

**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)

**Department of the Environment (DOE)**

Equality Officer (Enter name and contact details below)

S75:

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DDO (if different from 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?

**(Enter text below)**

The Department's Business Plan 2007 – 2008 commits the Department to ensuring that it will monitor progress in complying with obligations in respect of Equality of Opportunity (including good relations), providing guidance and reporting progress.

The Equality Unit is assisted by an Equality Working Group made up of approximately nine officials representing all divisions and agencies across the Department, who help drive forward the practical implementation of the commitments set out in the Department's Equality Scheme. The group fulfilled its commitment to meet twice during 2007/08, including once with representatives from the Section 75 groups who make up the Department's Equality Forum.

The Department continued to place all of its equality screening forms on its website. The site was updated regularly and individual letters issued to S75 representative groups at six monthly intervals setting out details of the policies screened out for equality impact assessment. During the reporting period 2007/08 the Department did not receive any challenges from S75 Groups or individuals to policies that had been screened out.

In order to continue to help Section 75 groups plan their resources to deal with consultation exercises, the Department also continued to issue a letter at six monthly intervals setting out details of consultation exercises planned for the future.

- 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?

**(Enter text below)**

Under Section 49B of the DDA Act 1995, the Department submitted a Disability Action Plan (DAP) showing how it proposes to fulfil the two new disability duties in relation to its functions. The Department consulted with disabled people, including staff, to finalise the DAP. The views of the

Environment Committee were also sought and the DAP was signed by both Minister and Permanent Secretary. The Department's DAP was submitted to the Commission in time to meet its deadline of 30 June 2007. During 2008/09 the Department will be required to make revisions to its DAP to bring it in line with guidance issued by the Equality Commission.

The Department began rolling out training on the new disability duties to all staff in October 2007 in an effort to increase staff awareness of the new duties. A total of 621 staff have received this training up to 31 March 2008 and the training is ongoing.

The Department has contributed the following actions to OFMdfM's Shared Future Triennial Action Plan for 2008/09 – (i) Ensure that planning policy promotes sharing over separation particularly in regard to access to shared spaces/facilities/services in town and city centres and in rural areas; (ii) Use the Environmental Heritage Service properties and estate to support the objectives of A Shared Future; and (iii) Ensure that the implementation of the Review of Public Administration will be compliant with Shared Future objectives.

The Department has nominated a Racial Equality Champion to oversee the implementation of the Racial Equality Strategy. Staff from the Equality Unit will continue to be active members of the Racial Equality Forum in an effort to further develop relationships with minority ethnic organisations and the understanding of their specific needs.

The Department will continue to play an active role in the Inter-Departmental Voluntary and Community Sector Joint Forum.

The Department's Road Safety Division and Environment and Heritage Service (now Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA)) have contributed a number of actions to OFMdfM's Children & Young Peoples' Action Plan. For example, the NIEA have a dedicated team of Environmental Educators who engage with school children of all ages directly in environmental education programmes at NIEA sites. The Agency also produces a range of environmental education material in line with the NI Curriculum for schools to utilise. The material is available in Irish, Ulster Scots and other ethnic minority languages.

The Department's Equality Working Group, made up of approximately nine officials representing all divisions and agencies, helps drive forward the

practical implementation of the commitments set out in the Department's Equality Scheme. The group will continue to meet twice a year, including once with representatives from Section 75 groups (the Equality Forum) to discuss issues around Section 75 and progress with the Department's EQIA timetable.

The Department will continue to be represented on the Inter-Departmental Equality Practitioners Group, chaired by OFMdfM and made up of equality officers from all NICS departments who meet on a quarterly basis to discuss Section 75 issues and share good practice.

The Department will continue to ensure effective operation of its Section 75 Complaints Procedure and ensure that relevant guidance is available on its Internet site.

The Department will continue to carry out an annual review of its *Guide to Making Information Accessible* in consultation with its Equality Forum. This guide, which is circulated to all staff and made available on the Department's Intranet site, ensures that information provided to the public is available in a range of formats, which meet the needs of all those who wish to access DOE services.

The Department will also continue to review its consultation process to ensure that it is effective in obtaining the views of the Section 75 groups represented on its Equality Forum.

- 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	•	
Persons of different political opinion	•	
Persons of different racial groups	•	

Persons of different age	•	
Persons with different marital status	•	
Persons of different sexual orientation	•	
Men and women generally	•	
Persons with and without a disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning Service ensured in the June 08 adoption &amp; publishing of the Craigavon Town Centre Boundaries and Retail Designations Plan 2010 that the text informing the public of our policy in relation to making the document available in a range of formats to meet the needs of those who wish to access our services was prominently printed on the inside cover.</li> <li>• NIEA have commissioned DVDs which will be made available at various sites so that disabled visitors can experience and view interactively parts of the site not easily accessible.</li> </ul>	
Persons with and without dependants	•	

### **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.

**(Enter text below)**

The theme of Equality of Opportunity and good relations continues to underpin all the Department's policies and operational programmes. In respect of the reporting period 2007 – 2008, the Department was committed to ensuring that equality of opportunity and good relations were important elements of its policy development, legislative activities and operational programmes. The Department, through its Equality Working

Group, ensured that officials engaged in policymaking were kept informed of the requirements of the statutory duties through the dissemination of best practice, up-dates on any changes and ongoing training.

The Department continued to emphasise the requirement to mainstream equality and good relations into policy development in an effort to eliminate or minimise any unintentional adverse consequences at early stages. An indication of the good progress made is the minimal number of Section 75 complaints received by the Department during 2007/08 (further details set out in Section 8).

The Department's Business Plan 2007 – 2008 committed the Department to ensuring that it will monitor progress in complying with obligations in respect of Equality of Opportunity (including good relations), providing guidance and reporting progress. This was achieved in a number of ways:-

- The Director of Corporate Services continued to have overall responsibility for the Equality Unit, in which a Deputy Principal and Staff Officer work full time on Equality issues reporting to a Principal Equality Officer who has additional responsibilities for the Department's Central Management Branch and Minister's Private Office.
- The Equality Unit continued to be assisted by an Equality Working Group made up of approximately nine officials representing all divisions and agencies across the Department, who helped drive forward and monitor the practical implementation of the commitments set out in the Department's Equality Scheme. The group fulfilled its commitment to meet twice during 2007/08, including once with representatives from the Section 75 groups who make up the Department's Equality Forum.
- The Equality Unit continued to provide a quarterly progress report on S75 commitments contained in the Equality Scheme and EQIA programme for the Minister, Permanent Secretary, Departmental Board and Senior Management Team.
- Staff continued to be kept aware of developments through the Department's in-house magazine, monthly team briefing and Agency business planning events.

- The Department continued to share a Principal Statistician with the Department for Regional Development, who contributed to the work of the Equality Unit by way of advice and guidance to the various business areas in respect of data collection and analysis.

## 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? <i>Please enter F or R</i>	Was initial screening decision changed following consultation? <u>Y</u> es/ <u>N</u> o	Is policy being subject to EQIA? <u>Y</u> es/ <u>N</u> o? If yes indicate year for assessment.
<b>DRIVER AND VEHICLE AGENCY (DVA)</b>			
Reintroduction of taxi driving test and renewal requirements for taxi drivers' licenses.	F	N	N
Motor Vehicles (Construction and Use) (Amendment) Regulations (NI) 2007.	F	N	N
Vehicle Integration Northern Ireland (VINI).	F	N	Y – 2007/08
<b>ENVIRONMENT AND HERITAGE SERVICE (EHS) (NOW NIEA)</b>			
The Pollution Prevention and Control (Industrial Pollution and	F	N	N

Radiochemical Inspectorate) Charging Scheme (Northern Ireland) 2008.			
<b>LOCAL GOVERNMENT POLICY DIVISION (LGPD)</b>			
Draft Local Government Pension Scheme (Amendment No.2) Regulations (NI) 2007.	F	N	N
Draft Local Government Pension Scheme (Amendment No.3) Regulations (NI) 2007.	F	N	N
Draft Local Government Pension Scheme (Amendment No.4) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2007.	F	N	N
<b>PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY GROUP (PEPG)</b>			
Consultation paper on amendments to the restriction of the use of certain hazardous substances in electrical and electronic equipment (ROHS) regulations.	F	N	N
Consultation on the Waste Management	F	N	N

Licences (Consultation and Compensation) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2008.			
Draft Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 18 – Renewable Energy.	F	N	N
Control of Development in Airport Public Safety Zones (Final Document).	F	N	N
Consultation Paper on options for Implementing the Batteries and Accumulators and Waste Batteries and Accumulators Directive (2006/66/EC).	F	N	N
The Draft Quality of Bathing Water (Northern Ireland) Regulations 2008.	F	N	N
Development Control Advice Note (DCAN) 14: Siting and Design of Radio Telecommunications Equipment. <i>(Published 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2008)</i>	F	N	N
Addendum to Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 7: Residential Extensions and	F	N	N

Alterations.			
<b>PLANNING SERVICE</b>			
The Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2008.	F	N	N
<b>ROAD SAFETY DIVISION (RSD)</b>			
Road Safety Education, Training and Publicity.	F	N	N
Motor Insurance Cover for Property Damage.	F	N	N
The Community Drivers' Hours and Recording Equipment Regulations (Northern Ireland)	F	N	N
Guidelines on the use of '3 for 2' and Standing Capacity in Exceptional Circumstances on School Bus Transport.	F	N	N
Disclosure of vehicle insurance information to the PSNI.	F	N	N
The Goods Vehicles (Licensing of Operators) Bill.	F	N	N

### 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.

#### 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
Development Control Advice Note (DCAN) 9: Residential and Nursing Homes	1	N/A - Not yet started as a result of other competing policy work. Likely to be incorporated into a future Planning Policy Statement.
Development Control Advice Note (DCAN) 13: Creches, Day Nurseries and Pre School Play Groups	1	N/A - Not yet started as a result of other competing policy work. Likely to be incorporated into a future Planning Policy Statement.
Derry Airport Local Plan	1	N/A - Plan start date to be rescheduled in light of competing work priorities.
Ards / Down Area Plan 2015	5	EQIA is an iterative process. The screening data and consultation process informed and shaped the plan proposals throughout each stage of the draft Plan preparation. The assessed potential effect on each Section 75 Group with analysis of perceived impacts from the Plan policy groupings was published in the draft plan EQIA. Final EQIA will issue along with Adopted Plan following consideration of the recently received PAC report of the Public Inquiry.
Banbridge / Newry and Mourne Area Plan 2015	5	EQIA is an iterative process. The screening data and consultation process informed and shaped the plan proposals throughout each

		<p>stage of the draft Plan preparation. The assessed potential effect on each Section 75 Group with analysis of perceived impacts from the Plan policy groupings was published in the draft plan EQIA. The applicant in the JR proceedings has recently withdrawn their legal challenge. When Plan progress resumes, final EQIA will issue along with Adopted Plan following Independent Examination.</p>
Magherafelt Area Plan 2015	5	<p>EQIA is an iterative process. The screening data and consultation process informed and shaped the plan proposals throughout each stage of the draft Plan preparation. The applicants in the JR proceedings have agreed not to participate in the appeal hearing or challenge the determination of non-feasibility for the draft MAP. As a result draft MAP is now able to progress towards the next stage in the preparation process – Independent Examination.</p>
Dungannon & South Tyrone Draft Area Plan – Revised By-pass option	1	<p>N/A - The revised by-pass option has now been shelved. Possible alternative routes are being considered.</p>
Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan (BMAP) 2015	5	<p>EQIA is an iterative process. The screening data and consultation process informed and shaped the plan proposals throughout each stage of the draft Plan preparation. Final EQIA will issue along with the Adopted Plan which will follow receipt of the PAC report into the Public Inquiry which finished in Spring 08.</p>

Northern Area Plan 2016	5	EQIA is an iterative process. The screening data and consultation process informed and shaped the plan proposals throughout each stage of the draft Plan preparation. Legal proceedings have and will continue to significantly delay the progressing of the draft NAP. A JR into the determination of non-feasibility, made by the Department, is due to be heard in October 2008. The appeal by the Department of the SEA judgment in relation to transposition issues was heard by the Court of Appeal in June 2008. The Court of Appeal has decided to refer the matter to the European Court of Justice.
Antrim / Ballymena / Larne Development Plan 2016	1	EQIA is an iterative process. The screening data and consultation process will inform and shape the plan proposals throughout each stage of the draft Plan preparation. Further substantive work on the draft ABL has ceased for a temporary period pending the outcome of the appeal into the SEA judgment. The referral to the ECJ will undoubtedly result in further delay to this plan.
Armagh Area Plan 2018	1	EQIA is an iterative process. The screening data and consultation process will inform and shape the plan proposals throughout each stage of the draft Plan preparation. Further substantive work on the draft Armagh Area Plan has ceased for a temporary period pending the outcome of the appeal into the SEA judgment. The referral to the ECJ will

		undoubtedly result in further delay to this plan.
West Tyrone Area Plan 2019	1	EQIA is an iterative process. The screening data and consultation process will inform and shape the plan proposals throughout each stage of the draft Plan preparation. Issues paper published in Oct 05. Further substantive work on the draft West Tyrone Area Plan has ceased for a temporary period pending the outcome of the appeal into the SEA judgment. The referral to the ECJ will undoubtedly result in further delay to this plan.
Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) Subject Plan for Belfast City Council Area 2015	5	EQIA is an iterative process. The screening data and consultation process informed and shaped the draft Subject Plan proposals throughout each stage of the draft Plan preparation. The assessed potential effect on each Section 75 Group, along with analysis of perceived impacts from the draft Subject Plan policy groupings, was published in the draft Subject Plan EQIA. The final EQIA will issue along with the Adopted Plan following consideration of the recently received PAC report into the Independent Examination.
Coleraine Borough Houses in Multiple Occupation Subject Plan 2016	1	N/A - Issues Paper published in April 06. EQIA of the Draft Plan will issue for public consultation. The progression of this plan has been significantly delayed by the legal proceedings which have and will continue to significantly delay the progressing of the draft NAP. A JR into the determination of

		non-feasibility, made by the Department, is due to be heard in October 2008. The appeal by the Department of the SEA judgement in relation to transposition issues was heard by the Court of Appeal in June 2008. The Court of Appeal has decided to refer the matter to the European Court of Justice.
Environment & Heritage Education Policy	1	N/A
Vehicles Integration Northern Ireland (VINI)	5	

- 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 EQIAs in question.

**(Enter text below)**

Detailed reasons for delay on the Department's EQIA programme are set out in the above table.

Ongoing EQIA Monitoring Activities April 2007- March 2008

<b>Title of EQIA subject to Stage 7 monitoring</b>	<b>Indicate if differential impacts previously identified have reduced or increased</b>	<b>Indicate if adverse impacts previously identified have reduced or increased</b>
Application for the Issue of a Driving Licence.	There were no previously identified differential impacts.	There were no previously identified adverse impacts.

## 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
N/A		

### **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.

#### **(Enter text below)**

From April 2006, responsibility for the provision of training moved from the individual Departments to a Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) wide shared service center known as the Centre for Applied Learning (CAL). CAL are responsible for sourcing, delivering or procuring all equality training programmes for NICS staff which will help ensure consistency of content and quality in the delivery of equality training.

Equality of Opportunity and anti-discrimination issues are included in all induction training courses, training courses for new managers and the Management Development Programme being rolled out across the Department.

The Department's Training Commissioner attended the Department's Equality Working Group meetings throughout the year to provide regular updates on training, including feedback and evaluation for equality representatives throughout the Department.

The Department also arranged for a number of policy making staff (from DOE and DRD) to undertake training during February 2008 on consulting with children and young people. This training was delivered by the Participation Network, an initiative supported by OFMDFM, which has been developed to support statutory agencies, local government and government departments in Northern Ireland to fulfil their duties to effectively engage children and young people in public decision making, in line with their Section 75 obligations. The training proved to be very successful and feedback received from attendees was very positive. The training has also helped build relations between both Departments and the Participation Network.

## **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.

**(Enter text below)**

The Department continued to issue, on a six monthly basis, a forward look of consultation exercises as well as a list of policies which were screened out for equality impact assessment. This allowed S75 representatives to consider whether they wished to become involved with a policy and therefore plan their resource allocation in advance and, in respect of screened out policies, whether they wanted to challenge the decision. Consultees were invited to take part, in their preferred manner, in both draft and final EQIA's. Details on all of the above were also posted on the Department's Internet site.

Internally, the Equality Unit provided a bi-annual progress report on S75 commitments contained within the Department's Equality Scheme and EQIA programme for the Permanent Secretary, Departmental Board and Senior Management Team.

The Equality Unit was assisted by an Equality Working Group made up of approximately nine officials representing all divisions and agencies across the Department, who help drive forward the practical implementation of the commitments set out in the Department's Equality Scheme. The group fulfilled its commitment to meet twice during 2007/08.

The Department hosted its annual Equality Forum of policy makers and S75 representatives to discuss matters of mutual interest on 26 November 2007. The Department views these meetings as an opportunity to further enhance its communication with representative organisations and to listen to feedback on how effective its communications mechanisms are. The Forum discusses issues around Section 75 and progress with the Department's EQIA timetable.

The Department continued to be represented in the Inter-Departmental Equality Practitioners Group, which is chaired by OFMdfM and made up of equality officers from all NICS departments who meet on a quarterly basis to discuss Section 75 issues and share good practice.

The Department continued to review its consultation list, seeking confirmation from consultees as to whether they wished to remain on the list and asking them to identify their preferred method of consultation. In addition, consultees were asked to identify any other groups which they felt should be added to the Departmental list.

The Equality Unit continued to maintain the Equality section on the Department's Internet site. Information available on this site includes the Department's Annual Progress Reports, the Department's Disability Action Plan, screening exercises, consultations and EQIAs.

Staff continued to be kept aware of S75 developments through the Department's in-house magazine, monthly team briefing and Agency business planning events.

Issue 17 of Equality Times, an in-house magazine used to promote equality of opportunity in DRD, DOE and DCAL, was released in 07/08. The magazine included an article on The Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations. (Northern Ireland) 2006. This edition also included articles on the Indian community living in Northern Ireland and the work of the South Tyrone Empowerment Programme in providing support and empowerment to the most marginalised members of the community.

## **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.

**(Enter text below)**

The Department for Regional Development continues to provide the statistical support for the Department and their Statistician is a member of the Equality and Social Needs Research and Information Group (ENSRIG), which includes as members officials of Northern Ireland Departments and the Northern Ireland Office, along with representatives of the Equality Commission and the Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action. The cross-departmental Information and Research needs Strategy, sponsored by ENSRIG, sets the direction in assessing and filling gaps on information relating to Section 75 groups.

OFMDFM has published three research papers which were funded by the Equality and Social Need Steering Group. These were the 2005 Labour Force Survey Religion report (published June 2007), the 2006 Labour Force Survey Religion report (published March 2008) and Social Capital in Northern Ireland – an analysis of the 05/06 Continuous Household Survey (published in October 2007).

The Department held annual Equality Forum meeting between policymakers and representatives of Section 75 groups. These meetings provide an opportunity for policymakers to update S75 groups on policy progress and issues of concern. Section 75 representatives are given the opportunity to comment on reported progress and highlight their own areas of concern. The Forum provides an excellent source for provision of feedback and advice on resolving issues around difficulties and problems in accessing information. The lessons learned and good practice is then promulgated across the Department through the Equality Working Group.

Bilateral meetings with the Equality Unit and Statistician continued to be held during the year with any of the Department's business areas undertaking screening or EQIA to discuss and determine data requirements and quality assure data which is used.

Work will commence in Summer 2008 on updating the Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure 2005. DOE statisticians will be involved in this project.

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

**(Enter text below)**

In view of the recent Monitoring Guidance received from the Commission the Department is currently in the process of assessing what data it currently collects and will in due course consider how to fill the gaps.

### **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.

**(Enter text below)**

The correspondence notifying S75 representatives of forthcoming policy consultation exercises included a tick list reply slip inviting the groups to identify which documents they would like to receive and the most suitable format for the particular group i.e., Arial font size 14, large print, audio cassette, Braille or minority languages to meet the needs of those people who are not fluent in English.

The Equality Unit continued to maintain the Equality section on the Department's Internet site. Information available on this site includes the Department's Annual Progress Reports, the Department's Disability Action Plan, screening exercises, consultations and EQIAs.

Where possible, **NIEA** continues to improve access for physically disabled people in its country parks and nature reserves through its ongoing upgrading programme. NIEA is currently developing Ness Country Park in association with Derry City Council and will provide a new visitor centre and easily accessible routes for less able visitors which will be open in spring 2009. In addition to this facilities such as the sensory trail at Roe Valley Country Park are available. The Agency's partnership with Shopmobility continues with the provision of powered scooters at Crawfordsburn and Roe Valley Country Park and other sites. The production of DVD information films for Carrickfergus Castle, Dunluce Castle and Scrabo Tower has recently been completed. These will be installed for viewing in accessible areas at each location and enable those physically unable to enjoy the experience of the site access to the sites and provide the opportunity to sample the history of the site from accessible locations.

**NIEA** carried out a postal survey among ethnic minority groups in 2008 to assess the level of awareness of its services. This survey did not indicate any specific requirements or issues amongst these groups but provided an opportunity to promote awareness of the Agency and its work. A follow-up survey will be carried out in 2009 as part of a consultation exercise on the Agency's External Communication Strategy. NIEA also continues to make available a wide range of educational and informational leaflets in various European languages.

The **NIEA** events calendar has been sent to disability representative groups, making them aware of the Agency's properties which have access for disabled people. NIEA plans to produce a leaflet listing the sites and

specifying the facilities available at each of them. This information will also be available on the web.

**Road Safety Division** has developed instructional adverts on 'better driver behaviour' for foreign nationals. These DVDs will soon be circulated to foreign national community groups. The adverts on the DVDs have been translated into Polish, Lithuanian, Portuguese and Mandarin. Leaflets have also been produced to provide information on seat belt legislation, the effects of alcohol on driving skills and the 'Course for Drink Drive Offenders'. These will shortly be accessible on the Road Safety Website.

The **Driver and Vehicle Agency (DVA)** continued to provide an audio voice over for the driver theory test in 20 languages and an on-screen BSL video translation. A translator will be arranged if no voice over is available. Extra time and the use of a Reader / Recorder can also be requested under certain circumstances.

In the adoption of the Craigavon Town Centre Boundaries and Retail Designations Plan 2010, **Planning Service**, acting on feedback from representatives of the relevant Section 75 Groups, ensured that the text informing the public that the document is available in a range of formats to meet the needs of all those who wish to access their services was prominently printed on the inside cover of the published Adopted Plan. The Agency will continue to do this for subsequent adopted plans.

During 2007/08 **Planning Service** continued to implement a unique consultation process for the Rathlin Islanders following a request from Community Technical Aid (CTA) and the Rathlin Community Development Association (RCDA). Planning Service identified that the island's small population were often restricted in getting to the weekly planning clinics in Ballycastle. Rathlin is 6 miles off-shore and weather and financial restraints often prevent the population from fully participating in the Planning process. The Moyle District Council applications are now emailed each week to the RCDA. At the request of the RCDA, a copy file is posted and/or electronically sent to them to inform them further of a particular application. The islanders can then decide whether they need to take time away from their work to visit the weekly planning clinic on the mainland.

**Planning Policy Section** (which transferred from Planning Service to PEPG on 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2007) when publishing a Planning Policy Statement or piece of Supplementary Planning Guidance, provides copies of its

consultation drafts or final documents to a wide variety of groups/ individuals, including equality groups. Publications are also made available to members of the public online or by request in a number of formats, including hard copy, large print, disc, Braille or audiocassette. It may also be made available in minority languages for those who are not proficient in English.

Following publication of draft PPS 18 (Renewable Energy) and associated draft Supplementary Planning Guidance on Wind Energy Developments, a member of the public with a visual impairment contacted the **Planning Policy Section** requesting that both documents be made available in an audio format. Following discussions with the respondent it was agreed that it would be more advantageous for an official from the Planning Policy Section to visit their home and read the documents aloud, providing the opportunity to explain the policy and guidance whilst taking note of any comments or concerns raised. The respondent agreed to this proposal and was subsequently visited by an official who facilitated this process.

## **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.

**(Enter text below)**

The Department received no new Section 75 complaints during the 2007/08 year. However, during the year work continued on 2 complaints which had been received during the 2006/07 year as follows:-

- On **25 September 2006** the Equality Commission wrote to the Department in respect of its powers under paragraph 11 of Schedule 9 of the NI Act 1998 challenging Planning Services' screening of the Joint Ministerial Statement of 31 January 2005. The Department again ruled that Planning Service had acted in accordance with commitments set out in its Equality Scheme and replied to the Equality Commission on 20 November 2006. In order to seek further clarification the Equality Commission wrote a further letter to the Department on 14 March 2007. The Department considered the points raised and responded on 20 April 2007 advising that it

remained content that Planning Service had acted in accordance with commitments set out in its Equality Scheme.

- On **17 November 2006** the Department received a letter challenging Planning Service's application of Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 1 in the Holylands area claiming that it unfairly treats neighbours as "3<sup>rd</sup> parties to planning proposals". The letter claimed that the increased number of 'houses in multiple occupation' have transformed the area into a transient district where anti-social behaviour is the norm and older people are alienated. The Department ruled that Planning Service had acted in accordance with commitments set out in the Department's Equality Scheme. The Equality Commission was advised of the complaint and was copied into the Department's response. On **13 February 2008** the Commission formally wrote to the Department advising that an investigation has been authorised into the screening of PPS1. Officials from the Department's Equality Unit met with the Commission on 13 March 2008 to discuss the case and the Department has since provided the Commission with a written account of the screening exercise from officials involved in the screening of PPS1 at the time the Department's Equality Scheme was drawn up.

### **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.

**(Enter text below)**

The Department continued to review its consultation list, seeking confirmation from consultees as to whether they wished to remain on the list and asking them to identify their preferred method of consultation. In addition, consultees were asked to identify any other groups which they felt should be added to the Departmental list.

The Department continued its practice of encouraging business areas to continually review their processes to ensure effective engagement with S75 representative groups. For example, directly asking those upon whom the policy will impact for their preferred method of consultation, using focus

groups, use of e-consultation where appropriate or using network organisations to reach end users.

The Department continued to place all of its equality screening forms on its website for consultation. The site was updated regularly and individual letters issued to S75 representative groups at six monthly intervals (October 2007 and April 2008) setting out details of the policies screened out for equality impact assessment. During the reporting period 2007/08 the Department did not receive any challenges to policies that have been screened out.

The Department also issued, on a six monthly basis, a forward look of consultation exercises to the S75 representative groups to allow them to consider whether they wished to become involved with a policy and therefore plan their resource allocation in advance. Consultees were invited to take part, in their preferred manner, in both draft and final EQIA's. Details on all of the above were also posted on the Department's Internet site.

The Department hosted its annual Equality Forum of policy makers and S75 representatives to discuss matters of mutual interest on 26 November 2007. The Department views these meetings as an opportunity to further enhance its communication with representative organisations and to listen to feedback on how effective its consultation mechanisms are. Consultation is a standing agenda item and any examples of good practice or areas of concern are taken on board and circulated around the Department by the Equality Unit and Departmental policy makers.

**Planning Service** continues to work with consultants to ensure inclusivity in the preparation of Area Development Plans. This is particularly successful in capturing the views of marginal groups within the community who may not have the capacity to clearly express their views. In addition, the Agency finds face-to-face meetings with key stakeholders benefits policy development, whilst also developing the Agency's understanding of what the sector does.

**DVA (Licensing)** continued to engage with Disability Action on a twice-yearly frequency to ensure that issues which would impact on drivers with a disability are subject to meaningful discussion and to review progress and evidence the driving assessments carried out by Disability Action on behalf of the Department.

**Road Safety Division** continued to consider if any road safety teaching materials produced 'in-house' could be produced in alternative formats. As a result, the teaching resource pack for the cycle training which includes a DVD was translated into Irish and made available for use by teachers in Irish Medium schools which participate in the Cycling Proficiency Scheme.

**Planning Policy Section**, when preparing a Planning Policy Statement (PPS) or a supplementary planning guidance document, will establish a working group consisting of representatives of key interest organisations to advise on relevant issues. Further to this the Section provides copies of its consultation drafts to a wide variety of groups/ individuals, including equality groups. Consultation drafts are also made available to members of the public online or by request in a number of formats. During the reporting year, as part of the process of reviewing draft PPS 14 (Sustainable Development in the Countryside), there was engagement with key stakeholders on the findings emerging by the Executive Subcommittee overseeing the review. This involved a series of meetings around Northern Ireland during February 2008 and the Planning Policy Section ensured this included representation by stakeholders representing a number of Section 75 groups. The final PPS 7 Addendum (Residential Extensions and Alterations) was published during the year. It was accompanied by a Summary of Responses which advised that a number of amendments were incorporated into the final PPS Addendum on foot of comments made regarding proposals for extensions for people with disabilities. The key change is that the PPS now advises that the accommodation needs of an applicant with a disability constitutes an important material consideration in itself and this matter will be taken into account alongside the other policy criteria when determining proposals. In making these changes the Department considers that the needs of people with disabilities are now adequately addressed in the PPS Addendum.

### **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.

**(Enter text below)**

The Department continued to view the promotion of good relations as essential to good quality policy development. Good relations training

formed part of the S75 awareness training provided for staff. Staff in the Equality Unit remain active members of the Racial Equality Forum in an effort to further develop relationships with minority ethnic organisations and gain an understanding of their specific needs. In the same spirit, the Department played an active role in the Migrant Workers Sub Group and the Inter-Departmental Voluntary and Community Sector Joint Forum.

The Department also took part in the development of the first Triennial Action Plan for 2006 – 2009 in respect of *A Shared Future* – Policy and Strategic Framework for Good Relations in Northern Ireland. The Department identified two specific objectives in relation to planning policy on access to shared spaces/facilities/services and utilisation of Environment Heritage Service (EHS) properties to support Shared Future objectives.

**DVA Licensing** staff continued to liaise with local councils, community groups and PSNI specifically to provide information for groups such as foreign nationals. The purpose is to provide useful information on a range of services provided by the public sector to help foreign nationals understand our processes. Feedback has been very useful and staff have been provided with information which has helped highlight some of the difficulties faced by migrant workers in applying for driving licences.

**Planning Policy Section** when preparing a Planning Policy Statement or a supplementary planning guidance document will establish a working group consisting of representatives of key interest organisations to advise on relevant issues. Further to this the Section provides copies of its consultation drafts to a wide variety of groups/ individuals, including equality groups. Consultation drafts are also made available to members of the public online or by request in a number of formats. In doing so Planning Policy Section meets the legal duty in addressing good relations.

**NIEA** properties are promoted as a shared cultural heritage with particular focus in support of the Shared Future objectives. The NIEA events calendar was circulated widely, including community and ethnic groups, and it was promoted through a high profile PR campaign. An estimated 1,933,000 visitors from a broad range of backgrounds enjoyed 300 events run by NIEA in 2007. This was a decline of 6.33% on 2006 and 1.60% lower than the baseline year of 2005. The drop is almost entirely attributable to the extremely wet summer, deterring visitors from coming to outdoor properties such as country parks. On the positive side, at 247,000,

visits to State Care Monuments were up by 9.2% on 2006 and 13.4% on 2005. This reflects well on the success of the 'living history' events run at State Care Monuments throughout the year, which attracted a total of 29,800 visitors. Overall attendance at events was estimated at 102,200 – an increase of 85.7% on the 2006 estimate. Of the 44,000 students participating in NIEA's education programme at its sites (September 2007-June 2008) 5% attended under the Education for Mutual Understanding initiative.

In September 2004 the number of languages in which **DVA** provided its theory test increased from 6 to 20. Since that time the volumes of customers using voiceovers has increased as indicated below and the numbers requiring translations has decreased. This indicates that the theory test is increasingly accessible to those whose first language is not English.

2004 - 2005	2670 Voiceovers (VOs) & 20 Translations.
2005 - 2006	4341 VOs & 27 Translations.
2006 - 2007	5044 VOs & 18 Translations.
2007 - 2008	5606 VOs & 32 Translations.
2008 – YTD (July)	2003 VOs & 1 Translation.

- Please outline any use of the Commission's Good Relations Guide.  
**(Enter text below)**

The Department is currently considering how to take forward its requirements under the new Good Relations Guidance and is awaiting central direction from OFMdfM in implementing the guidance. The Programme for Cohesion, Sharing and Integration remains the subject of discussion between government Ministers.

### **Section 11: Additional Comments**

- Please provide any additional information/comments  
**(Enter text below)**

The Department continues to emphasise to officials the importance of application of the statutory duties. This is reinforced with the provision of training, requirements to update senior officials on progress and awareness-raising through in-house magazines, team briefing and

business planning events. Given the passage of time, the Department considers that it has moved forward from knowledge of the statutory duties to understanding and implementation. There are numerous examples of policy-making decisions which have benefited from improved consultation with end users and better understanding of their needs. This is reflected in positive feedback received from S75 representative groups at the Department's Equality Forum and the relatively low number of Section 75 complaints received by the Department during the year.

The Department continually strives to improve the provision of information to S75 representatives and to further expand access to the services it provides to the public at large. Managing the diverse expectations of representative groups can be a challenge. However, further development of working relationships with S75 groups to build trust and mutual understanding can only enhance these relationships.

The Department remains of the opinion that data on sexual orientation and political opinion remains light and policy development would benefit from a wider range of information sources to support these areas.

It should be noted that the Department's Disability Action Plan has only been in existence since 1 July 2007 and therefore the outcomes which can be recorded up to 31 March 2008 are somewhat limited.

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

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 <sup>1</sup>	Outcomes / Impact <sup>2</sup>
National <sup>3</sup>			
Regional <sup>4</sup>	<b>DVA's Driver Licensing Division</b> seeks to increase participation in public life by ensuring that the disabled sector is properly represented through meetings with groups such as Disability Action, the Occupational Health Service, the Disabled Drivers' Association and various other disabled drivers' associations	DVA have met with Disability Action to discuss matters relating to disabled drivers in Northern Ireland.	It was agreed that no changes to DVA procedures where needed at this stage and that further meetings will take place to monitor the situation.

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

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

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

	which represent the rights of disabled drivers. The Agency will keep membership of these groups under review.		
Local <sup>5</sup>			

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

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

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

	Training Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
1	<p>The Department's <b>Equal Opportunities Branch</b> has identified the need for and is undertaking a continuous programme of extensive Equal Opportunities training directed at <b>all</b> grades. This training has been developed by the Department to make staff aware of discrimination and incorporates the employment legislation that includes disability. It also includes disability awareness and covers the Department's Disability Action Plan. 1000 front line and office holders will be trained by March 2011.</p>	<p>621 DOE staff have been trained up until 31 March 2008. Training is still ongoing.</p>	<p>The training has increased awareness and understanding of staff in relation to disability legislation. Particular emphasis is given to information and discussion on reasonable adjustments for staff with disabilities. Advice and guidance is given to departmental staff on the NICS procedures and best practice in respect of reasonable adjustments. The Department concentrates on this area as our training evaluation has shown that this area is of interest to staff, particularly line managers.</p>
2			
3			

4			

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	The Department's Equality Unit carried out an annual review of the Department's "Guide to Making Information Accessible".	The Guide was reviewed at the Department's Equality Forum meeting on 26 November 2007 and comments invited from the S75 groups.	The Guide was updated to take on board any new good practice. A full review is planned by March 2009.
2			
3			
4			

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

	Encourage others Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
1			
2			
3			
4			

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			
2			
3			

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

	Action Measures partly achieved	Milestones <sup>6</sup> / Outputs	Outcomes/Impacts	Reasons not fully achieved
1				
2				
3				
4				

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

	Action Measures not met	Reasons
1		
2		
3		

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

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

The Department's annual Equality Forum meeting is a useful means of monitoring the guidance contained in the Department's "Guide to Making Information Accessible". The Guide is a standing agenda item and feedback is sought from the Section 75 Groups on how the Department provides information in a range of formats to meet the needs of its customers, including those with disabilities.

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(b) Quantitative

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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: ~~Yes~~ / No

If yes please outline below:

	Revised/Additional Action Measures	Performance Indicator	Timescale
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			

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?

The Department reviewed its Disability Action Plan and submitted its revised version to the Equality Commission on 24 July 2008.