

**EQUALITY SCHEME FOR THE CIVIL SERVICE
COMMISSIONERS FOR NORTHERN IRELAND**

JUNE 2001

OFFICE OF THE CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSIONERS EQUALITY SCHEME

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EQUALITY SCHEME FOR THE CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSIONERS FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

Statement by the Chairperson

The Civil Service Commissioners for Northern Ireland who are independent of the Northern Ireland Civil Service are fully committed to the fulfilment of the Section 75 obligations on the promotion of equality of opportunity and good relations. This Equality Scheme sets out how the Commissioners propose to fulfil those obligations.

As Chairperson of the Commissioners I shall ensure that all the Commissioners and staff within the secretariat will be familiar with the scheme. I will provide the required leadership to achieve this and the Commissioners will ensure that equality will be mainstreamed into every aspect of their work. I am fully committed to the development and implementation of the Scheme including the provision of efficient internal monitoring arrangements to ensure that the duties are effectively complied with and for monitoring and reviewing progress.

I shall also ensure that provision is made for the necessary resources in terms of people, time, training and money to ensure compliance with the statutory duties.

I, together with my colleagues, welcome the fact that the principles of openness and accountability, which have always been an integral part of our work, will be enhanced through the fulfilment of the Section 75 obligations. Widespread consultation with representatives of and spokesmen/women for those affected by our policies and functions is central to the successful operation of the Scheme, and we welcome this contribution to the decision making process.

Judith Eve

**JUDITH EVE
CHAIRPERSON
Civil Service Commissioners
for Northern Ireland**

Christine Collins

**CHRISTINE COLLINS
Secretary
Civil Service Commissioners
for Northern Ireland**

EQUALITY SCHEME FOR THE CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSIONERS FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

1. Introduction

1.1 Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 ('the Act') requires the Civil Service Commissioners in carrying out their functions relating to Northern Ireland, to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity:

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

1.2 In addition, without prejudice to its obligation above, the Commissioners shall, in carrying out their 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. In doing so we recognise that the provision of equality of opportunity is a major factor in the development of good relations and that this has a special relevance not only to our own responsibilities and functions but also in close working relationships with all other Departments, as to how we contribute to the discharge of their responsibilities.

1.3 Schedule 9 of the Act requires the Commissioners to set out in an Equality Scheme how they propose to fulfil the duties imposed by Section 75. This document is intended to fulfil that statutory requirement.

1.4 The Commissioners are committed to the fulfilment of its Section 75 obligations in all areas of their functions powers and duties relating to Northern Ireland. They will ensure that implementation of the Section 75 obligations is supported with the necessary resources in terms of people, time and finance to ensure that the statutory duties are effectively complied with; and they will communicate to and train their staff on the requirements of the statutory obligations and how these can be efficiently implemented.

2. The Commissioners' Remit of Authority

2.1 The Civil Service Commissioners for Northern Ireland were first appointed in 1923 to uphold the principle that selection for appointment

to posts in the Northern Ireland Civil Service should be on the basis of merit in fair and open competition. Commissioners derive their responsibilities from the Civil Service Commissioners (Northern Ireland) Order 1999.

2.2 The 1999 Order provides for Commissioners to discharge their responsibilities by:

- making General Regulations which set out the circumstances in which the principle of selection on merit on the basis of fair and open competition shall not apply, (the exceptions to the merit principle);
- publishing and maintaining a Recruitment Code on the interpretation and application of the principle of selection on merit on the basis of fair and open competition;
- approving the appointments through open competition to senior positions in the NICS;
- auditing recruitment policies and procedures followed by departments and agencies in making appointments to the NICS to ensure that the Recruitment code is being observed; and
- requiring departments and agencies to publish information relating to recruitment and to the use of permitted exceptions to the principle of selection on merit on the basis of fair and open competition.

The Order also provides that the Commissioners may consider and determine appeals made to them by existing civil servants under the NICS Code of Ethics. The Commissioners are required to publish an annual report of the number of appeals made to them under the Code of Ethics together with summary information as to the nature of such appeals.

2.3 The Commissioners expect that equality issues arise from their functions, policies and procedures listed above and as such these will be the focus of an examination of their equality obligations.

2.4 The Civil Service Commissioners for Northern Ireland are responsible for the regulation of appointments through open competition to the Northern Ireland Civil Service. They have no operational responsibility for recruitment to the NICS. The responsibility for operational recruitment through open competition to the NICS, falls in the main to DFP Recruitment Service and those departments and agencies which are recruiting directly.

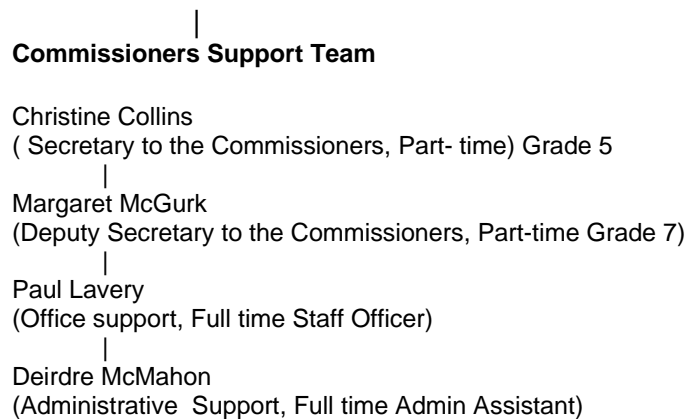
2.5 Where the Commissioners have the lead responsibility for a policy which requires close co-operation with, or is operationalised by, other Departments, it will ensure that those Departments have the opportunity to be fully involved in an equality impact assessment which may be necessary; e.g. by participation in a steering group of officials.

3. **Arrangements for assessing Compliance with Section 75 Duties and Consulting on matters Likely to be Relevant**

3.1 The Civil Service Commissioners comprise six individuals who are independent of the NICS and perform this role on a part-time basis. They meet approximately six times per year and are supported by a small team of three people. The support staff are assigned to the Commissioners by the Secretary of State and are resourced by the Northern Ireland Office (see organisation chart below)

Civil Service Commissioners (All work on a part-time capacity)

Judith Eve---Ian Doherty---Margaret Elliott---John Steele---Sid McDowell---Vacant Position
Chairperson



3.2 The Commissioners have overall responsibility for the obligations of Section 75 and are committed to the fulfilment of these obligations in all areas of their work. Responsibility for driving forward implementation on behalf of the Commissioners will be located at the Office of the Civil Service Commissioners (OCSC)(NI) which provides secretarial support to the Commissioners under the personal responsibility of a Grade 7 official in the NICS, (Deputy Secretary to the Commissioners). The current Grade 7 is Mrs Margaret McGurk reporting directly to Christine Collins (Grade 5), the Secretary to the Commissioners. Mrs McGurk will be the central point of contact for the Equality Commission, for complainants and for those affected by the Scheme . She is based at the Office of the Civil Service Commissioners, 5th Floor Windsor House, Bedford Street Belfast, BT2 7SR, Tel (028) 90549425.

3.3 The Commissioners will set objectives and targets relating to their Section 75 obligations which will be included in all levels of strategic planning. They will discuss, monitor and review the implementation of these obligations at all of their meetings during the year. The

Commissioners' Annual Report will contain a formal report on the Commissioners' progress in meeting the objectives and targets set in relation to the statutory duties.

- 3.4 An annual review will also be prepared detailing progress on the steps which the Commissioners have taken to promote equality of opportunity and good relations. This review 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 foreword to the Commissioners' annual review will be signed by the Chairperson, following which the review will be made available on the Internet and a press release will be issued. The Commissioners will liaise with the Equality Commission to ensure that progress is maintained. Copies of the annual review will be made available on request, and in alternative formats if required, to the affected groups.
- 3.5 Objectives and targets relating to the statutory obligations will be integrated into the Commissioners strategic and operational plans, and will be reviewed each quarter. Matters relevant to the statutory obligations will be included as objectives in the forward job plans of the Secretary and Deputy Secretary to the Commissioners and for all members of the Commissioners' secretariat. Progress towards these objectives will be monitored by senior officers in reviewing the course of an individual's personal performance (at least annually).
- 3.6 Consultation with groups and individuals will begin as early as possible and the Commissioners are committed to carrying out consultations in accordance with the Equality Commission Guiding Principles. The Commissioners will consult with bodies listed in Annex A in relation to Section 75 duties, screening and the Scheme itself. Relevant interested groups as well as the Equality Commission, other public bodies, voluntary, community, trade union and other groups with a legitimate interest in the matter, will be consulted in relation to equality impact assessments.
- 3.7 The Commissioners' secretariat will work with representative groups and individuals of the Section 75 categories in order to identify how best to obtain their views. There will be different means of consultation for different groups and this may involve face to face meetings, small group meetings, focus groups, discussion papers with the opportunity to comment in writing, questionnaires or internet. All methodologies will be considered in line with best practice.
- 3.8 Barriers to proper consultation will be removed ensuring accessibility of language and appropriate formats in a timely fashion to ensure meaningful consultation. Issues concerning access to information will be given particular consideration. Information will be made available on request in accessible formats, including Braille, large print, audio cassette, signed video cassette and in minority ethnic languages. Consideration will be given on how best to communicate information to

children, young people, and those with learning disabilities, in consultation with representatives of the affected groups under Section 75.

- 3.9 Information will be made available to ensure meaningful consultation, and will include the provision of all relevant quantitative and qualitative data and other documentation such as the relevant parts of consultant's reports.
- 3.10 Special training will be developed in consultation with the affected groups and will be given to those engaged in consultation exercises, to ensure that those facilitating consultations have the necessary skills to communicate effectively with those being consulted.
- 3.11 The Commissioners recognise that different groups have different needs and may have special customs. In organising consultation meetings therefore, the Commissioners secretariat will aim to ensure full participation by consideration of time of day/year, venue, accessibility particularly for those with disabilities, how the meeting will be run, the use of appropriate language, whether a signer is necessary, the provision of childcare and the need for alternative formats.
- 3.12 In consulting with groups and individuals the Commissioners will begin as early as possible. The Commissioners recognise that adequate time should be allowed for groups to consult amongst themselves and they will therefore provide a period for response of at least eight weeks. However, there may be circumstances when this timescale is not feasible. For example when action is urgently required to comply with a court judgement or with EU or international obligations. Such circumstances will be monitored, kept under review, justified very clearly and reported on in the Commissioners' annual review.
- 3.13 In addition to consultation on equality impact assessments on specific policy areas, the Commissioners will also need, from time to time, to consult on reviews and other plans. Within each relevant policy area, appropriate bodies will be included in relevant consultations of these kinds.
- 3.14 The Commissioners will consult as appropriate with the Equality Commission, Community Relations Council and other organisations which have a legitimate interest in the work of the Commissioners on issues relevant to its fulfilment of the Section 75 obligations; i.e. the impact of their policies on equality of opportunity and on good relations. This will include other public authorities; voluntary and community groups and Trade Unions. They will take account of proposals from those bodies relating to its compliance with Section 75 obligations. In addition the Commissioners have consulted on their Equality Scheme with the bodies indicated in Annex A and it is anticipated that other organisations will be added to the list of consultees as consultation on equality impact assessments proceed.

- 4. Arrangements for Assessing and Consulting on the Impact of Policies on the Promotion of Equality of Opportunity.**
- 4.1 The overall aim of this scheme is to employ a suitable methodology to assess how each of the Commissioners' policies and functions as indicated in Annex B impact on the promotion of equality of opportunity and good relations within the terms of Section 75 of the Act.
- 4.2 Where relevant, an equality impact assessment will include an annex on the promotion of good relations (without prejudice to the statutory obligation on equality of opportunity). Annex A contains a pool of organisations which will be used for consultation in relation to the equality impact assessment for each policy/function. One of the organisations to be consulted specifically in relation to the annex (of the main policy area assessment) which deals with the promotion of good relations will be the Community Relations Council.
- 4.3 In identifying policies and functions to be subject to equality impact assessment, the Commissioners have also considered the maintenance and revision of such. Within the next 3 years following approval of this scheme the Commissioners have agreed that all their policies and functions will be subject to an impact assessment. The Commissioners will consider the impact of each current or new function or policy on equality of opportunity in terms of the nine categories listed at Section 75 of the Act. For each policy/function the following criteria will be applied:
- a. Is there any evidence of higher or lower participation or uptake by different groups*?
 - b. Is there any evidence that the different groups have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to the particular main functional areas?
 - c. Is there an opportunity to promote equality of opportunity or good relations better by altering policy or practice, or working with others in government or the community at large?
 - d. Have consultations in the past with relevant representative organisations or individuals within groups indicated that particular policies or functions create problems that are specific to them?
- 4.4 An equality impact assessment will aim to identify whether , within each relevant Section 75 category, the policy/function under consideration creates differential impacts between groups in the category or has the potential to enhance equality of opportunity between groups, particularly in terms of:

- rights;
- resources;
- participation, and
- value and norms (ie traditional roles, stereotypes, division of labour, attitudes and behaviour)

The Commissioners are committed to conducting equality impact assessments in accordance with the procedures set out in the Equality Commission’s publication “ Practical guidance on Equality Impact Assessment”. They will also draw on guidance from the Equality Unit of the Office of the First and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM).

4.5 In prioritising their policies/functions for impact assessment the Commissioners will take into account:

- relevance to social need;
- effect on people’s daily lives;
- effect on economic, social and human rights; and
- scale of expenditure incurred by the policy.

4.6 Any new policies which may be developed during the period covered by this scheme, will be subjected to the same process for equality impact assessment as current policies.

4.7 In making any decision on a current or proposed policy, the Commissioners will take into account any relevant equality impact assessment and the outcome of associated consultation.

4.8 Equality impact assessments will be conducted in accordance with the arrangements for consultation as outlined in section 3 of this scheme and also in accordance with the Equality Commission’s guiding principles. The Commissioners will consult on equality impact assessments with relevant public sector organisations and affected groups. Representatives of the affected groups under Section 75 and local organisations will also be consulted. They will also consult with those directly affected by the policy to be assured, whether or not they have a direct economic or personal interest.

4.9 In summary, the Commissioners will carry out equality impact assessments on all their policy/function areas (listed in Annex B) over the three year period following approval of the scheme. The timetable for the conduct of these assessments is set out in Section 9 below.

5. Arrangements for Monitoring Adverse Impact

5.1 Knowledge of the impact of the Commissioners’ policies and functions on the different groups within the section 75 categories is essential to ensuring equality of opportunity and to redressing any shortcomings. A system will be established to monitor the impact of policies in order to

identify their effects on the relevant groups. Within one year of approval of this Scheme, the Commissioners will assess the extent of existing monitoring within each of their main functions and policy areas indicated in Annex B and the scope for extending it.

In addition to the value of any additional information required for improving information on equality of opportunity, this assessment will also take into account the following factors:-

- resource implications; and
- readiness of the public to supply information

This assessment will be carried out on an annual basis and the results made publicly available.

- 5.2 In some cases an equality impact assessment may identify an anticipated differential adverse impact on particular groups within Section 75 categories. Assuming that no alternative policy is feasible, consideration will be given to what steps might be taken to mitigate such anticipated adverse impact. The Commissioners 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 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 Commissioners will ensure that the policy is revised.
- 5.4 The Commissioners will involve one of the Department of Finance and Personnel's Agencies, the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency, in their review of existing monitoring arrangements and their consideration of special monitoring of anticipated adverse impacts.

6. Arrangements for Publication of Results of Assessments and monitoring.

- 6.1 The Commissioners will make publicly available the outcome of any equality impact assessment and of any monitoring undertaken in relation to paragraphs 5.1 and 5.2 above. The material will be accessible on the Commissioners' web site at www.nicscommissioners.org. It will also be made available in printed form and in accessible formats i.e Braille, disk, audio cassette through a request to Margaret McGurk, Deputy Secretary to the Commissioners, Office of the Civil Service Commissioners, 5th Floor Windsor House, Bedford Street, Belfast, BT2 7SR; Tel 028 90549425, Fax 028 90549414, E-Mail: Margaret.McGurk@NIO.x.gsi.gov.uk. The Commissioners will inform the general public about the availability of the material through press releases including press publications and

other media associated with Section 75 categories, eg talking newspapers and in languages other than English. Press releases or public advertisements will go to all three Belfast daily newspapers including the North West version of the Belfast Telegraph. Consideration will also be given to how best to communicate with young people with learning disabilities. It will also directly inform bodies listed at Annex A when this material is available.

6.2 Published documentation on an equality impact assessment will include:

- the aims of the policy;
- details of any consideration given to mitigating any adverse impact of the policy on the promotion of equality of opportunity; and
- details of any consideration given to alternative policies which might better achieve the promotion of equality of opportunity.

7 Commitment to take account of data collated from an impact assessment

7.1 The Commissioners in making any decision with respect to a policy adopted or proposed to be adopted by them will take account of any information and statistics gathered from an impact assessment and any consultation carried out in relation to the policy.

8. Arrangements for training staff on issues relevant to the duties

8.1 The Commissioners will ensure that they and all staff in their secretariat will receive information and training, as appropriate to their grade and responsibilities, on their Section 75 obligations, Equality Scheme requirements and the arrangements for equality impact assessment. A detailed training plan for the Commissioners and their secretariat is being developed which will aim to achieve the following objectives:-

1. To raise awareness of current anti-discrimination legislation in Northern Ireland, including the provision of Section 75, Schedule 9 and Section 24 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. This will form part of the Induction training for new staff.
2. To provide those involved in the screening and impact assessment of policies with the necessary skills and knowledge to do the work effectively.
3. To provide those who deal with complaints in relation to the Commissioners' Equality Scheme, with the necessary skills and knowledge to investigate and monitor complaints effectively.

4. To provide those involved in the consultation process with the necessary skills and knowledge to do this work effectively.
 5. To provide those involved in the implementation and monitoring of the Commissioners' Equality Scheme to do this work effectively.
 6. To evaluate the extent to which all participants of the above mentioned training have acquired the necessary skills and knowledge.
- 8.2 An annual progress report on the extent to which the above objectives have been adhered will be produced and will be included in the annual review to the Equality Commission.
- 8.3 The training will be delivered in consultation with representatives of the affected groups by the NIO Training and Development Unit, Business Development Services and consultants.
- 8.4 The Commissioners' will ensure that their secretariat will have access to a copy of the Commissioners' Equality Scheme.

9. Public Access to Information and Services

- 9.1 The Commissioners are committed to effective communication with the public. They recognise, however, that there is a risk that some sections of the public will not enjoy equality of opportunity in assessing information which they may provide. There are three particular risk areas:
- people with sensory and learning disabilities may have particular difficulties with information in print;
 - members of minority ethnic groups, whose first language is not English, may have difficulties with information provided only in English; and
 - some local newspapers are read mainly by only one part of the community.
- 9.2 In disseminating information through the local press, the Commissioners will ensure that press statements and public advertisements are carried by all three Belfast daily newspapers. Where press statements or public advertisements are aimed at a particular area within Northern Ireland, the Commissioners will ensure that the information is disseminated through at least two local newspapers circulating in that area, ensuring that the information is accessible to all parts of the community. Specialist publications, targeting specific groups of people, will also be used when appropriate. Wherever appropriate information will be posted on the internet.

- 9.3 The assessment of monitoring referred to at paragraph 5.1 will include arrangements for monitoring access to information to ensure equality of opportunity.
- 9.4 The Commissioners' office will maintain a welcoming and harmonious environment. The Commissioners will adhere to the relevant provisions of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.
- 9.5 The Commissioners will, within the first year following approval of the scheme, assess their arrangements for providing information in consultation with representative groups. This assessment, which outlines existing systems as they operate currently, will examine the need for accessible formats such as Braille, large print, audio cassette and signed video cassette and minority ethnic language formats. The assessment will take account of the statutory requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995; the likely demand for information in such formats across their main policy areas; resource implications; and, in particular, the recommendations of the cross-departmental Promoting Social Inclusion (PSI) working groups on minority ethnic people and on access to information. This assessment will make recommendations on how public access to information can be better ensured by improving arrangements for providing information in different formats and languages. The Commissioners will consult on these recommendations and will implement them appropriately. The Commissioners will inform the Equality Commission of the changes that will be made following the review.
- 9.6 In developing new approaches to consultation, the Commissioners will draw, in particular, on the outcome of a conference organised by the Office of the First and Deputy First Minister on 4th and 5th December 2000. This dealt with practical issues in carrying out future consultations in the context of Section 75 obligations, and included inputs from representatives of groups which have traditionally been marginalised. It also addressed the special difficulties in consulting children on policy issues in which they have an interest. The Commissioners will also draw on advice from the Equality Commission and lessons from other jurisdictions.
- 9.7 The Commissioners' commitments in this scheme on equality of opportunity in assessing information are without prejudice to any rights to information in the current Code of Practice on Open Government or in the implementation of Freedom of Information legislation.

10. Summary Timetable

- 10.1 The Commissioners are committed to mainstreaming equality into every aspect of their functions and related policies. Therefore in the timetable which follows they are committing to undertake an impact assessment of their Recruitment Code which is a major project. The

Recruitment Code incorporates all their policies relating to recruitment and selection, through open competition, to appointments in the Northern Ireland Civil Service. In any future policy development they will consider at an early stage any associated equality issues.

10.2 The following timetable summarises the measures which the Commissioners propose to take during the five years beginning 1 July 2000.

Year 1 1 July 2000 to 30 June 2001

- Consult with relevant bodies to gauge level of interest in Commissioners functions/policies.
- Examine feedback from consultees including Equality Commission on the initial draft of the Commissioners Equality Scheme and produce a second draft of the Equality Scheme.
- Provide training on Section 75 obligations to Commissioners and their secretariat.
- Prepare annual Review for Equality Commission

Year 2 1 July 2001 to 30 June 2002

- Commence undertaking an impact Assessment on the Commissioners' Recruitment Code.
- In consultation with the representative groups an assessment will be made by 30 June 2002 of the arrangements for providing information to these groups.
- By 30 June 2002 assess the extent of existing monitoring within each of the Commissioners' main functions and policy areas.
- Prepare Annual Review for Equality Commission

Year 3 1 July 2002 to 30 June 2003

- Complete impact assessment of Commissioners' Recruitment Code and amend Code as appropriate by 30 June 2003.
- Provide refresher training on Section 75 obligations to Commissioners and their secretariat
- Prepare annual Review for Equality Commission

Year 4 1 July 2003 to 30 June 2004

- Undertake an impact assessment of the Commissioners' function of determining appeals made to them by civil servants under the NICS Code of Ethics.
- Prepare Annual Review for Equality Commission.

Year 5 1 July 2004 to 30 June 2005

- Complete a review of the Commissioners' Equality Scheme by 30 June 2005 and forward a copy of the review to the Equality Commission.

11. Publication of the Scheme

- 11.1 Following approval of the scheme by the Equality Commission, it will be made available, free of charge, in print form and accessible formats (in a timely fashion) upon request to Margaret McGurk, Office of the Civil Service Commissioners, 5th Floor Windsor House, Bedford Street, Belfast, BT2 7SR; Tel 028 90549425, Fax 028 90549414, E-Mail: Margaret.McGurk@NIO.x.gsi.gov.uk. It can also be accessed on the Commissioners' Internet web site at www.nicscommissioners.org. A copy of the scheme will be sent to all those who responded and specific consideration will be given to how best to communicate the scheme to young people and those with learning difficulties.
- 11.2 The Commissioners will also issue a press statement when the scheme is approved by the Equality Commission. In addition to making the approved scheme accessible on the Commissioners' web site a summary of the scheme will also be copied to staff in their secretariat.

12. Complaints

- 12.1 When a person believes that he/she has been directly affected by a failure of the Commissioners to comply with this scheme, he/she (or his/her appointed representative) should, in the first instance, bring their complaint to the attention of Margaret McGurk, Office of the Civil Commissioners @ 5th Floor Windsor House, Bedford Street, Belfast, Tel 90549425, Fax 028 90549414, E-Mail: Margaret.McGurk@NIO.x.gsi.gov.uk. The Commissioners will aim to respond to the claimant within one month. In responding to the complainant, the office will inform him/her of the procedure for pursuing the complaint further with the Equality Commission, as set out in para 10 of Schedule 9 to the Northern Ireland Act 1998. In any subsequent investigation by the Equality Commission the Commissioners will cooperate fully, providing access to relevant information as the Commission may require. Similarly, the Commissioners will cooperate

fully with any investigation by the Equality Commission under subparagraph 11(1)(b) of Schedule 9 to the Act 1998.

- 12.2 The Commissioners will monitor any complaints that it has not fulfilled its statutory obligations and will seek to resolve such complaints bilaterally.

13. Review

- 13.1 The Commissioners will complete a review of this scheme by June 2005 at the latest and a copy of the report will be sent to the Equality Commission. The review will take account of any guidance which the Equality Commission may issue on such reviews. This review will include an assessment of how the Commissioners have complied with their Section 75 obligations and how equality of opportunity and good relations have been advanced in relation to the main policy areas.

CONSULTATION ON EQUALITY SCHEME

This list is not exhaustive; additional bodies may be added during the lifetime of this scheme to reflect the establishment of new organisations and the development of new policies.

Political Parties

Labour

Conservative

Liberal Democrat

UUP

SDLP

DUP

Sinn Fein

APNI

Green

NIUP

UKUP

Women's Coalition

PUP

UDP

Workers' Party

UUAP

IRSP

Representative Organisations

Committee on the Administration of Justice

Equality Commission

Community Relations Council

Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission (NIHRC)

Age Sector Reference Group

Putting Children First

Youth Council for Northern Ireland

Chinese Welfare Association

Indian Community Centre

Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities

Traveller Movement Northern Ireland

Coalition on Sexual Orientation

Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action

Northern Ireland Gay Rights Association

Disability Action

MENCAP

British Deaf Association

RNID Northern Ireland

RNIB Northern Ireland

Women's Forum Northern Ireland

NIPSA

NIC-ICTU

FDA

Age Concern

Barnardos Northern Ireland

Gingerbread

Carers National Association Northern Ireland

Employers Forum on Disability

Help the Aged Northern Ireland

Lesbian Line

Northern Ireland Association for the Care and Rehabilitation of Offenders

Northern Ireland African Cultural Centre

Northern Ireland Islamic Centre

Sikh Cultural Centre

Departmental Representatives

Personnel Director

DRD
DCAL
DE
CSA, DSD & SSA
NIPS
DARD
NIO
DETI
DFP & OFM/DFM
DHSS & PS
DHFETE
DOE

Director Of Personnel Central Personnel Group

Northern Ireland Civil Service Recruitment Service

ANNEX B

COMMISSIONERS' POLICIES/FUNCTIONS

The 1999 Order provides for Commissioners to discharge their responsibilities by:

- making General Regulations which set out the circumstances in which the principle of selection on merit on the basis of fair and open competition shall not apply, (the exceptions to the merit principle);
- publishing and maintaining a Recruitment Code on the interpretation and application of the principle of selection on merit on the basis of fair and open competition;
- approving the appointments through open competition to senior positions in the NICS;
- auditing recruitment policies and procedures followed by departments and agencies in making appointments to the NICS to ensure that the Recruitment code is being observed; and
- requiring departments and agencies to publish information relating to recruitment and to the use of permitted exceptions to the principle of selection on merit on the basis of fair and open competition.

The Order also provides that the Commissioners may consider and determine appeals made to them by existing civil servants under the NICS Code of Ethics. The Commissioners are required to publish an annual report of the number of appeals made to them under the Code of Ethics together with summary information as to the nature of such appeals.

ANNEX C

SECTION 75 CATEGORIES

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

Category	Main Groups
Religious belief Christian	Protestants; Catholics; people of non-faiths; people of no religious belief
Political Opinion	Unionists generally; Nationalists generally; members/supporters of any political party
Racial group	White people; Chinese; Irish Travellers; Indians; Pakistanis; Bangladeshis; Black Africans; Black Caribbean people; people of mixed ethnic group.
Gender	Men (including boys); women (including girls) "Men and Women generally"; transgendered people.
Marital status	Married people; unmarried people; divorced or separated people; widowed people
Age	Children under 18; people aged between 18 and 65; and 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 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	Heterosexuals ;bi-sexuals; gays; lesbians;