



**SECTION 75, THE NORTHERN
IRELAND ACT 1998
(THE EQUALITY DUTIES)**

**SOUTHERN EDUCATION AND LIBRARY
BOARD**

**ANNUAL REPORT:
1 April 2001 – 31 March 2002**

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1 INTRODUCTION

Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 (the 'Act') requires public authorities to promote equality of opportunity and good relations. The Southern Education and Library Board is fully committed to the fulfilment of the Section 75 obligations. The Board's Equality Scheme was approved on 15 March 2001. This Annual Report that records the activities undertaken by the Board in furtherance of its equality obligations, covers the period 1 April 2001 to 31 March 2002. The Report will be made available to consultees and is published on its website at www.selb.org.

2 STRATEGIC IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SECTION 75 EQUALITY DUTIES

The Board's Corporate Plan states:

"In developing its Corporate Plan the board recognises the importance of declaring its corporate values". The corporate values it believes in include:

"Exercising integrity, objectivity, accountability, impartiality and promoting equal opportunity for all".

To ensure a corporate and integrated/partnership approach, the following arrangements have operated during the year under review:

- Objectives and targets relating to the statutory duties are being mainstreamed into the Corporate and Operational Plan and Service Development Plans;
- Following approval of its Equality Scheme an Action Plan for 2001/2002 was agreed by the Board's Services Committee in April 2001;
- Progress reports on the implementation of the Equality Scheme are provided to the Board;
- Equality issues are considered by the Senior Management Team for all papers going to the Board;
- The Board's multi-disciplinary Statutory Duty Co-ordinating Group met on five occasions;
- Implementation of the Equality Scheme is a standard item of business on the agenda for the Chief Administrative Officers' Inter-Board monthly meetings. Reports, both written and

verbal, are received from the Inter-Board Statutory Duty Co-ordinating Group;

- The Staff Commission has co-ordinated work on the implementation of the Equality Schemes on an Inter-Board basis and/or Department of Education/Non Departmental Public Body (DE/NDPB) basis;
- The Inter-Board/Staff Commission Statutory Duty Co-ordinating Group met on eight occasions;
- The Department of Education set up and chairs the DE/NDPB Equality Liaison Committee at which the Board and all of the DE's other NDPB's together with the Departments for Employment and Learning, and Culture, Arts and Leisure, attend. The Liaison Group met on a quarterly basis.

3. SCREENING OF POLICIES

The summary action plan included in the Board's Equality Scheme provided that in Year 1 the following actions would take place:

- Screening of all existing policies; and
- submission to the Equality Commission of a Report on the Screening Exercise.

The Board adopted a two-stage approach to the screening process. Stage 1 of the process commenced in September 2000 when a comprehensive list of the Board's policies was issued to those consultees identified in Appendix B of the Board's Equality Scheme. Pro forma documentation was prepared and issued to consultees to facilitate feedback at this stage of the screening process.

During January/February 2001 the Board screened its policies using the criteria specified in the Equality Commission's Guide to the Statutory Duties.

The five Boards compared the outcome of their screening exercise and taking account of the feedback from consultees; they concluded that a co-ordinated joint approach should be maintained. A report on the outcome of the screening exercise was compiled on an Inter-Board basis. The Report 'Consultation on the Screening of Policies – June 2001' outlined the policy area, included feedback on the screening exercise, recorded the initial decisions and proposed a timetable for equality impact assessments.

In the prioritisation of policies for EQIA, account was taken of the timetable established by other relevant statutory bodies in relation to common functions. The Boards agreed to co-join¹ and/or co-operate² with the Department of Education and others on a number of EQIAs. This approach was universally welcomed.

Stage 2 of the screening process was initiated in May/June 2001 with the issue of the consultation reports. This report was advertised in the press and the report was circulated to all of the consultees listed in the Board's Equality Scheme. Consultation events were organised on a Staff Commission/Inter-Board basis, with the Staff Commission acting as consultation co-ordinator for all regional meetings. To facilitate more focused feedback in a number of key policy areas, regional meetings were organised in partnership with:

- Age Sector Reference Group;
- Carers National Association Northern Ireland;
- Coalition on Sexual Orientation;
- Disability Action;
- Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities;
- Traveller Movement Northern Ireland
- Women's Support Network;
- Youthnet.

A consultation meeting was also held with parents of children from the Chinese community who had indicated that they could have difficulty contributing at a public meeting. Information was translated for and during the consultation event.

Participants were advised in advance of all the consultation meetings that requests for assistance to ensure full participation, including any communication, transport or access needs, would be considered. All requests for assistance were met. These included:

- provision of transport;
- translation of information;

¹ The term 'co-join' means that the DE and the Boards will conduct EQIAs on a partnership basis for those policies that exist at both strategic and operational levels and where equality issues have emerged at both of these levels. On completion of the various elements of the EQIA the decision-making authority will rest with the DE and/or the Boards as per their area of responsibility.

² The term 'co-operate' means that Boards will provide information and support to the DE on the conduct of EQIAs. On completion of the EQIA, the decision-making responsibility will remain with the DE.

- information being made available in an alternative format (braille);
- dietary requirements;
- provision of a crèche;
- interpreter service;
- signer (BSL – British Sign Language).

Trade Unions were invited to respond through the negotiating machinery. Separate meetings were held with NIPSA and UNISON.

Local consultation meetings were held in Armagh, Craigavon and Newry on 25, 26 & 27 June 2001 respectively; two other meetings were held in Armagh on 3 August 2001 and in Craigavon on 3 September 2001.

As with Stage 1 of the exercise, it was agreed that all feedback, written and verbal, at local and/or regional levels, would be shared and taken into account by each of the Boards and the Staff Commission in finalising their decisions on the programme(s) and timetable for equality impact assessments. Written submissions were received from:

- Association for Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus;
- Chinese Welfare Association;
- Disability Action;
- Hospital Road Youth club;
- MENCAP;
- Multi Cultural Resource Centre;
- NIPPA – The Early Years Organisation;
- Northern Ireland Public Service Alliance;
- Smart Attack Child Care;
- Traveller Movement Northern Ireland.

As a result of the consultation exercise, a number of additional policies were earmarked for EQIA and the programme for EQIA was accelerated in a number of policy areas. A Report on the Screening of Policies was published and issued to consultees in December 2001. This Report summarises the issues raised during the consultation process and outlines the decisions taken by the five Boards/Staff Commission following consideration of these issues.

The Report was launched by Martin McGuinness, Minister for Education and the Chief Executives of the five Education and Library Boards and the Staff Commission on 14 February 2002. Speaking as Chair of the Association of Chief Executives and on behalf of the five Boards and the Staff Commission, the Western Board's Chief Executive, Joe Martin, said "*I am delighted that we have worked together with the Department as an education community to build and sustain partnership arrangements with the community and voluntary sectors and the trade unions.*"

4. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EQIA)

Following consideration of the issues raised during the Stage 2 consultation process and the DE's decision to re-examine those policies that had not been scheduled for EQIA it emerged that nine policies were earmarked for EQIA during Year 1. However, the Boards' involvement was mainly in relation to the following three policies:

Electronic Libraries for Northern Ireland (ELFNI)

The Equality Schemes of each of the Boards indicated that during the 12 months following the commencement of the Scheme, a new policy known as 'Electronic Libraries for Northern Ireland' would require to be impact assessed. The aim of the ELFNI project is to deliver socially inclusive, cost effective, efficient and modern public library and information services to the Northern Ireland community.

To deliver these services Boards will provide, by way of a partnership arrangement with the private sector (PFI), PCs with access to electronic information, including the World Wide Web, for public use in all branch libraries. Also provided will be a computerised library management system to operate in all libraries, an electronic gateway to a wide range of quality assured information sources and various services, e.g. fax and photocopying for public use.

The arrangements for preparing and consulting on the Equality Impact Assessment were co-ordinated, on behalf of the five Boards, by the Western Board's Head of Libraries and Information. A detailed report explaining the aims and objectives of the ELFNI policy was published on 1 June 2001. This report was advertised in the press and copies were distributed to all of the consultees listed in each Board's Equality Scheme and copies were also available from each public library in Northern Ireland. In addition a series of consultation meetings for the general public was held at suitable venues in each Board's area.

Consultees welcomed the proposed access to electronic information that ELFNI will provide and the majority of those who responded indicated that they believe the project will promote equality of opportunity in respect of library use. However the trade unions expressed concerns about the use of PFI as a means of delivering the policy. Initial concerns in respect of some 60 library staff across the five Boards who could have been affected by proposals to rationalise the existing arrangements for some services were resolved before implementation of the project.

The final report on the outcomes of the ELFNI Equality Impact Assessment was published in December 2001. The availability of the Report was advertised in the press and the results were posted on each Board's website.

The EQIA, which was listed for Year 1, has been completed.

Code of Employment and Promotion Procedures

To pave the way for the EQIA of the Staff Commission's Code of Employment and Promotion Procedures and the Inter-Board Internal Trawl, the Commission established a Working Group to review the existing Code and the Internal Trawl arrangements. The Working Group comprised representatives of the Staff Commission, the Education and Library Boards, recognised trade unions and the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland.

The five Boards have agreed to co-join with the Staff Commission in the conduct of the EQIA, which will incorporate an impact assessment of the Inter-Board internal trawl arrangements. The project team has been appointed and provided with training in the EQIA process. The EQIA, which is listed for Year 2, is at Step 1 of the process.

Review of Public Procurement

The five Boards and the Staff Commission agreed to co-operate with the Department of Finance & Personnel's EQIA of the public procurement policy. In September 2001, the Department of Finance & Personnel issued a consultation document on proposals contained in the 'Review of Public Procurement'. A joint Inter-Board commentary on the proposals was submitted to the Department in December 2001.

The Equality Commission has produced "Practical Guidance on Equality Impact Assessments". The Guidance identifies seven

separate elements, which must form part of an assessment. Each of the elements and the EQIA Timetable Reporting Matrix is contained at Appendix B.

5. TRAINING PROVISION

The summary action plan included in the Board's Equality Scheme provided that in Year 1 a training programme would commence. In September the Services Committee of the Board approved a Training Strategy, a copy of which is contained at Appendix C.

Equality Awareness

In July 2001, the Statutory Duty Co-ordinating Group established an Inter-Board/Staff Commission group to design, pilot and produce materials to facilitate the implementation of equality awareness training to all staff and members. John Kremer, Reader in Psychology, Queens University and Equality Consultant, was invited to facilitate the pilot training to make the process more objective. Two pre-meetings were held with John Kremer to review and discuss the training materials.

The aim of the training is to raise awareness of current anti discrimination legislation, with an emphasis on Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and its implications for the Boards/Staff Commission. Four pilot training sessions took place during October 2001 with 35-40 participants attending each session. The feedback overall was very positive with most participants indicating that the aim of the training had been '*very well/well met*' (94%).

Virtually all of the comments made were positive in terms of the materials, course content, methodology and presentation of materials. Participants welcomed the balance struck between presentation of information and practical exercises. A training plan has been developed which seeks to ensure that this training is rolled out to staff over the next eighteen months. To date, such training has been provided to 250 staff. The feedback overall has been very positive with 98% of the participants indicating that the aim of the training had been '*very well/well met*'.

Equality awareness training for Board Members was held at Board Headquarters on 20 December 2001.

In addition, given the pivotal role of the Joint Negotiating Council (JNC) in the formulation and review of employment policies, the Staff commission organised an equality awareness training day on 3 December 2001 for Council members. The aim of the training was to raise awareness of current anti

discrimination legislation with an emphasis on Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and the implications for the JNC. As a result of the training, the JNC is currently drafting an Equality Action Plan. It is also noteworthy that the implementation of the Board's Equality Scheme is a standard item of business on the agenda for all Executive Committee and Joint Negotiating Council meetings.

A copy of the Board's Equality Awareness Training Programme for staff is contained at Appendix C.

Screening of Policies

A series of inter-Board Workshops aimed at providing practical guidance on the screening of policies was designed and organised by the Staff Commission. Board officers involved in the screening of policies had the opportunity to attend. Pro forma documentation prepared to facilitate the screening of policies was tested during the practical training sessions and through an Inter-Board pilot exercise on the 'Home to School Transport' policy. An evaluation of this pilot exercise concluded that the pro forma document was a useful aid to the screening process.

Equality Impact Assessment

The Statutory Duty Unit of OFMDFM made arrangements with the Government Purchasing Agency for a call-off contract for consultants to provide training in respect of a range of equality training including Equality Impact Assessments.

Given the DE's/NDPBs' decision to co-join or co-operate, as appropriate, in conducting EQIAs, it was agreed that training linked to each EQIA be conducted on an integrated basis under the auspices of the Department of Education. Board officers involved in the following EQIAs have participated in such training:

- Promotion of Personal & Social Development of Young People;
- Promotion of Inclusion of Children with Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Schools and Classes;
- Selective Structure of Post-Primary Education: Transfer Procedure Tests;
- English as an Additional Language.

In addition, the Staff Commission provided EQIA training for:

- Board officers involved in an Inter-Board Best Value Review in Special Education which will incorporate an EQIA; and
- Board officers involved in the EQIA of the Code of Employment and Promotion Procedures and the Internal Trawl.

In the light of the Boards'/Staff Commission's experience of the EQIA "Electronic Libraries for Northern Ireland", and to achieve a consistency of approach to the conduct of EQIAs, the Statutory Duty Co-ordinating Group developed a workbook to assist with the process.

The use of the workbook was tested at the EQIA training linked to the Best Value review in Special Education and it was found to be beneficial in obtaining a focused and consistent approach to impact assessments. The workbook aims to complement the Equality Commission's "Practical Guidance on Equality Impact Assessment". At the year's end the workbook "A Recommended Approach to Conducting an EQIA" was being produced for issue to all those involved within the education community, in EQIAs.

Consultation Skills

A workshop on Consultation Skills was organised by the EQIA Project Team for Board officers involved in the consultation on the EQIA "Electronic Libraries for Northern Ireland".

The Boards/Staff Commission are currently working in partnership with Focus Consultancy Service on the design of a consultation skills training package. The learning outcomes have been specified as:

- to have knowledge and understanding of good practice in the consultation process;
- to be able to identify and meet specific needs;
- to have increased awareness of issues affecting target groups;
- to be aware of necessary personal attributes to enable effective consultation;
- the ability to demonstrate a practical approach to the consultation process.

Work on the package is at an advanced stage. The objective is to pilot the programme in May/June 2002 and roll out training thereafter to Board officers involved in consultation events.

6. COMMUNICATION

In order to demonstrate fully the Board's public commitment to the promotion of equality of opportunity and good relations, the Chief Executive jointly chaired the Youthnet Regional Consultation event referred to at 3 above and participated in the public launch of the Boards'/Staff Commission's Report on the Screening of Policies. The Chief Executive, to demonstrate internally her commitment to the successful implementation of the Equality Scheme, has ensured that copies of the Equality Scheme have been made available to staff. In addition, by ensuring that the equality duties are a standard item on the agenda of the Senior Management Team and quarterly reports to the Board, she has ensured that the implementation of the Scheme has been put into effective and visible practice within the Board.

The Head of Corporate Services, as the Board Officer with operational responsibility for the implementation of the Scheme, has, through the Boards' Statutory Duty Co-ordinating Group, the DE/NDPB Liaison Group and the Association of Chief Administrative Officers, planned and monitored the implementation of the Scheme. In addition, the Head of Corporate Services participated in regional and local consultation events and introduced equality awareness training sessions for Board members and Board officers.

7. INFORMATION PROVISION

The summary action plan included in the Board's Equality Scheme provided that, in Year 1, "a review of arrangements for providing information to the public" would be conducted.

In its Equality Scheme, the Board gave a commitment to consider how best to communicate information to young people and those with learning difficulties. In February 2001, an inter-Board/Staff Commission Working Group was established to prepare guidance to meet this commitment. The purpose of the Working Group is to ensure that those who are affected by policy decisions and/or delivery of services can contribute to the decision making process.

As an initial step, and to assist in developing the guidance, a range of professionals working with various groups were invited to a conference on 12 June 2001 at which they submitted their

views on how to engage specific individuals and groups in consultation exercises and on how information should be made available to individuals and groups. As a result of this, the Working Group has identified and addressed communication, consultation and participation needs for:

- pupils in mainstream education;
- people who are deaf or have a hearing impairment;
- people who are blind or have a visual impairment;
- those who have a(n) :
 - moderate learning difficulty;
 - severe learning difficulty;
 - physical/medical condition;
 - communication difficulty;
 - specific learning difficulty e.g. Dyslexia;
 - emotional/behavioural difficulty and may require education otherwise than at school (EOTAS);
 - mental ill health difficulty;
 - dependant(s); and a
 - particular need because of their racial or ethnic origin.

At the year's end the guidance was due to be issued for formal consultation and was being used as a basis for the development of a consultation skills training package.

In terms of actual consultation events during the year, positive working relations were developed with community and voluntary sector organisations. This was primarily achieved through the organisation of partnership events and the joined-up approach adopted by the education community. The partnership events were organised at a time, venue and with arrangements which suited the consultees. Events were publicised by umbrella groups using leaflets designed by the Boards/Staff commission in consultation with them. An example of the leaflet titled "It's Good to Listen" is contained at Appendix 2 of the Report on Screening of Policies.

The benefit of such an approach was that the Boards/Staff Commission had the opportunity to reach out to a much wider constituency than the umbrella group and for consultees it saved time because they, at one meeting, were able to meet with all five Boards, the Staff Commission and the Department of Education who were invited to all regional events. Details of the

Groups represented at regional meetings are contained at Appendix 1 of the Report on Screening of Policies.

The consultees' appreciation of the approach adopted was demonstrated by their attendance at the subsequent launch of the Report on Screening of Policies. At the launch the Boards/Staff Commission re-affirmed their commitment to meet with the community/voluntary sector on an annual basis to review progress on the implementation of their Equality Scheme.

In accordance with the provisions of its Equality Scheme, a series of public consultation events were organised aimed at discussing and/or obtaining feedback on the screening of policies process. The response to such meetings was poor.

A number of specific initiatives have been implemented to improve accessibility to information. These include arrangements being put in place to ensure the accommodation of requests for:

- the provision of information on computer disc;
- the provision of information in Braille (a Braille printer has been installed at Newry Branch Library.
- the provision of information on audio cassette (An inter-Board/Staff Commission Service Level Agreement with Armagh Talking Newspaper in relation to obtaining the services of a reader to produce information on audio cassette has been drafted);
- arrangements are in place to have a textphone installed at Board Headquarters;
- the provision of translation/interpreter services. Links have been established with the Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities (NICEM) and Newham Language Shop to ensure requests can be dealt with promptly. A translation and interpreter service was provided by the SEELB's Home to School Liaison Officer at a consultation event organised to obtain the views of parents of children from the Chinese community on the Boards' Report on Screening of Policies;
- the Board entered into an inter-agency arrangement on a pilot basis for a period of one year, to provide Interpreter Services within the Southern Area for the Chinese and Asian Communities. The other statutory agencies involved are:

Southern Health & Social Services Board;

Craigavon and Banbridge Community Health & Social Services Trust;

Craigavon Area Hospital Group Trust;
Armagh & Dungannon Health & Social Services Trust;
Newry & Mourne Health & Social Services Trust; and
Social Security Agency.

Three Interpreters have now been employed and recently commenced work in the Southern Area – a full-time Chinese Interpreter, and two part-time Asian Interpreters. The Al Nur and Wah Hep community associations employ and supervise the Interpreters. The statutory agencies have provided funding for the first year after which the Interpreter Service will be reviewed.

The Interpreter Service was launched at the Multi-Cultural Health Fair hosted by Craigavon & Banbridge Community Health & Social Services Trust on 26 March 2001 at Craigavon Civic Centre. The Board's Team Leader for English As An Additional Language Service spoke at the launch about the Service and how she hoped it would enhance the Board's existing educational provision for both the Asian and Chinese communities.

- an Inter-Board review of the Boards' estates has commenced to establish a baseline position on the accessibility of premises.

8. DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

Data Sources

During the year the Boards/Staff Commission utilised the information compiled by the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency on the key sources of data within Northern Ireland Departments. Furthermore, the Department of Education's Statistics and Research Branch made input to the DE/ NDPB Liaison Group on the on-going programme of work on the provision of statistical information. This linked the Liaison Group to the Equality & Social Needs Research and Information Group (inter-Departmental Group) and ensured that NDPBs had an opportunity to contribute to the development of the cross-Departmental research strategy. This work is scheduled to be completed by June 2002.

The main data sources in the education sector are the Annual Schools Census and the Post Primary School Leavers Survey.

Boards contributed to the debate on the development of this database through the Liaison Group.

EQIA – Electronic Libraries

With regard to the EQIA of the policy “Electronic Libraries for Northern Ireland”, specific actions were identified to establish that the project is delivering the expected benefits and improving services for groups across the nine categories. The development of systems to monitor the impact of this service are as specified in the results of the Equality Impact Assessment. They include:

- The establishment of an Intelligent Customer Unit that will act as the agent of the Contract Executive in managing the contract. The Unit will be responsible for developing and operating appropriate systems and procedures to monitor impact and to recommend service improvements;
- The ELFNI Benefits Realisation Plan, which includes a section on equality, sets out the benefits of the project and how and when these will be measured. The Contract Executive will receive regular updates on the achievement of benefits from the Intelligent Customer Unit;
- The project itself will provide much improved access to information on library usage and library users through the management information systems, which will provide for the first time the means of obtaining consistent information across all five Boards and the opportunity to hold data which is currently not provided. The need to monitor equality issues will inform the consideration of what data will be held;
- The Boards already carry out or participate in a range of customer surveys, and these will be further developed in the light of equality issues. Boards will request questions on equality issues to be included in the national Public Library User Surveys.

Best Value Fundamental Review– Special Educational Needs

In addition, the Central Management Support Unit for the five Boards, which has responsibility for undertaking Best Value Fundamental Reviews, has undertaken to incorporate within such reviews an equality impact assessment. A Best Value Review centres around a culture of continuous improvement with a major focus on customers and quality. In the context of the on-going Best Value Review in Special Education, efforts have been made to capture qualitative data on the experiences

of various groups of people with regard to special educational needs. This has included:

- Meeting with voluntary sector organisations e.g. Cedar Foundation and Downs Syndrome Association;
- Focus group meetings organised under the auspices of Cedar Foundation with children (aged 12-17 years). The children who were representative of schools and Boards gave their views on a range of different aspects of their education including classroom assistants, transport, choice of subjects and access for children with disabilities;
- Focus group meetings with parents facilitated through voluntary organisations and/or school Principals.

In addition, statistical data is being collected on the number of statutory assessments and annual reviews, school population etc; enrolment figures for special schools and units, and the number of statemented children in mainstream education. Some trend information is available in relation to the data collected to date in some of these areas.

Monitoring of Employment Policies

An Inter-Board/Staff Commission sub-group was established by the Statutory Duty Co-ordinating Group to review the collection of monitoring data to facilitate the review and/or EQIA of employment policies. An interim report, which includes recommendations for a more comprehensive and uniform Equal Opportunities Monitoring form has been produced. At the year's end this report was being considered by the Statutory Duty Co-ordinating Group.

EQIA – Youth Service Promotion of Personal and Social Development of Young People through Leisure Activities

The five Boards are currently compiling information on an agreed template for submission to the Youth Council for Northern Ireland.

9. COMPLAINTS

The Board, as part of its Service Charter, has a Complaints Procedure. It has been decided that this procedure will be used to investigate complaints arising from a failure to comply with the Board's Equality Scheme. No complaints were received during the period under review.

10 TIMETABLE

The Equality Scheme has, at paragraph 10, a summary action plan and timetable, the action plan is included below. Progress is recorded on each item. Further information on the implementation of the Scheme is contained earlier in the report at the sections highlighted.

Year 1

Action Plan

Awareness Seminars for Staff

Progress to Date

Materials developed and piloted in October 2001. A further seven sessions were conducted, providing training for 250 Board Officers. (Section 5)

Inter-Board Statutory Duty Co-ordinating Group

Groups formed at:
- DE/NDPB level;
- Inter-Board/Staff Commission
- Intra Board. (Section 2)

Preparation of Draft Equality Scheme

Draft scheme submitted 30 June 2000, and approved by Equality Commission on 15 March 2001. (Section 1)

Advertisements placed with invitation to consult on draft Equality Scheme

Consultation advertised. Analysis of consultees' comments and the Board's response is contained at Appendix C of the Equality Scheme. (Section 1)

Scheme published

May 2001. (Section 1)

Training programme commenced and is ongoing

Training conducted:
- Equality Awareness
- Screening of Policies
- Equality Impact Assessment
- Consultation Skills (Section 5)

Policy Unit

Education and Library Boards/Staff Commission Co-Ordinator in post (Section 2)

Screening of all existing

Conducted on two-stage basis.

Policies	(September 2000 – March 2001) (Section 3)
Submission to Equality Commission Report on Screening Exercise	Report submitted December 2001. (Section 3)
Review of Monitoring Arrangements	On-going. (Section 8)
Review of Arrangements for providing information to the public	Measures implemented: - provision of information on disc, in Braille, on audio cassette; - translation and interpreter service and Inter-Board group has drafted consultation guidelines. Further developments anticipated in Year 2 (Section 6 and 7)

In addition, substantial work has been undertaken on the conduct of equality impact assessments, see Section 4 of this Report.

11. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

11.1 GOOD RELATIONS DUTY

1) Youth Service

The Youth Service has made a major contribution to the development and practice of improving community relations.

During the year number of initiatives were taken forward to further promote community relations included:

- a Conference for young people at the Share Centre, Co. Fermanagh at the end of October 2001. During the Conference consultation took place on current and future youth provision arising out of which a Conference Report has been prepared;
- an audit of current service provision against JEDI (Joined in Equity, Diversity and Interdependence initiative). An action plan will be available at the end of July 2002;
- a rural action research project looking at the particular needs of young people in South Tyrone, South Armagh and the Loughshore Youth Forum;
- a road show for the Bill of Rights consultation;

- the appointment of a Travellers' Support Worker in the Newry area in partnership with other NDPB's;
- the Board's Community Relations Support Scheme funded 85 projects involving 6512 young people ranging from 5-25 years. The projects facilitated by Youth Workers included activity and discussion-based programmes for young people from diverse backgrounds.

2) Community Relations Council

On 13 March 2002 Ms Ann McGlade, Programme Director for Policy Development with the Community Relations Council made a presentation to the Inter-board Statutory Duty Co-ordinating Group on how Boards/Staff Commission could promote good relations. She outlined to members the Community Relations Operating Principles, namely Equity, Respect for Diversity and Interdependence and recommended that these principles be incorporated into the development of a 'Good Relations Policy'. An information pack, which included guidelines for the drafting of a Good Relations Strategy, was made available for members of the group.

3) Asylum Seekers

The Department of Education has established a joint DE/NDPB Working Group. The Board's nominee is the Head of Pupil and Parent Unit. Its terms of reference are as follows:

- 'This Group shall sit as a forum to discuss education issues relating to Asylum Seekers/refugees – children;
- The Forum will meet bi-annually, or as required, to share information and good practice across the education sector.'

4) Promoting Social Inclusion

The Board has in place a Support Service for Minority Ethnic Groups, which is managed by the Head of the Pupil and Parent Unit. Within the service, the English As an Additional Language Team comprises six teachers who provide specific language support and liaises with the Board's Education Librarian, to provide schools with additional multi-cultural resources. The Team Leader works directly with Principals, Senior Management, Teachers, families and local community groups (Al Nur, Wah Hep, Portuguese Forum) to facilitate the integration of children from minority ethnic groups into schools and the wider community. The Board provides financial support to the Chinese Wah Hep Homework Club. The Team Leader also provides direct language support to children at both primary and post-primary level. An integral part of the team's work is attendance at and participation in

multi-cultural conferences, workshops, lectures and seminars such as participation in the Inter-Board EAL Forum and EAL Teachers' Group. Together with the Board's Support Officer for the Education of Children from the Irish Traveller Community the Team Leader for EAL were responsible for the Board's exhibition of intercultural resources at the 'Multi-Cultural Health Fair' held in Craigavon Civic Centre on 26 March 2001.

The Traveller Support Service is another element of the Board's provision for Minority Ethnic Groups. The service has made significant progress in improving educational provision for the Education of Children from the Irish Traveller Community. The Support Officer represents the Board on the Forum for the Education of Traveller Children, liaises with schools, Traveller families and other statutory and voluntary agencies to help to ensure uptake of educational provision for Traveller Children. His work necessitates regular attendance at a variety of seminars, launches, conferences, and workshops on Traveller specific/intercultural themes. During the year he assisted with arrangements for the dissemination of the intercultural resources for Key Stages 2 and 3.

5) Youth Education Social Inclusion Partnership (YESIP)

The Youth Education Social Inclusion Fund is the working title for Measure 2.2 "Developing Children and Young People" and part of Measure 2.8 "Accompanying Infrastructure and Equipment Support" under the European Union Programme for Peace and Reconciliation. The overall strategic aim of the EU Programme for Peace and Reconciliation ('Peace 2') is "to reinforce progress towards a peaceful and stable society and to promote reconciliation". The YESIP Fund is administered by a consortium with the Southern Education & Library Board as the Lead Organisation and Youthnet as Sectoral Partner for Youth.

Key issues during the year included:

- With a budget of £20 million pounds YESIP and Peace II Measure 2.2 was launched on 16 January;

The aim of Measure 2.2 is to build on the successful interventions commenced under Peace 1 and further target those groups of children and young people who are at greatest risk of social exclusion and marginalisation both in schools and the youth sector.

- Identification and targeting of top 25% wards of the combined ranking of Education and Employment Domains of Noble;
- Development and publication of a new website www.YESIP.org to promote the Peace II Measures 2.2.

6) New Targeting Social Need (NTSN)

DE has put in place a DE/NDPB Working Group whose representatives includes the Board's Head of Educational Services, ELBs, CCMS, the Youth Council, the Department's Statistics Branch and is chaired by the Head of the Department's Equality Unit. The Group provides a forum for discussion of NTSN, acting as a focus for the exchange of information, advice and material. Where appropriate it allows members to agree a common approach to NTSN issues. In addition its role is to monitor the implementation of NTSN within the Department and its executive NDPBs. It will also have a key part to play in the drawing up of NTSN Action Plans post 2003 when the current Action Plans are completed.

7) Promoting Community Relations IN Schools

Schools throughout the Board's area are encouraged to build understanding between children and young people. An extensive programme was funded and provided through the Schools' Community Relations Programme. Programmes included:

- 114 primary schools and 30 post-primary schools engaged in cross community contact programs;
- 8 primary schools took part in a Special Bridge Builder project. The project helped schools to work within their own community settings and share their work in a cross community setting with other schools participating in the project;
- A special cross-community event was held in June 2001 in Craigavon Civic Centre when the participating schools were able to display their work to each other;
- Pupils from 5 post-primary schools joined in a cross community residential with other young people in the Belfast Education and Library Board in acting as host to 40 young people from the Czech Republic from 29 June-8 July 2001. The Czech Inspiration Programme was the second part of a two year programme. Killowen Outdoor Centre provided an excellent start to the residential through a well-delivered programme of team building and a wide range of outdoor activities. The second part of the residential was held at the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum. This provided an opportunity for all the young people to learn about each others culture. The young people put on a cultural celebration on 6 July 2001 which was attended by the Minister of Education.

11.2 Greater Craigavon Network – Equality Officers Network

The Greater Craigavon Network representing a range of public sector organisations operating in the greater Craigavon area and of which the Board's Chief Executive is a member considered that there was merit in establishing a network of Equality officers/Co-coordinators common share good practice and to explore opportunities for mutually beneficial working together on the Equality/Section 75 agenda.

The Equality Officers Network held its inaugural meeting on 28 June 2001 and agreed its terms of reference as follows:

- 1) The Equality Officers Network (EON) operates as a sub-group of the Greater Craigavon Network (GCN) and is accountable to that body.
- 2) Membership of the EON will be comprised of officers having responsibility for equality issues employed by
 - (a) those bodies represented on the Greater Craigavon Network; and
 - (b) district councils adjoining the Craigavon boundary

Membership may be extended beyond (a) and (b) above at the discretion of the Network.

Agencies are free to change their representative at any time or to send a substitute.

- 3) A Chairperson will be elected by the members on an annual basis.
- 4) The remit of the EON is to provide the opportunity for equality officers to meet on a regular basis to discuss areas of common interest, to share good practice and to identify projects or areas of work which can be developed on a joint basis such as
 - the establishment of an Equality Forum to act as a platform for consultation within the Greater Craigavon area;
 - the development of training resources ;
 - the sharing of research data including joint primary research where appropriate;
 - liaison on the provision of measures to promote accessibility to information and services;

- joint equality impact assessments (where appropriate).
- 5) The Equality Officers Network will meet on a quarterly basis, meeting venue to be rotated among the agencies represented. The host agency will provide the taking of the official record.

The Group met on a number of occasions during the year and on 9 & 10 November 2001 they invited the following representatives to Craigavon Civic Centre to consult and advise on training requirements for staff:

Margaret Campbell, Craigavon & Banbridge Carers Group
Patricia Jordan, FACE Young Carers Group
Paul Yam, Wah Hep Chinese Association
Des McCabe, NI Interfaith Forum
Teresa Geraghty, Children's Law Centre
Catherine Moustafa, Al Nur Asian Association
Brendan Doyle, Equality Commission
Inez Keenan, Southern Travellers
Gerard Doran, Youth Adviser, SELB

The Group hopes to meet other representatives in September 2002 and take on board their advice in order to further develop, share resources and best practice on staff training. The Board is represented on the group by the Assistant Personnel Officer with day-to-day responsibility for managing the Section 75 obligations. During the year she shared the Board's Equality Awareness Training materials with members of the group.

11.3 Responses to consultation documents

Board Responses

Commissioner for Children for Northern Ireland
Post Primary Review Body (Burns Report)
Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland

Inter Board Responses

Public Procurement
"About time: Flexible Working Report of the work and Parents Taskforce".
OFMDFM Consultation Guidelines

11.3 Board Officers attended Conferences and Training on

- Human Rights in Education Conference held on 26 September 2001;
- Discrimination and Equality Law organised by Legal Island and held on 18 October 2001.
- Racial Equality in Education Conference held on 8 November 2001;
- Equality Officers' Network held on 9 & 10 November 2001;
- Equality Commission's Equality Impact Assessment Training held on 16 November 2001;
- The Human Rights Act and Education Seminar hosted by the Southern Board on 20 November 2001;
- Equality Commission's Briefing Session on the Single Equality Bill for Northern Ireland held on 27 November 2001;
- Staff Commission's EQIA Best Value Training held on 5 February 2002;
- Staff Commission's EQIA Code of Employment and Promotion Procedures Training held on 5 March 2002;
- Launch of Interpreter Service for Asian and Chinese Communities held on 26 March 2002;
- Multi-Cultural Health Fair organised by Craigavon & Banbridge Health & Social Services Community Trust held on 26 March 2002;

Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

Essential Elements on conducting an Equality Impact Assessment as provided for in the Equality Commission’s “Practical Guidance on Equality Impact Assessment”.

- Consideration of Available Data and Research
- Assessment of Impacts
- Consideration of:
 - Measures which might mitigate any adverse impact
 - Alternative policies which might better achieve the promotion of equality of opportunity
- Formal Consultation
- Decision by Public Authority
- Publication of Results of EQIA
- Monitor for Adverse Impact in the Future and Publication of the Results of Such Monitoring

EQIA TIMETABLE REPORTING MATRIX

TITLE OF EQIA	STAGE (AS PER STEPS 1-7 OF EQIA PROCESS)	PARTNERSHIPS WITH PUBLIC AUTHORITIES
1. Electronic Libraries	Completed	
2. Arrangements for School Funding (Local Management of Schools	Stage 5 Decision by Public Authority	Co-operate with Department of Education
3. Selective Structure of Post-Primary Education: Transfer Procedure Tests.	Stage 1 Consideration of Available Data and Research	Co-operate with Department of Education/CCMS/CCEA/Other Departments
4. Differential Eligibility for Retirement from Teaching for Men and Women.	Stage 3 } Consideration of: } } – Measures which might mitigate any } adverse impact.	Co-operate with the Department of Education
5. Payment of Benefits to Surviving Family or Other Nominated Beneficiaries.	} } – Alternative policies which might better } achieve the promotion of equality of } opportunity	Co-operate with the Department of Education
6. Promotion of Personal and Social Development of Young People through Leisure Activities	Stage 3 (See above for definition)	Co-operate with the Department of Education/ Youth Council
7. Promotion of Inclusion of Children with Special Education Needs in Mainstream Schools and Classes.	Stage 1 Consideration of Available Data and Research.	Co-operate with the Department of Education/ Other Departments
8. Recovery of Capital Grant From Schools	Stage 1 Consideration of available data and Research	Co-operate with the Department of Education/ CCMS
9. Public Procurement	Pre-Consultation stage	Department of Finance and Personnel

