

*Civil Service Commissioners for Northern Ireland*



**Public Authority Statutory Equality and Good Relations Duties  
Annual Progress Report 2016-2017**

**Contact:**

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Documents published relating to our Equality Scheme can be found at:  
[www.nicscommissioners.org](http://www.nicscommissioners.org)

**Signature:**

**This report has been prepared using a template circulated by the Equality Commission.**

**It presents our progress in fulfilling our statutory equality and good relations duties, and implementing Equality Scheme commitments and Disability Action Plans.**

**This report reflects progress made between April 2016 and March 2017**

## **PART A – Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and Equality Scheme**

### **Section 1: Equality and good relations outcomes, impacts and good practice**

- 1** In 2016-17, please provide **examples** of key policy/service delivery developments made by the public authority in this reporting period to better promote equality of opportunity and good relations; and the outcomes and improvements achieved.

*Please relate these to the implementation of your statutory equality and good relations duties and Equality Scheme where appropriate.*

Civil Service Commissioners for Northern Ireland (CSCNI) are responsible for ensuring appointments to the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) are made on merit on the basis of fair and open competition. We also have a role in hearing appeals made by existing civil servants under the NICS Code of Ethics.

Commissioners' primary role is to regulate appointments to the NICS, at all levels, to ensure that the Merit Principle is adhered to. Commissioners are concerned only with recruitment to the NICS through open competition.

Commissioners' responsibilities derive from prerogative Orders in Council made by the Secretary of State. Our authority derives from the Civil Service Commissioners (NI) Order 1999. The current Regulations for the Civil Service Commissioners for Northern Ireland referred to as our general regulations came into operation on 1<sup>st</sup> February 2007.

Commissioners discharge their statutory responsibilities by:

- maintaining the principle of selection on merit on the basis of fair and open competition in relation to selection for appointment;
- making General Regulations which prescribe the circumstances in which the Merit Principle shall not apply;
- publishing and maintaining a Recruitment Code on the interpretation and application of the Merit Principle
- auditing recruitment policies and practices followed in making appointments to the Civil Service to establish whether the Recruitment Code is being observed; and
- requiring the publications of such information as they may specify relating to recruitment and to the use of permitted exceptions to the Merit principle.

Commissioners are supported by a small Secretariat team funded by the Northern Ireland Office headed by the Secretary to the Civil Service Commissioners and known as the Office of the Civil Service Commissioners (OCSC)

The Civil Service Commissioners for Northern Ireland are fully committed to promoting equality of opportunity and good relations in all their areas of work in line with Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

The Commissioners' primary role is to regulate appointments to the NICS to ensure these are made on merit and on the basis of fair and open competition. The

Commissioners' Recruitment Code provides advice and guidance on the application of the Merit Principle and is mandatory for everyone involved in open recruitment to the NICS. Commissioners firmly believe that adhering to the Recruitment Code will ensure appointments to the NICS are made on merit on the basis of fair and open competition and will help promote an effective Civil Service which reflects the diversity of Northern Ireland society and promotes equality and good relations.

Appointments to the NICS must be made in line with the expectations set out in the Commissioners' Recruitment Code. Commissioners have a duty to audit NICS Recruitment policies and practices followed in making appointments to the NICS to establish whether the Recruitment Code is being observed. Commissioners are committed to continuing to work in close partnership with all key stakeholders to uphold the Merit principle and promote public confidence in NICS recruitment.

Commissioners made two amendments to their Recruitment Code in July and December 2016 to clarify Commissioners' guidance on the Ministerial role in the process for appointments to the Senior Civil Service and to update the Chair's Foreword to provide clarity on the extent of the Commissioners' statutory role. A Section 75 screening was performed for both amendments and concluded that the amendment would have no differential impact on any of the Section 75 categories and the change was "screened out".

The Commissioners' 2016/17 Business Plan includes an objective to fulfil all statutory equality responsibilities and encourage the NICS to promote diversity, equality and good relations via recruitment process.

Job descriptions and performance plans for the Commissioners' staff reflect their contributions to the discharge of the Section 75 statutory duties and implementation of the Equality Scheme, where relevant. Targets relating to equality duties and responsibilities are included in forward job plans which are reviewed bi-annually. Staff also identify training needs aimed at raising their awareness of the statutory duties and attend seminars, as appropriate, to ensure they are informed about any developments in relation to Section 75 Groups. In March 2017 Disability Action were invited to present an awareness session to Commissioners and the Secretariat. This reflected the Commissioners' plan to remain informed about diversity issues and complemented the information and awareness training presented to Commissioners and Secretariat in April 2016 by ECNI.

The effective discharge of Section 75 statutory duties was appraised in the annual performance reviews of Commissioners and the Secretariat staff.

Commissioners are fully committed to promoting equality of opportunity and good relations and have demonstrated this commitment this year through engagement, outreach and training.

The principles of diversity, inclusivity and equality of opportunity are central to the Merit Principle and are indeed embedded within the Commissioners' Recruitment Principles. Commissioners believe that these principles should be embraced fully during recruitment processes in order to achieve an effective civil service that reflects the diversity of Northern Ireland society. This year the Office of the Civil Service Commissioners met the NICS Disability Working Group, to explore the barriers to

recruitment faced by people with a disability and understand Commissioners' experience of disabled candidates going through recruitment competitions. It is hoped that there will be further engagement with this group and other interested parties. Commissioners welcome the commitment to raising awareness and seeking to address diversity issues at the most senior level in the NICS, as evidenced by setting up this working group and by the appointment of a second diversity champion in Noel Lavery.

The Commissioners' Chairperson and the Secretary met with the Chief Executive, Chief Commissioner, from the NI Human Rights Commission (NIHRC) to discuss NIHRC plans to: continue to embed human rights throughout the government/public sector in NI; further develop the "transitional justice" agenda in Northern Ireland; and the potential impact of 'Brexit' on both areas of work.

In exercising their commitment to furthering the equality and diversity agenda, Commissioners also met with the Commissioner for Older People and the former CEO of the Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities. The purpose of both meetings was to explore the particular challenges facing minority groups in recruitment processes and how the NICS could become an employer of choice for such groups.

A meeting with the Commissioner for Public Appointments highlighted the challenges still faced in the promotion of gender equality and resulted in a commitment to meet annually to consider areas of mutual interest and explore outreach opportunities.

Commissioners met with the Permanent Secretaries Group to discuss NICS recruitment issues and the Commissioners' role in safeguarding and promoting the Merit Principle.

The Civil Service Commissioners (NI) Order 1999 and the Commissioners' Recruitment Code require NICS Departments and Agencies to publish a wide range of information and statistical summaries regarding recruitment to the NICS. Amongst other things, Commissioners require the following information to be published:

- Statistical summaries, in a format which the Commissioners may specify, of all recruitment activity during the publication period, including analyses by all categories covered by Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998;
- Any actions or initiatives undertaken in the reporting year to attract candidates, and advance a recruitment- related agenda for diversity, inclusivity and equality of opportunity and which specifically target areas of under representation; and
- A report on the outcomes as a result of any such actions or initiatives

During 2016/17 Commissioners have continued to engage with the NICS in relation to the review by Commissioners, of the recruitment related information and data gathered and analysed by the NICS. This has led to:

- further improvements to the clarity, significance and breadth of information reported in the statistical analysis of NICS recruitment competitions produced annually by NISRA; and
- the development of increased statistical analysis and reporting of Department led competition data; and
- better corporate oversight in relation to recruitment related Departmental compliance statements, with the introduction of Permanent Secretary Recruitment Related Assurance Statements.

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Commissioners continue to engage with the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) in relation to the statistical information that they produce as this is important independent analysis that is used to inform the Commissioners ongoing discussions with the NICS in relation to recruitment.

Commissioners welcome the NICS Work experience programme for people with disabilities which launched in April 2016. Commissioners will continue to encourage the NICS in their development of this initiative and seek updates in relation to the progress of the work experience programme.

Commissioners continue to honour their commitments in their Disability Action Plan which sets out measureable actions to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people and encourage participation by disabled people in public life.

Commissioners conducted their statutory five year review of their Equality Scheme in December 2016. It was found that very minor changes were required. A Section 75 screening was performed and concluded that the amendments made would have no differential impact on any of the Section 75 categories and the changes were “screened out”.

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- 2 Please provide **examples** of outcomes and/or the impact of **equality action plans/** measures in 2016-17 (*or append the plan with progress/examples identified*).

Appended at the end of this Progress Report.

PART A

**3** Has the **application of the Equality Scheme** commitments resulted in any **changes** to policy, practice, procedures and/or service delivery areas during the 2016-17 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

Yes                       No (go to Q.4)                       Not applicable (go to Q.4)

Please provide any details and examples:

**3a** With regard to the change(s) made to policies, practices or procedures and/or service delivery areas, what **difference was made, or will be made, for individuals**, i.e. the impact on those according to Section 75 category?

Please provide any details and examples:

**3b** What aspect of the Equality Scheme prompted or led to the change(s)? *(tick all that apply)*

- As a result of the organisation's screening of a policy *(please give details):*
  
- As a result of what was identified through the EQIA and consultation exercise *(please give details):*
  
- As a result of analysis from monitoring the impact *(please give details):*
  
- As a result of changes to access to information and services *(please specify and give details):*
  
- Other *(please specify and give details):*

## Section 2: Progress on Equality Scheme commitments and action plans/measures

### Arrangements for assessing compliance (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 2)

4 Were the Section 75 statutory duties integrated within job descriptions during the 2016-17 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

- Yes, organisation wide
- Yes, some departments/jobs
- No, this is not an Equality Scheme commitment
- No, this is scheduled for later in the Equality Scheme, or has already been done
- Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

All job descriptions for relevant staff reference the requirement to comply with Section 75 statutory duties.

5 Were the Section 75 statutory duties integrated within performance plans during the 2016-17 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

- Yes, organisation wide
- Yes, some departments/jobs
- No, this is not an Equality Scheme commitment
- No, this is scheduled for later in the Equality Scheme, or has already been done
- Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

Section 75 statutory duties were integrated into the personal performance agreements of relevant staff.

In the 2016-17 reporting period were **objectives/ targets/ performance measures** relating to the Section 75 statutory duties **integrated** into corporate plans, strategic planning and/or operational business plans? *(tick all that apply)*

- Yes, through the work to prepare or develop the new corporate plan
- Yes, through organisation wide annual business planning

PART A

- Yes, in some departments/jobs
- No, these are already mainstreamed through the organisation's ongoing corporate plan
- No, the organisation's planning cycle does not coincide with this 2015-16 report
- Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

**Equality action plans/measures**

**7** Within the 2016-17 reporting period, please indicate the **number** of:

Actions completed:	6	Actions ongoing:	2	Actions to commence:	1
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Please provide any details and examples (*in addition to question 2*):

Commissioners have developed an Equality Scheme and Action Plan which is reviewed at least annually. An annual progress report is submitted each year and training needs are assessed annually.

**8** Please give details of changes or amendments made to the equality action plan/measures during the 2016-17 reporting period (*points not identified in an appended plan*):

The plan was reviewed and no amendments were considered necessary.

**9** In reviewing progress on the equality action plan/action measures during the 2016-17 reporting period, the following have been identified: (*tick all that apply*)

- Continuing action(s), to progress the next stage addressing the known inequality
- Action(s) to address the known inequality in a different way
- Action(s) to address newly identified inequalities/recently prioritised inequalities
- Measures to address a prioritised inequality have been completed

**Arrangements for consulting (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 3)**

**10** Following the initial notification of consultations, a targeted approach was taken – and consultation with those for whom the issue was of particular relevance: (*tick one box only*)

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- All the time                       Sometimes                       Never

There were no consultations undertaken this year.

- 11** Please provide any **details and examples of good practice** in consultation during the 2016-17 reporting period, on matters relevant (e.g. the development of a policy that has been screened in) to the need to promote equality of opportunity and/or the desirability of promoting good relations:

There were no consultations undertaken this year.

- 12** In the 2016-17 reporting period, given the consultation methods offered, which consultation methods were **most frequently used by consultees**: *(tick all that apply)*

- Face to face meetings
- Focus groups
- Written documents with the opportunity to comment in writing
- Questionnaires
- Information/notification by email with an opportunity to opt in/out of the consultation
- Internet discussions
- Telephone consultations
- Other *(please specify)*:

Please provide any details or examples of the uptake of these methods of consultation in relation to the consultees' membership of particular Section 75 categories:

There were no consultations undertaken this year.

- 13** Were any awareness-raising activities for consultees undertaken, on the commitments in the Equality Scheme, during the 2016-17 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

- Yes                       No                       Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

There were no consultations undertaken this year.

- 14** Was the consultation list reviewed during the 2016-17 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

PART A

Yes       No       Not applicable – no commitment to review

The consultation list was reviewed and updated. Advice from the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland is that the consultation list should include those groups whose remit is relevant to the Commissioners' role and who might be impacted by new policies developed by the Commissioners. In light of this, some organisations were deleted from the list.

**Arrangements for assessing and consulting on the likely impact of policies (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 4)**

[<http://www.nicscommissioners.org/equality-scheme.htm>]

**15** Please provide the **number** of policies screened during the year (*as recorded in screening reports*):

2
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**16** Please provide the **number of assessments** that were consulted upon during 2016-17:

0	Policy consultations conducted with <b>screening</b> assessment presented.
0	Policy consultations conducted <b>with an equality impact assessment (EQIA)</b> presented.
0	Consultations for an <b>EQIA</b> alone.

**17** Please provide details of the **main consultations** conducted on an assessment (as described above) or other matters relevant to the Section 75 duties:

N/A

**18** Were any screening decisions (or equivalent initial assessments of relevance) reviewed following concerns raised by consultees? (*tick one box only*)

Yes       No concerns were raised       No       Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

**Arrangements for publishing the results of assessments (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 4)**

**19** Following decisions on a policy, were the results of any EQIAs published during the 2016-17 reporting period? (*tick one box only*)



Model Equality Scheme) undertaken during 2016-17, and the extent to which they met the training objectives in the Equality Scheme.

In March 2017 Disability Action were invited to present an awareness session to Commissioners and the Secretariat. This reflected the Commissioners' plan to remain informed about diversity issues and complemented the information and awareness training presented to Commissioners and Secretariat in April 2016 by ECNI.

This updated and refreshed the knowledge and understanding of Equality & Diversity issues for Commissioners and the Secretariat. This training also refreshed Commissioners' and Secretariat staffs' awareness of the provisions of Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, our equality scheme commitments and the particular issues likely to affect people across the range of Section 75 categories.

The training that has been delivered is appropriate and proportionate given the nature of the work performed by the Office of the Civil Service Commissioners and the size of our operation (3 Commissioners, 6 staff - 1 full-time, 5 part-time).

- 25** Please provide any examples of relevant training shown to have worked well, in that participants have achieved the necessary skills and knowledge to achieve the stated objectives:

Feedback from staff and Commissioners in relation to the Equality Commission training delivered on 20 April 2016 and the training provided by Disability Action in March 2017 suggested that the participants achieved a stronger awareness of diversity issues and the importance of the role of the Office of the Civil Service Commissioners in promoting the principles of equality of opportunity and equality of treatment in relation to the promotion of the application of the Merit Principle in recruitment to the NICS.

#### **Public Access to Information and Services (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 6)**

- 26** Please list **any examples** of where monitoring during 2016-17, across all functions, has resulted in action and improvement in relation **to access to information and services**:

There has been no change to how we make information, including information in relation to the role and work of the Commissioners, available to the public. On request, information will continue to be made available in alternative formats. We will aim to do this within 10 working days. If we envisage any delay in meeting the request within this timescale, we will advise the member of the public of the reason and the timescale.

**Complaints (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 8)**

**27** How many complaints **in relation to the Equality Scheme** have been received during 2016-17?

Insert number here:

0
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Please provide any details of each complaint raised and outcome:

**Section 3: Looking Forward**

**28** Please indicate when the Equality Scheme is due for review:

2022

**29** Are there areas of the Equality Scheme arrangements (screening/consultation/training) your organisation anticipates will be focused upon in the next reporting period? *(please provide details)*

Commissioners plan to arrange a follow-up to the training provided in April and March, to explore issues of particular interest in more depth and to build on a meeting with the ECNI Chief Commissioner in March 2017 by arranging more regular engagement to discuss areas of mutual issues in relation to NICS recruitment policies and practices.

**30** In relation to the advice and services that the Commission offers, what **equality and good relations priorities** are anticipated over the next (2017-18) reporting period? *(please tick any that apply)*

- Employment
- Goods, facilities and services
- Legislative changes
- Organisational changes/ new functions
- Nothing specific, more of the same
- Other (please state):

**PART B - Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (as amended) and Disability Action Plans**

**1. Number of action measures for this reporting period that have been:**

4

Fully achieved

Partially achieved

Not achieved

**2. Please outline below details 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>i</sup>	Outcomes / Impact <sup>ii</sup>
National <sup>iii</sup>			
Regional <sup>iv</sup>	Commissioners' Recruitment Code to clearly encourage the NICS to consider how best to facilitate disabled people to compete on merit in fair and open competition with others.	Commissioners have included a statement reflecting their commitment to this expectation in the Recruitment Code. All NICS Departments and Agencies are required to adhere to the Code.	NICS and general public are aware of the Commissioners' expectation in relation to facilitating disabled people to compete on merit.

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		<p>Commissioners have regular dialogue with senior NICS representatives and use their influence to encourage and support employment of people with disabilities and seek regular feedback on new initiatives within the NICS. This year Commissioners met with the NICS Disability Working Group to explore barriers to recruitment faced by disabled people and how to mitigate them.</p> <p>Commissioners require the NICS, to publish statistical summaries, in a format which the Commissioners may specify, of all recruitment activity during the publication period, including analyses by all categories covered by Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and discuss trends, actions or</p>	<p>The NICS is aware that Commissioners are committed to monitoring data relating to of all S75 Groups, including people with disabilities. The NICS publish An annual report titled “Recruitment to the NICS – Annual Report” that contains the information that Commissioners require to be published.</p>
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PART B

	<p>Ensure that training is provided on disability duties to all staff and Commissioners.</p> <p>Ensure specialist training is provided for Commissioners and Secretariat staff involved in recruitment and selection panels.</p> <p>Ensure the Commissioners' sponsor department encourages applications from all Section 75 groups, including peoples with disabilities.</p>	<p>initiatives with NICS.</p> <p>The need for refresher training is reviewed annually.</p> <p>All Commissioners and relevant staff attend regular training on recruitment processes and practices within the NICS. Commissioners will use their influence with the NICS to ensure that diversity considerations, including the needs of disabled people, are properly considered by recruitment panels.</p> <p>This is raised with the NIO sponsor unit when considering arrangements for competitions to appoint new Commissioners.</p>	<p>Commissioners and the Secretariat have maintained and enhanced their knowledge and understanding of disability duties .</p> <p>Commissioners and staff enhance their knowledge and understanding of various strands and elements of the recruitment and selection processes and, in particular, emerging legislative changes and relevant case law.</p> <p>This was taken into account when developing job specifications and advertising for future replacement Commissioners.</p>
Local <sup>v</sup>			

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

	Training Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
1	ECNI were invited to present an awareness session to Commissioners and Secretariat in April 2016 and Disability Action were invited to do the same in March 2017	Update on current Equality/Disability Policy and Law/Case studies	Inform Commissioners and Secretariat of current thinking which in turn will influence stakeholders in the NICS.
2			

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	None this year.		
2			

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

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	Encourage others Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
1	Commissioners engage regularly with NICS Permanent Secretaries and senior NICS officials where equality and diversity are discussed.	Face to face discussions.	NICS is aware of the importance Commissioners attached to the consideration of equality and diversity, and meeting the needs of people with disabilities.
2			

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	None at this time.		
2			

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

	Action Measures partly achieved	Milestonesvi / Outputs	Outcomes/Impacts	Reasons not fully achieved
1	N/A			

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2				

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

	Action Measures not met	Reasons
1	N/A	
2		

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 Secretariat , on behalf of Commissioners, monitor the Disability Action Plan and review and report at least annually. Any issues arising are presented to Commissioners for discussion at their business meetings, as appropriate.

(b) Quantitative

The Secretariat , on behalf of Commissioners, monitor the Disability Action Plan and review and report at least annually. Any issues arising are presented to Commissioners for discussion at their business meetings, as appropriate.

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

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- 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?

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 organisation's annual review of the plan? If so, please outline proposed changes?

No

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<sup>i</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.

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

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

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

<sup>vi</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.

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## CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSIONERS' EQUALITY SCHEME ACTION PLAN

<b>THEME</b>	<b>ACTION MEASURE</b>	<b>PERFORMANCE INDICATOR</b>	<b>IMPACT</b>	<b>WHEN</b>	<b>OUTCOME</b>	<b>CURRENT POSITION</b>
Equality duty	Development of an Equality Scheme and Action Plan.	Publication of Scheme and Action Plan.	Commissioners demonstrate public commitment to uphold their equality duties and consider stakeholder views.	1 May 2012. 5 year review published January 2017	Commissioners' commitments to Equality are implemented.	Current Equality Scheme is in place.
Implementation	Monitor Equality Action Plan.	Regular monitoring of progress against the Equality Action Plan and Disability Action Plan.	Commissioners meet their commitments set out in the Equality Scheme and the Section 75 duties.	[at least annually]	Increased awareness of Commissioners commitment to Equality.	Reviews completed as at 31 August 2015 and 8 June 2016.

## PART B

Reporting	Submit a Section 75 Annual Progress Report.	Submission of Annual Progress Report to ECNI.	Ensures delivery of actions and commitments set out in the Commissioners Equality Action Plan and Disability Action Plan and the promotion of Section 75 duties.	By 31 August each year.	Increased public awareness of Commissioners commitment to Equality.	2015/16 report submitted in July 2016
Review	Undertake a 5-year review of the Equality Scheme.	Conduct a 5-year review of the Commissioners' Equality Scheme.	Commissioners ensure the commitments set out in the Equality Scheme and the Section 75 duties are relevant and effective.	2017	Enhanced effectiveness of the Equality Scheme.	Completed December 2016 And published in January 2017
Consultation	Review and update consultation list.	Up to date list of consultees.	Effective consultation process.	May 2012	Awareness of Commissioners commitment regulatory role and their commitments to Section 75 responsibilities.	Reviewed and updated November 2016

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<p>Screening</p>	<p>Screen all new policies and revisions to existing policies and conduct EQIAs as required.</p>	<p>All policies screened and EQIAs undertaken if necessary.</p>	<p>Equality considerations and potential impact on Section 75 groups identified and addressed, as necessary, during the development of all policies.</p>	<p>Ongoing, as and when new policies are developed or existing policies are revised.</p>	<p>Any adverse impact negated / addressed in relation to all policies.</p>	<p>All new and revised policies screened, as necessary. August 2016 and December 2016 amendments to the Recruitment Code, screened.</p>
<p>Training</p>	<p>Undertake relevant training in equality &amp; diversity and disability awareness issues for all staff across all Section 75 groups.</p>	<p>Commissioners and the Secretariat to understand and are aware of equality &amp; diversity and disability duties across all Section 75 groups</p>	<p>Increased awareness of disability duties and their importance in terms of the Commissioners' regulatory role.</p>	<p>Equality training needs assessed annually (December)</p>	<p>Increased awareness of equality and disability duties.</p>	<p>Awareness and update session provided to Commissioners and staff April 2016, further session under consideration for autumn 2017.</p>

PART B

Communication	Provide relevant information in an accessible format for people with sensory impairment (e.g. large print, Braille or audio CD).	Documents available in accessible format.  Accessible website.	Improved access to information and increased awareness of Commissioners' regulatory role.	Ongoing.	Documents available from the website and in accessible format on request.	Ongoing
Influence	Commissioners to use their influence with NICS, through for example the use of audit, to promote equality of opportunity for Section 75 groups throughout the selection and recruitment process as an integral component of the Merit Principle.	Correspondence with NICS highlights equality of opportunity issues.	Promotion of equality of opportunity in terms of NICS recruitment and selection processes.	Ongoing.	Enhanced awareness of Section 75 duties during NICS recruitment and selection process.	Ongoing