

EQUALITY COMMISSION FOR NORTHERN IRELAND
Public Authority 2007 - 2008
Annual Progress Report on Section 75 of the NI Act 1998 and
Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Order (DDO) 2006

This report template includes a number of self assessment questions regarding implementation of the Section 75 statutory duties from **1 April 2007 to 31 March 2008**. This template also includes a number of questions regarding implementation of Section 49A of the DDO from the **1 July 2007 to 31 March 2008**. Please enter information at the relevant part of each section and ensure that it is submitted electronically (by completing this template) and in hardcopy, with a signed cover letter from the Chief Executive or, in his/her absence, the Deputy Chief Executive to the Commission by **30 September 2008**.

In completing this template it is essential to focus on the application of Section 75 and Section 49. This involves progressing the commitments in your equality scheme or disability action plan which should lead to outcomes and impacts in terms of measurable improvement for individuals from the equality categories. Such outcomes and impacts may include changes in public policy, in service provision and/or in any of the areas within your functional remit.

Name of public authority (Enter details below)

Carrickfergus Borough Council

Equality Officer (Enter name and contact details below)

S75: Lisa Adair
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DDO (if different from above): As above

S75 Executive Summary

- What were the key policy/service developments made by the authority during this reporting period to better promote equality of opportunity and good relations and what outcomes were achieved?

The Council as a whole, throughout all Departments, has now entrenched the principles of the legislation in all aspects of the development and monitoring of policies and procedures, Business Plans and the Corporate Plan. This has allowed for the seamless inclusion of Section 75 objectives and associated actions in the strategic business plans of Council. The details of these actions are explained within the body of this Report

- What are the main initiatives planned in the coming year to ensure the authority improves outcomes in terms of equality of opportunity and good relations for individuals from the nine categories covered by Section 75?

The plan for the incoming year includes the following: -

- **A full assessment of all Leisure policies to ensure compliance against the legislative requirements prior to the opening of the newly refurbished Carrickfergus Leisure Centre**
- **Hosting of the Councils' third Disability Involvement Day which will continue to promote the duties contained in the Disability Discrimination legislation**
- **Refresher Equality and Good Relations training for all staff in the organisation to highlight both the duties and any new legislation which staff and the organisation generally need to have cognisance of**
- **Hosting of second Business and Community Awards for the Borough, community categories to include: Partners & Community Initiative, Community Initiative of the Year, Volunteer of the Year and Community Group of the Year**
- **Development of the Corporate Plan for the period 2009 – 2011 which will provide a platform to entrench the principles of equality and good relations at the centre of business allowing for effective and efficient mainstreaming**
- **Development of an action driven Business Plan to Departmentally drive the Section 75 ethos from within the organisation**

- Please give examples of changes to policies or practices which have resulted in outcomes. If the change was a result of an EQIA please tick the appropriate box in column 3:

	Outline change in policy or practice which have resulted in outcomes	Tick if result of EQIA
Persons of different religious belief	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of a Carrickfergus Church Forum (interdenominational) to promote a greater understanding and tolerance towards people of different faiths. 	
Persons of different political opinion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None identified 	
Persons of different racial groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotion of positive attitudes towards people of different racial backgrounds – outcome: production of a ‘Welcome Pack’ to assist with easy access to information for people whose first language is not English (further detail included later in this Report) • Positive education regarding the understanding of different cultures and traditions – outcome: development of a ‘One World Garden’ designed as a multi-cultural community space for the people of Whitehead 	
Persons of different age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotion of positive attitudes towards people of all ages – outcome: development of a Youth Forum for the Borough in collaboration with Carrickfergus Community Forum and Carrickfergus District Policing Partnership to drive issues for individuals under the age of 18. 	
Persons with different marital status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None identified 	
Persons of different sexual orientation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None identified 	

Men and women generally	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adoption of a Gender Action Plan for Council to support the Women in Local Councils' initiative – outcome: event held for local secondary school children highlighting the role for women in Local Government • Declaration of Principles developed and disseminated throughout Council – outcome: greater staff understanding if the principles. 	
Persons with and without a disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adoption of a Disability Action Plan as required by the Disability Discrimination Order – outcomes: baseline audit of staff regarding levels of disability to be monitored on a yearly basis; hosting of a Council Involvement Day, aim of which was to highlight a variety of disability related issues and promote inclusion; awareness training for #45 senior staff, Councillors and frontline staff; additional question relating to disabilities added to screening pro forma resulting in further consideration given to such issues during the development of policies and procedures • Parks equipment purchases including benches specifically designed to facilitate people with disabilities • Routine development of dropped kerbs and accessible pathways in Victoria Cemetery • Toilets for people with disabilities installed at Victoria Cemetery 	<p style="text-align: center;">X</p> <p style="text-align: center;">X</p> <p style="text-align: center;">X</p>
Persons with and without dependants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None identified 	

Section 1: Strategic Implementation of the Section 75 Duties

- Please outline evidence of progress made in developing and meeting equality and good relations objectives, performance indicators and targets in corporate and annual operating plans during 2007-08.

Over the accounting period, Council has consciously included details of Equality commitments in its Business Plan. All Section 75 requirements in this respect have been built into associated targets which are reviewed and monitored annually.

The targets, as adopted by Council for the period 2007 - 2008 are: -

To make the public amenities within Victoria Cemetery compliant with the Disability Discrimination legislation. (SMART parameter; To make the public amenities within Victoria Cemetery compliant with the Disability Discrimination legislation). Target deemed as met with Council committing to dropping kerbs upon request, ensuring that pathways are free from obstruction and that the new section will have dropped kerbs and accessible pathways as a matter of course. Toilets for people with disabilities were also installed in Cemetery house and are available for use by the general public.

To liaise with the Borough's ethnic minorities regarding Council services. (SMART parameter; Hold 2 events for the promotion of links with the Boroughs' ethnic minorities). Carrickfergus Community Safety Partnership and Carrickfergus Borough Council's Good Relations Steering Group launched the Ethnic Minorities Welcome Pack on Thursday 3rd May 2007. 600 copies of the Welcome Pack provide information in the languages of Portuguese, Latvian, Russian, Mandarin and Polish to migrant workers and ethnic minority populations new to the Carrickfergus area. Information provided covers housing, education, medical services, employment, transport, local facilities, emergency numbers and advice and support services. It is intended the packs will be distributed locally through libraries, schools, Council, PSNI and community groups.

Design, development and launch of the One World Garden in partnership with the community in Whitehead. The project aims to educate the local community by representing all continents of the world in appropriate foliage

Progress on all Section 75 matters is reported to the Corporate Strategy Sub Committee at quarterly meetings, with internal Departmental meetings being held as required

Further to this, and key to the Corporate Plan for the period 2005 – 2009, Council has built in the themes of Citizenship, Social Progress, Economy and Environment. Under the theme Citizenship, additional emphasis has been placed on the general principles of Equality by stipulating the following: -

‘Citizenship – Enhancing our sense of Civic pride by communicating with our people, encouraging participation, and valuing diversity.’

Resourcing of the duty is now dispersed through all Departments of Council, continuing in Council’s attempts to entrench and mainstream the principles. Individual Departments are responsible for estimating their Equality related expenditure for the year whilst receiving guidance, where necessary, from the Business Development Manager.

The Council’s Business Development Manager leads and monitors all work conducted under the auspices of Section 75.

With specific regard to the Good Relations duty, Council would now consider that associated work conducted is the proactive arm of the legislative requirement, where work on the ground has made a substantial difference to the lives of many within the Borough. The Good Relations Officer produces a yearly Business Plan which relates directly to budgetary requirements for the service area

Section 2: Screening

- Please provide an update of new/proposed/revised policies screened during the year.

Title of policy subject to screening	Was the <u>F</u> ull Screening Report or the <u>R</u> esult of initial screening issued for consultation?	Was initial screening decision changed following consultation?	Is policy being subject to EQIA? <u>Y</u> es/ <u>N</u> o? If yes indicate year for assessment.
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	<i>Please enter <u>F</u> or <u>R</u></i>	<u>Yes/No</u>	
IT Security Policy	<u>R</u>	<u>NO</u>	<u>NO</u>
Purchasing and Procurement Policy	<u>R</u>	<u>NO</u>	<u>NO</u>
Equal Opportunities Statement	<u>R</u>	<u>NO</u>	<u>NO</u>
Violence at Work Policy	<u>R</u>	<u>NO</u>	<u>NO</u>
Officer time spent at evening Council and Standing Committees – Rationalising Procedures	<u>R</u>	<u>NO</u>	<u>NO</u>
Policy on Disclosure of Information (Access NI)	<u>R</u>	<u>NO</u>	<u>NO</u>
Policy on Leave for Personal and Domestic Reasons	<u>R</u>	<u>NO</u>	<u>NO</u>
Civic Grants Policy (amended)	<u>R</u>	<u>NO</u>	<u>NO</u>
'No Smoking' Policy (amended)	<u>R</u>	<u>NO</u>	<u>NO</u>
Carrickfergus Allotment Strategy	<u>R</u>	<u>NO</u>	<u>NO</u>

Section 3: Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA)

- Please provide an update of policies subject to EQIA during 2007/08, stage 7 EQIA monitoring activities and an indicative EQIA timetable for 2008-09.

No Equality Impact Assessments were undertaken during the Reporting Period. Please note that an assessment was conducted of all Employment policies and the policies listed above in the screening section were subject to thorough screening and associated consultation. It was also concluded during the reporting period that there would be little value in conducting a full Assessment of Leisure policies as Carrickfergus Leisure Centre is currently undergoing a major refurbishment. Temporary arrangements are being provided in Oakfield Community Centre with the Leisure Centre due to re-open in June 2009. It is anticipated that, prior to opening, all associated policies to be introduced will be screened in accordance with the duties. It should further be noted that the refurbishment has been conducted with full acknowledgement of accessibility issues.

EQIA Timetable – April 2007 - March 2008

Title of Policy EQIA	EQIA Stage at end March 08 (Steps 1-6)	Outline adjustments to policy intended to benefit individuals, and the relevant Section 75 categories due to be affected.
None Applicable		

- Where the EQIA timetable for 2007/08 (as detailed in the previous annual S75 progress report to the Commission) has not been met, please provide details of the factors responsible for delay and details of the timetable for re-scheduling the EQIA/s in question.

See above for explanation

Ongoing EQIA Monitoring Activities April 2007- March 2008

Title of EQIA subject to Stage 7 monitoring	Indicate if differential impacts previously identified have reduced or increased	Indicate if adverse impacts previously identified have reduced or increased
Parks and Countryside	Differential impacts continue to reduce, with Business target for 2007-2008 stating 'To make the public amenities within Victoria cemetery compliant with the Disability Discrimination legislation' (direct linkage with EQIA carried out). This has resulted in the dropping of kerbs in the old section (on request), the clearing of pathway obstructions, and the routine dropping of kerbs and introduction of accessible pathways in the new section. A toilet for	Reduced, as stated

	people with disabilities has also been installed in Cemetery House and can be accessed by any member of the public	
Leisure Centre	The Centre has now been temporarily closed for refurbishment, partly due to the identified need for additional and specific facilities as stated in the EQIA. It is anticipated that differential impacts will be substantially reduced once the programme of works has been completed.	Reduction of adverse impact identified expected when the Centre re-opens in June 2009
Community Development	Both Community Services and Good Relations functions continue to be monitored with the Community Safety function and District Policing Partnership feeding into issues relating to community tension and the identification of solutions.	Adverse impacts decreased

2008-09 EQIA Time-table

Title of EQIAs due to be commenced during April 2008 – March 2009	Existing or New policy?	Please indicate expected timescale of Decision Making stage i.e. Stage 6
Leisure Centre Policies	Existing	April 2009

Section 4: Training

- Please outline training provision during the year associated with the Section 75 Duties/Equality Scheme requirements including types of training provision and conclusions from any training evaluations.

Training of all new staff and newly promoted staff is now being delivered through a Staff Induction Procedure which includes basic training in the rudiments of the Section 75 legislative requirements.

As a direct result of including a training target in the Council's Disability Action Plan, 45 employees and Councillors (frontline staff

and management grades) received training on Disability Awareness which was delivered by Belfast Lough Sailability

Section 5: Communication

- Please outline how the authority communicated progress on delivery of the Section 75 Duties during the year and evidence of the impact/success of such activities.

Council has sought to continue to effectively communicate with its stakeholders in a variety of ways. These have included: -

- **Ensuring that Equality and Good Relations initiatives are reported to the Borough community in our twice yearly Council magazine**
- **Regular press articles to highlight relevant events and promote the interests of Section 75 interest groups**
- **Sourcing of dedicated publications to promote the work of Council eg Council bought a double page spread in the magazine Ability NI to highlight works undertaken to ensure that people with disabilities can access Council services**
- **Staff are kept informed of Equality and Good relations by email when required**
- **The Council web site was identified as not being fit for purpose with regard to accessibility and is now undergoing reconstruction to address the issues uncovered. The result of this exercise will be reported in the incoming reporting period**

Section 6: Data Collection & Analysis

- Please outline any systems that were established during the year to supplement available statistical and qualitative research or any research undertaken/commissioned to obtain information on the needs and experiences of individuals from the nine categories covered by Section 75.

Information has been collected from a variety of sources (NISRA, Central Government Departments, Public Records Office, Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey), and internal data sources have been modified to allow for more Section 75 analysis.

Council also commissioned the production of a Good Relations Audit for the Borough (dealing with issues both internal and external). This

provided a quantity of both qualitative and quantitative information which will influence further research projects.

In order to build up a generic demographic picture of the Borough, new census figures have been used and collated into easily understood interpretations accessible at the beginning of each future Equality Impact Assessment. Further to this, any data collected within Council as the result of other fields of work has proved of use, including the RES Best Value Survey (2003), the Community Support Plan, individual service questionnaires and satisfaction surveys, and the Community Relations Strategy. A mechanism has also been put in place to ask extra questions on our general computerized complaints form, which should assist in the collection of data for more of the nine category groupings.

External data has also been sought from sources such as deprivation studies, published research reports, pressure group data, and statutory agencies. All of the information accumulated has aided in the development of new policies and should prove invaluable during the Equality Impact Assessment process.

Council also recognizes that further information will be needed to enable Council Departments to meet their obligations under the Equality Legislation. Therefore, it is committed to the provision of necessary resources such as the commissioning of independent research by consultants when considered appropriate.

All new policies, when being examined for possible adverse impact, will be influenced by data previously collected.

It should, however, be noted that there remains a noticeable gap in reliable information from certain category groupings which is difficult to supplement either quantitatively or qualitatively. Further progressive, innovative assistance from the Commission would be appreciated, like the introduction of a formal central information unit established into which small interest groups could feed relevant statistics and information for the general use of all public authorities. Given this, Council welcomes the explicit commitment in the Section 75 effectiveness review to ‘develop baseline data and indicators to help local authorities to measure outcomes’.

As a new initiative for the reporting period, and in order to get definitive baseline data on a myriad of Council activities, Council

sought to update its' State of the Borough production which had previously been developed in 2000. The purpose of the document is to produce a snapshot of life in the Borough at a particular moment in time. In the current production, greater emphasis has been placed on ascertaining community information based on Section 75 dimensions of difference, thus enabling Council to target resources effectively and equitably. The document will be published during the incoming reporting period and further information will be available in our 2008-2009 report.

- Please outline any use of the Commission's Section 75 Monitoring Guide.

Council took cognisance of the monitoring guide when developing a staff monitoring questionnaire as required by our adopted Disability Action Plan.

Section 7: Information Provision, Access to Information and Services

- Please provide details of any initiatives/steps taken during the year, including take up, to improve access to services including provision of information in accessible formats.

Council is collectively more aware of the issues involved when producing information for public consumption. The Marketing department within Council has received briefing on what is expected in this regard, with targeted advice coming from the RNID and Disability Access. In conducting Equality Impact Assessments it was also established that Council did not expressly invite individuals and groups to seek documentation in alternative formats. To this end, Council now includes the following statement in all of it's Council productions: -

“Carrickfergus Borough Council wishes to ensure that all sections of the community have access to all Council documentation. Should you wish to have this documentation made available to you in an alternative format (e.g. Braille, audio cassette), or in another language should you be unable to communicate in English, please contact....”

Further to this, and to ensure inclusivity when running focused Council events, invitations to the Councils' Disability Involvement Day on the 14th June 2007 were made available in Braille without the request having been made. At the same event, a signer was used to sign key parts of the mornings activities. This helped to raise staff awareness and, since September 2007, two members of staff have embarked on sign language courses. It is envisaged that this type of training will continue to be encouraged Corporately.

The previously mentioned 'Welcome Pack' has also been an encouraging addition to Councils' documents which has demonstrated, through percentage of take-up, the necessity to produce information on Council services in alternative languages. The 'Welcome Pack' will be going into its' second print run in the incoming reporting period.

Council also reacts proactively when service requests are received and has, within the reporting period, produced copies of Council-owned documentation in alternative formats e.g. copy of our bin calendar in large print.

At the end of the reporting period, and as a direct result of receiving service requests, Council undertook to rework the accessibility features of the Council web site. It is expected that the enabled site will be reporting on in the incoming reporting period.

Section 8: Complaints

- Please identify the number of Section 75 related complaints:
 - received and resolved by the authority (including how this was achieved);
 - which were not resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant;
 - which were referred to the Equality Commission.
 -

No complaints were received within the reporting period

Section 9: Consultation and Engagement

- Please provide details of the measures taken to enhance the level of engagement with individuals and representative groups during the year.

Council has continued to employ all methods of consultation referred to in previous progress reports.

As different issues dictate, Council has also employed more focused consultative methods. Where, for example, there have been obvious issues with regard to disability access, the appropriate local groups have been contacted and asked for comment. Council has found this to be an extremely effective method to gauge specialist opinion and would suggest that consultees being approached in this direct way is often more rewarding than targeting all groups with little response. It should also be noted that groups being consulted with are more willing to continue to give their views on projected policy issues if they are privy to sound and timely feedback. Council officers are now more aware of this and structures are beginning to form to acknowledge this.

Section 10: The Good Relations Duty

- Please provide details of additional steps taken to implement or progress the good relations duty during the year. Please indicate any findings or expected outcomes from this work.

Please see attached Report for the accounting period as compiled by the Councils' Good Relations Officer – Appendix 1

- Please outline any use of the Commission's Good Relations Guide. **The Guide has been read by the pertinent Officers and has been disseminated to the Members of the Good relations Sub Committee**

Section 11: Additional Comments

- Please provide any additional information/comments

Annual Report July 2007/ March 2008
'Disability Duties' Questions

1. How many action measures for this reporting period have been?

Fully
Achieved

Partially
Achieved

Not
Achieved

7

0

0

2. Please outline the following detail on all actions that have been fully achieved in the reporting period.

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

Level	Public Life Action Measures	Outputs ¹	Outcomes / Impact ²
National ³	N/A	N/A	N/A
Regional ⁴	N/A	N/A	N/A
Local ⁵	Provide awareness training for senior staff, elected Members and front line staff Add Disability screening to S75 screening pro forma	45 staff from target groups trained by Belfast Lough Sailability 1 Additional question added to screening pro forma	Greater staff and Councillor awareness of issues regarding disability Further mainstreaming of the Disability duties

¹ **Outputs** – defined as act of producing, amount of something produced over a period, processes undertaken to implement the action measure e.g. Undertook 10 training sessions with 100 people at customer service level.

² **Outcome / Impact** – what specifically and tangibly has changed in making progress towards the duties? What impact can directly be attributed to taking this action? Indicate the results of undertaking this action e.g. Evaluation indicating a tangible shift in attitudes before and after training.

³ **National** : Situations where people can influence policy at a high impact level e.g. Public Appointments

⁴ **Regional**: Situations where people can influence policy decision making at a middle impact level

⁵ **Local** : Situations where people can influence policy decision making at lower impact level e.g. one off consultations, local forums.

	<p>Host an event to encourage positive interaction between disabled and non-disabled people</p> <p>Prepare annual report on the implementation of the Plan</p> <p>Conduct an employee and elected member monitoring survey</p> <p>Review communication policies and procedures</p>	<p>Event held June 2007 <i>(no provision to report this during the reporting period as stipulated by the Commission)</i></p> <p>Report completed and forwarded prior to the Commissions' deadline</p> <p>Survey conducted and baseline data collected – to be conducted annually to examine trends</p> <p>Initial review undertaken with recommendations disseminated to relevant staff</p>	<p>Promotion of the duties to a local audience with associated press coverage</p> <p>Adherence to established requirements</p> <p>Monitoring of trends regarding employees and elected members who may be effected by issues regarding disabilities</p> <p>Greater internal understanding of what is expected when producing Council-owned documentation</p>
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2(b) What **training action measures** were achieved in this reporting period?

	Training Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
1	Disability Awareness training provided for senior/frontline staff and elected members	#45 staff/Councillors trained	Higher internal level of understanding of associated issues

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

	Communications Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
1	Production of Council-owned documentation, on request, in alternative formats	Production of Council bin calendar and invitation to Disability Involvement Day in large print and Braille	Customer led approach to service delivery for people with specific needs

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

	Encourage others Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
1	Disability Involvement Day held 14 th June 2007	27 relevant organisations alongside Council displaying a variety of service opportunities for people with disabilities	Promotion of the two duties to a large audience with media uptake with the Council taking the lead as in its role as Civic Leader

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

	Action Measures fully implemented (other than Training and specific public life measures)	Outputs	Outcomes / Impact
1	N/A		

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

	Action Measures partly achieved	Milestones ⁶ / Outputs	Outcomes/Impacts	Reasons not fully achieved
1	N/A			
2				
3				
4				

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

	Action Measures not met	Reasons
1	N/A	
2		
3		

⁶ **Milestones** – Please outline what part progress has been made towards the particular measures; even if full output or outcomes/ impact have not been achieved.

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

(a) Qualitative

Staff and elected member monitoring survey, State of the Borough baseline statistical data

(b) Quantitative

Focus groups, collaboration with Carrickfergus Community Forum

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

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

Please delete: No

If yes please outline below:

	Revised/Additional Action Measures	Performance Indicator	Timescale
1	N/A		

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

N/A
