volunteer Development Agency
Northern Ireland Youth Forum
NSPCC
NUS/USI
Ocean Youth Trust NI
Omagh District Council
Parents' Advice Centre
Peace People
PHAB
Play Resource Warehouse
PlayBoard NI
Police Authority for NI
Presbyterian Church in Ireland
Probation Board for NI
Progressive Unionist Party
Putting Children First
Relate
Roman Catholic Church
Royal Group of Hospitals
Royal National Institute for Deaf People
Royal National Institute for the Blind NI
Royal Ulster Constabulary
Rural Development Council for NI
Save the Children
Scout Association
Scouting Ireland (CSI)
Share Holiday Village
Sinn Fein
Social Democratic Labour Party
South and East Belfast Health & Social Services Trust
South Eastern Education and Library Board
Southern Education and Library Board
Southern Health & Social Services Council
Southern Health and Social Services Board
Sports Council for NI

St John's Ambulance Brigade NI
Staff Commission for Education & Library Boards
Strabane District Council
Training and Employment Agency
Traveller Movement Northern Ireland
Ulster Community & Hospitals Trust
Ulster Democratic Party
Ulster Unionist Assembly Party
Ulster Unionist Party
United Hospitals Trust
United Kingdom Unionist Party
Voluntary Service Belfast
West Belfast Economic Forum
Western Education and Library Board
Western Health & Social Services
Western Health and Social Services Board
Women's Forum NI
Women's Resource and Development Agency
Women's Support Network
Young Farmers' Clubs of Ulster
Youth Initiatives
YouthAction NI
YouthLink NI
YouthNet

This list is not exhaustive and may be amended in light of experience. If your group has not been included, and you wish to be considered for inclusion, please contact the Council's Equality Officer, Arthur Dempster, at:

Youth Council for Northern Ireland
Forestview
Purdy's Lane
Belfast BT8 7AR

Tel: 028 9064 3882
Fax: 028 9064 3874
E-mail: adempster@youthcouncil-ni.org.uk

**MAIN GROUPS RELEVANT TO THE SECTION 75 CATEGORIES FOR
NORTHERN IRELAND PURPOSES**

Category	Main Groups
Religious belief	Protestants; Catholics; people of non-Christian faiths; people of no religious belief.
Political opinion	Unionists generally; Nationalists generally; members/supporters of any political party.
Racial group	White people; Chinese; Travellers; Indians; Pakistanis; Black people.
‘Men and women generally’	Men (including boys); women (including girls).
Marital status	Married people; unmarried people; divorced or separated people; widowed people.
Age	Children under 16; people of working age (16/65); people over 65.
‘Persons with a disability’	Persons with a physical, sensory or learning disability as defined in Sections 1 and 2 and Schedules 1 and 2 of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.
‘Persons with dependants’	Persons with personal responsibility for the care of a child; persons with personal responsibility for the care of a person with an incapacitating disability; persons with personal responsibility for the care of a dependant elderly person.
Sexual orientation	Heterosexual people; homosexual people; bisexual people.

APPENDIX C

(i) WRITTEN RESPONSES RECEIVED

<p>Agricultural Research Institute Armagh & Dungannon Health & Social Services Trust Ballymena Borough Council Belfast Education and Library Board Certification Office Coalition on Sexual Orientation Committee on the Administration of Justice Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment Craigavon Area Hospital Group Trust Department of Agriculture and Rural Development Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure Department of Education Derry City Council Disability Action Down District Council Duke of Edinburgh's Award Enterprise Ulster Equality Commission Guide Association Institute of Directors Labour Relations Agency Lisburn Borough Council Members of the Legislative Assembly Mencap Multi-Cultural Resource Centre</p>	<p>North Eastern Education and Library Board Northern Health and Social Services Board Northern Health and Social Services Council Northern Ireland Association for the Care & Resettlement of Offenders Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education Northern Ireland Housing Executive Northern Ireland Museums Council PHAB PlayBoard Resource and Development Agency Scout Association Scout Foundation South Eastern Education and Library Board Southern Council Southern Education and Library Board Southern Health and Social Services Board Training and Employment Agency Ulster Community Hospitals United Hospitals West Belfast Economic Forum Women's Aid Federation YouthLink</p>
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(ii) CONSULTATIVE MEETINGS

- (a) Northern Ireland Youth Forum (an umbrella body for young people's organisations), 24 June 2000
- (b) Voluntary Youth Organisations funded by the Youth Council, 14 June 2000

APPENDIX D

SUMMARY OF SPECIFIC COMMENTS RECEIVED

The amended Equality Scheme forwarded to the Equality Commission clearly indicates the changes which have been made to the draft Equality Scheme. These changes reflect the substance of the comments received from those who responded to the Council's draft Scheme.

The Council found the feedback it received very helpful and was able to incorporate the great majority of the points made into the amended Scheme. There were, however, a limited number of points raised by some respondents which were not accommodated within the Scheme and details of these are given below.

	POINT RAISED	COUNCIL RESPONSE
1	Coalition on Sexual Orientation	
	Representative groups should be able to make complaints to public authorities on behalf of individuals about whom some details might be given	The Council would require more time to consider this proposal
2	Mencap	
(i)	Urges the Youth Council to state its commitment, in its Equality Scheme, to actively promote equality of opportunity for people with a learning disability and their carers	The Council is committed through its Equality Scheme to promoting equality of opportunity to all of the groups identified in the legislation
(ii)	Highlight the availability of Mencap guidelines on making information more accessible to people with a learning disability	Guidelines requested from Mencap to inform the Council's actions
(iii)	Identify services which should be offered on an outreach basis	The Council is not a provider of direct services to individuals

	POINT RAISED	COUNCIL RESPONSE
3	Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities	
	A Race Equality Audit is provided as a checklist for revising Equality Schemes	The Council will use this as a useful reference when applying its Equality Scheme and reviewing its operation
4	West Belfast Economic Forum	
(i)	Suggests that the Council must make the equality duty applicable to employers, in the private sector, who are awarded public contracts and who are given public assistance. Further suggests that monitoring procedures must be in place to ensure that the equality duty is being adhered to, and that the legal responsibility for making monitoring returns lies with private companies. However, responsibility for tracking the equality performance of the company lies with the Council	It is the Council's view that by implementing the Scheme, and applying Screening and Impact Assessment to policies in this way, the Scheme will be affecting the awarding of contracts to the private sector
(ii)	Requests that the Scheme should state that, in order to promote equality, employees will have to disclose membership of oath bound organisations such as the Free Masons, Orange Order, Knights of Colombanus, Royal Black Perceptory, Ancient Order of Hibernians, Independent Loyal Institution and the Apprentice Boys. Further suggests that Clause 47 of the Patten Legislation of the Policing Bill Northern Ireland should be extended to and adopted by the Council	The Council's view is that this issue has wide implications and, in general terms, should be referred to the Department of Education for consideration

	POINT RAISED	COUNCIL RESPONSE
(iii)	<p>A monitoring and evaluation procedure must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Needs assessment • Evaluability assessment • Structures conceptualisation • Implementation and Evaluation • Process Evaluation • Output Evaluation • Impact Evaluation • Secondary Analysis 	<p>The review of existing monitoring will consider this issue as part of that process</p>