



**THE SOUTHERN EDUCATION
AND
LIBRARY BOARD**

EQUALITY SCHEME

CONSULTATION ON THE SCREENING OF POLICIES

June 2001

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INTRODUCTION

The Southern Education and Library Board was established as part of Local Government re-organisation in Northern Ireland in 1973 and is one of the largest area Boards servicing the District Council areas of Armagh, Banbridge, Cookstown, Craigavon, Dungannon and Newry and Mourne, spanning some 1,450 square miles with a total population of approximately 322,000 people including over 75,698 pupils. It is a corporate body, established under statute, as the local authority for education. Its functions and responsibilities are derived from statute.

The Board employs 7,960 staff and has an annual budget of approximately £200 million. Board Headquarters is based in 1-5 Charlemont Place, Armagh. From this venue and through a number of other satellite buildings including the Library Headquarters at 1 Markethill Road, Armagh, the Board delivers its full range of services primarily to over 300 schools and colleges and 23 libraries throughout the region.

WHAT WE DO

The core functions of the Board are set out in legislation and cover a wide range of responsibilities. The main services provided by the board are:

- Curriculum Advisory and Support Service;
- Youth Service;
- Public Library & Schools' Library;
- Education Welfare Service;
- Schools' Psychological Service;
- Services in relation to Child Protection;
- Human Resources;
- School Meals and Milk;
- Home to School Transport;
- Music Service;
- Boarding and Clothing Grants;
- Arranging and overseeing the implementation of the Transfer Procedure;
- Monitoring the employment of school children in its area for compliance with legislative requirements;
- Advice and guidance to schools in relation to financial matters and the exercise of a payment function for schools;
- Purchasing Service;
- Financial Services;
- Arrangements for management of controlled schools, including appointment of Boards of Governors;
- Maintenance of Board properties and maintained schools;
- Capital works at controlled schools;
- Employment of teachers in controlled schools and all other staff in controlled and maintained schools;
- Admission arrangements to schools;
- A range of services to support children with special needs in mainstream and special schools;

- Internal Audit Service;
- Legal and Insurance Services;
- Pre-School arrangements;
- Student Support.

In fulfilling these functions the Board secures funding from the Department of Education, Department of Culture, Arts & Leisure, Department of Further and Higher Education Training and Employment, the European Union and non-statutory agencies. It establishes schemes which prioritise and determine the allocation of funds and provide systems to delegate responsibility to Boards of Governors and other partners in the Education service.

VISION

The Southern Education and Library Board's vision is *"to be valued for providing coherent high quality services to meet the need of our user community"*.

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Southern Education & Library Board is to ensure that high quality education, youth and library services exist throughout the area in order to:

- Promote learning;
- Provide opportunities for personal development;
- Encourage individuals to acquire core skills; and
- Promote moral values in individuals and in the community, a sense of shared responsibility, respect for one another and appreciation of the worth of the individual person –

thereby enriching life in the community and contributing to Northern Ireland's economic development.

The Board fulfils this mission by providing and securing necessary support services, advice and guidance in accordance with its statutory role, for our direct and indirect customers and partners.

WHAT WE BELIEVE IN

In developing its Corporate Plan for 2001-2004, the Board recognises the importance of declaring its corporate values. It recognises these values as aspirations and will seek to make them a reality in its work and service provision. The corporate values it believes in are:

- Valuing its customers and striving to meet their needs;
- Valuing staff, their commitment and contribution;
- Communicating openly and effectively, building trust and co-operation;

- Exercising integrity, objectivity, accountability, impartiality and promoting equal opportunity to all;
- Focusing on quality outputs and results and achieving best value; and
- Having a management style and philosophy that are professional, flexible and supportive, delegates responsibility and authority for decision making to appropriate levels and encourage the involvement of all staff in the promotion and development of our corporate identity.

Schools controlled or maintained by the board as at October 2000

NURSERY	No of Pupils	No of Schools
Controlled	682	12
Roman Catholic Maintained	157	3

PRIMARY	No of Pupils	No of Schools
Controlled	15419	97
Controlled Integrated	68	1
Roman Catholic Maintained	23632	137
Irish Medium Maintained	64	1
Church of Ireland Maintained	267	2

SECONDARY	No of Pupils	No of Schools
Controlled	9019	17
Controlled Integrated	362	1
Roman Catholic Maintained	12619	18

GRAMMAR	No of Pupils	No of Schools
Controlled	2514	3

SPECIAL	No of Pupils	No of Schools
Controlled	328	6

Schools not controlled or maintained by the board as at October 2000

PRIMARY	No of Pupils	No of Schools
Integrated Maintained	953	3

SECONDARY	No of Pupils	No of Schools
Integrated Maintained	867	2

GRAMMAR	No of Pupils	No of Schools
Roman Catholic Voluntary	7409	10
Other Voluntary	1338	2

The Board also provides:

- A Youth Service through a network of 478 Youth Units and 3 Outdoor Education Centres.
- A Library Service through 23 libraries and 10 mobile libraries and services to schools, hospitals and homes.
- A Music Service with approximately 2,600 pupils benefiting from the expertise and experience of a highly committed team.
- A specialist Curricular Advisory and Support Service to teachers.

Categories Board staff are employed in as at January 2001:

Teaching staff in controlled schools	1670
Non teaching staff in all schools	3635
Headquarters staff	586
Headquarters outcentres staff	54
Library staff	147
Music Service staff	38
Transport staff	364
Grounds Maintenance staff	29
Vehicle Maintenance staff	20
Youth Service staff	233
School Meals staff	1184

A number of staff are responsible for the formulation, implementation, development and on-going review of board policies and all staff have a responsibility for the implementation of such policies.

CONTEXT

Section 7 of the Board's Equality Scheme sets out the procedures for the screening and impact assessment of board policies. A screening of policies pro forma was developed, together with an implementation plan for the screening of policies. **A summary of the screening process, together with the screening of policies pro forma, are set out at Appendix 1.**

EXPLANATION OF DECISION

Initial decisions fall into the following categories:

1. Impact Assessment;
2. No Impact Assessment;
3. Best Value (Inter-Board) Review;
4. Inter-Board Review;
5. Review (see Section 11).

Policies which are reviewed in accordance with (3) and (5) above will be screened and/or equality impact assessed as appropriate.

CONSULTATION

In preparation for the initial screening of policies, the board distributed a list and description of its main policies to all parties listed at Appendix A of the Board's Equality Scheme and to staff for initial feedback. **A brief summary of the pre-screening consultation exercise is contained at Appendix 2.**

The board recognises that the following report on the screening of policies is subject to further consultation in accordance with the Equality Scheme. The board will initially widely circulate the report, and will endeavour to ensure that consultation is carried out in an effective way. All enquiries relating to these policies should be directed to:

Maura Murphy
Equality Unit
Southern Education and Library Board
3 Charlemont Place
The Mall
ARMAGH
BT61 9AX

Telephone	028 3751 2407 - direct line
Facsimile	028 3751 2325
E-mail	maura.murphy@selb.org
Website	www.selb.org

This document will be made available on request in alternative formats including large font, audio cassette, braille, disc and the main minority ethnic languages for those people not fluent in English.

The Consultation exercise will close on **3 August 2001**. Comments on the screening exercise should be provided prior to that date.

TIMETABLE FOR EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

The following represents the board's proposed programme for the implementation of impact assessments.

Those policies which either originate or are controlled in full or in part across the education sector require arrangements to be put in place to co-ordinate Equality Impact Assessments between the various public authorities concerned.

To **co-operate** means that boards will provide information and support to the Public Authorities on the conduct of Equality Impact Assessments. On completion of the various elements of an Equality Impact Assessment the decision-making responsibility will remain with the Public Authorities.

In order to implement this it has been agreed with the Public Authorities that they will **co-join** and/or **co-operate** with the Boards in conducting Equality Impact Assessments.

To **co-join** means that boards and the Public Authorities will operate, on a partnership basis, on the conduct of an Equality Impact Assessment for those policies that exist at both strategic and operation levels and where equality issues have emerged at both of these levels. On completion of the various elements of an Equality Impact Assessment the decision-making responsibility will rest with either the Public Authorities and/or the boards as per their area of responsibility.

The programme and timetable is subject to consultation with interested groups and individuals. The Department of Education is currently revisiting its Equality Impact Assessment programme and this may result in changes to the timetable specified above.

TIMETABLE FOR EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Policy	Decision	Timetable
Pre School Education (Section 1)	Equality Impact Assessment Inter-Board	Year 2
Special Educational Needs (Section 4) – “Promotion of inclusion of children with special educational needs in mainstream schools and classes”	Co-join with the Department of Education’s Equality Impact Assessment	Year 1
“Maximising learning opportunities for children with learning difficulties/special educational needs”	Co-join with the Department of Education’s Equality Impact Assessment	Year 2
Youth Service (Section 5) “Promotion of personal and social development of young people through leisure activities”	Co-join with the Department of Education’s Equality Impact Assessment	Year 1
Suspension & Expulsion of Pupils (Section 7) “Promotion of inclusion for pupil groups in danger of educational under-achievement”	Co-join with the Department of Education’s Equality Impact Assessment	Year 2
Student Support (Section 8) Free School Meals (8.1)	Co-operate with the Department of Education’s Equality Impact Assessment	Year 3
Discretionary Awards (8.2)	Co-operate with any Department of Higher & Further Education, Training & Employment Equality Impact Assessment	Not specified
Home to School Transport (Section 9)	Co-join with the Department of Education’s Equality Impact Assessment	Year 2

Policy	Decision	Timetable
School Meals Provision (Section 10)	Co-operate with the Department of Education's Equality Impact Assessment	Year 3
Employment (Section 11)		
Code of Employment & Promotion Procedures (11.1)	Co-join with the Staff Commission's Equality Impact Assessments	Year 2
Internal Trawl (11.1)		
Library Service (Section 12)		
Electronic Libraries (12.1)	Equality Impact Assessment Inter-Board	On-going
Curriculum Support (Section 13)		
"Maintenance of Statutory Northern Ireland Curriculum" (13.1)	Co-operate with the Department of Education's Equality Impact Assessment	Year 2
"Raising standards of literacy/numeracy strategy" (13.2)	Co-operate with the Department of Education's Equality Impact Assessment	Year 2
"Support for low and under-achieving schools" (13.2)	Co-operate with the Department of Education's Equality Impact Assessment	Year 2
Music Policy (13.3)	Equality Impact Assessment Inter-Board	Year 3
Open Enrolment (Section 14)		
Open Enrolment (14.1)	Co-operate with the Department of Education's Equality Impact Assessment	Year 3
Transfer Procedure (14.2)	Co-operate with the Department of Education's Equality Impact Assessment	Year 1
Finance of Controlled & Maintained Schools (Section 15)		
Procurement (Section 18)	Co-operate with the Department of Education's Equality Impact Assessment	Year 1
	Co-operate with the Department of Finance & Personnel's Equality Impact Assessment	Year 1

OUTCOME OF SCREENING EXERCISE

1. PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION

Policy for Pre-School Education:

The importance of Pre-School Education is universally recognised. The aims of Pre-School Education are as follows:

- to encourage the development of each child's potential towards making him/her a confident and independent individual by providing a wide range of experiences and activities within a safe, caring, educational environment;
- to provide activities that are fun and exciting so that the children are encouraged to be curious and to enjoy learning;
- to encourage positive attitudes to self and others and to develop confidence and self esteem;
- to provide a child centred education which will set children on the path of life long learning; and
- to encourage meaningful partnership between school and parents so that Pre-School education builds on the foundations laid in the home (a stable family life is essential in developing early emotional and social skills).

One of the board's responsibilities is to provide pre-school education. The Government's decision to expand pre-school provision to ensure that every child whose parent wishes has at least one year's pre-school education has required the board to prepare a Pre-School Education Development Plan. The purpose of this plan is to identify how the board's Pre-School Education Advisory Group (PEAG), in partnership with the statutory, voluntary and private providers, aims to develop, within available resources, universal quality pre-school education in the board's area.

Comment:

The target group for this policy is pre-school children, i.e. those in their immediate year before compulsory schooling begins. Currently, there is a lack of provision in some geographical areas. This may have a negative equality impact on grounds of perceived religious belief. Children with Special Needs are deemed to have differing needs and these are being accommodated in this provision. There has been inter-agency collaboration in the development of this policy. Given the opportunity to promote equality of opportunity and good relations and the impact on social and human rights the board has decided to conduct an impact assessment of this policy.

Decision:

Impact Assessment.

2. PRIMARY EDUCATION

Policies relating to this function have been subsumed within the other functions.

3. SECONDARY EDUCATION

Policies relating to this function have been subsumed within the other functions.

4. SPECIAL EDUCATION

Policy – Special Educational Needs:

The Education (NI) Order 1996 places a number of duties on boards and others in relation to Special Needs. To meet its statutory obligations the board seeks to ensure that the special educational needs of all children living in its area are identified and addressed appropriately. A child is regarded as having special educational needs if he/she has a learning difficulty¹ which calls for special educational provision to be made for him/her.

The following principles underpin the board's policy and practice in supporting children and young people with special educational needs:

- ♦ all children and young people who experience learning difficulties should receive appropriate educational provision to address their special educational needs;
- ♦ the knowledge, views and experiences of parents are vital. Those with parental responsibility should be fully involved in any decision taken about the education of their child;
- ♦ in determining the educational provision to be made, the ascertainable wishes of the child should be considered in the light of his/her age and understanding;
- ♦ a child may have special educational needs requiring the intervention of the board as well as health and social services personnel even before he/she reaches compulsory school age;
- ♦ there should be close co-operation between all the agencies concerned and a multi-disciplinary approach to the resolution of issues;
- ♦ children and young people with special educational needs should have the greatest possible degree of access to a broad and balanced education, including maximum access to the Northern Ireland Curriculum;
- ♦ children have a wide range of special educational needs and there are various ways in which these needs may be met. The needs of most children will be

¹ The term "learning difficulty" applies to a broad range of circumstances. A child will be considered to have a learning difficulty if:

- the child has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of his/her age; or
- the child has a disability which either prevents or hinders him/her from making use of the education facilities of a kind generally provided in schools for children of his/her age; or
- the child has not obtained the lower limit of compulsory school age and is or would be, if special education provision were not made for him/her, likely to fall within either of the two heads above.

met in mainstream schools without a statutory assessment and without a statement of special educational needs. The Board of Governors of each school has a statutory duty to ensure provision for those children with special educational needs in its school;

- ◆ in a small minority of cases the board may decide that the degree of a child's learning difficulty or disability, and the nature of the provision necessary to meet the child's special educational needs, are such that they cannot reasonably be provided for within the resources normally available to mainstream schools in the area. For such children the special educational provision required will be determined through the making and maintaining of statements of special educational needs by the board;
- ◆ children with special educational needs, including those with statements, should, wherever appropriate and taking into account the wishes of their parents, be educated alongside their peers in mainstream schools;
- ◆ there should be an annual review of the special educational provision arranged for a child and an updating and monitoring of educational targets and strategies. Teachers should monitor and informally review a child's progress during the course of the year. If the child's special educational needs change, a review should be scheduled as soon as possible to ensure that the provision specified in the statement is still appropriate;
- ◆ the requirements of children and young people with special educational needs will be a consideration in the developmental planning of all aspects of the board's activities;
- ◆ the board recognises the importance of training and support for Boards of Governors and school staff in meeting the requirements of children with special educational needs.

To achieve these objectives, the board has developed procedures to:

- a) provide central support to schools primarily at Stage 3 of the Code of Practice;
- b) facilitate the gathering of evidence and making decisions about statutory assessment for children with significant and/or complex learning difficulties or disabilities and, as appropriate, the making of a statement.

The effective implementation of this policy requires the provision of a range of support services including:

- ◆ educational psychology service;
- ◆ education welfare service;
- ◆ curriculum advice and support service;
- ◆ behavioural support team;
- ◆ children's order team; and
- ◆ home to school transport.

In addition, in line with the Code of Practice on the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs 1998, ("the Code of Practice"), the board has developed guideline documents to assist schools in carrying out the on-going process of identification, assessment, planning, intervention, monitoring, review and evaluation in relation to pupils with special educational needs.

The special educational needs of the majority of children are met effectively by schools at Stages 1-3 of the Code of Practice. At Stage 3 a request for the involvement of specialist support services e.g. educational psychology, literacy teaching and support service may feature. At Stage 4 a request can be made to the board's Special Education Section for a Statutory Assessment. If a statutory assessment is initiated the process is a lengthy one and in line with the requirements of the Code of Practice, is likely to take around six months to complete. If appropriate, a statement may be made and the special education provision specified will be arranged, monitored and reviewed. In circumstances where a statement is not appropriate, information detailing the child's special educational needs and the actions which the school should take to address those is made available by the board. In a small number of cases, children may demonstrate such significant difficulties that a school may consider it advisable to refer to the board for a statutory assessment without going through the school-based stages of the Code of Practice.

Comment:

This is an extremely complex policy area, not just because there is a continuum of needs, but because there is an absolute necessity for a service which is delivered on a seamless basis across a range of policy/functional areas. It requires a multi-disciplinary/multi-agency approach to ensure that the identified special educational needs of each child and young person are met. The policy recognises that even before a child reaches compulsory school age, he or she may have special educational needs requiring the intervention of the board as well as the health services.

There is evidence of higher than normal rates of referral of children of travellers and ethnic minorities; children of primary school age (including children who are "young for their class", especially those with Spring birthdays); of more boys than girls, particularly at the formal assessment stage. The policy is specifically aimed at identifying and assessing pupils who may have special educational needs and, therefore, by its very nature has a differential impact towards those who have a disability. There is clear evidence of different needs but from Stage 3 of the process, the service provided by the board is child specific, that is individual to the special educational needs of the child. There is evidence of inter-agency partnerships which have been established to address issues arising in relation to children and young people with special educational needs. The board will co-join with the Department of Education in its Equality Impact Assessment on the "promotion of inclusion for children with special educational needs in mainstream schools and classes" and "maximising learning opportunities for children with learning difficulties/special educational needs".

This service has been identified for a Best Value Review.

Decision:

Best Value (Inter-Board) Review. Co-join with the Department of Education's Impact Assessments "Promotion of inclusion for children with special educational needs in mainstream schools and classes" and "Maximising learning opportunities for children with learning difficulties/special educational needs".

5. YOUTH SERVICE**5.1 Policy for the Youth Service****Policy Summary:**

The current policy for the Youth Service in Northern Ireland was introduced by the Department of Education in September 1987. It identified the target range as 5-25, with an emphasis on the 10-20 age band and set out clear aims and objectives for the Youth Service including a core Youth Curriculum. The Youth Service comprises both statutory and voluntary sectors. The statutory sector is administered by the Education and Library Boards and consists of some 166 youth clubs and 21 residential centres and a range of project based work. The Youth Service has recently undertaken a major Policy Review. In May 2000 the report "A Youth Service for the Millennium" was launched. This represented the findings of the Policy Review Group which had been set up to suggest a framework for the development of the Youth Service and prepare an action plan for strengthening its contribution to meeting the needs of children and young people. The Department of Education is taking the lead in ensuring the implementation of the Report. A Policy Implementation Body has been tasked by the Minister "to produce an action plan for the future development of the Youth Service".

Comment:

Barriers have been identified, particularly in regard to access to youth services, for those young people with severe learning difficulties and/or disabilities and within certain age bands, given the concentration on meeting the needs of young people in the 10-20 age band. A key component of the policy review has been the extension of service provision to include young people between the ages of 4-25 years. Furthermore, as a result of the Northern Ireland Assembly's Programme for Government, the Department of Education has set the following objective:

"To promote, through the youth service, the personal and social development of children and young people and assist them to gain knowledge, skills and experience to reach their full potential as valued individuals and, through community relations measures for young people, to encourage the development of mutual understanding and promote recognition of and respect for cultural diversity".

To fulfil this objective it is necessary to identify barriers to equality of access and to assist youth service providers improve access to youth service provision. There is also an opportunity to further promote equality of opportunity and good relations through the development and implementation of this policy.

The Department of Education has identified this policy for impact assessment. The Education and Library Boards will co-join with the Department of Education in this review. The Education and Library Boards have also identified the Youth Service

for a Best Value Review. It is envisaged that the impact assessment and/or best value review will impact on and/or encompass a number of the other policies identified in this section.

Decision:

Best Value (Inter-Board) Review. Co-join with the Department of Education's Impact Assessment "Promotion of personal and social development of young people through leisure activities".

5.2 Community Relations Policy

Policy Context:

Traditionally the Youth Service has been underpinned by an ethos to promote individual and community relations. Northern Ireland is a divided community and it is a crucial role of both formal and informal education to develop opportunities which will lead to greater understanding and tolerance. The Northern Ireland Youth Committee Report for the period 1977-81 declared that one of the principal aims of the Youth Service should be:

"to promote greater understanding of a society with diverse traditions".

This was further reinforced by the Youth Service Curriculum Review 'A Model of Effective Practice' (1997) which identifies as a core principle of youth work practice "... the promotion of acceptance and understanding of others".

The Community Relations Youth Service Support Scheme, funded by the Department of Education, has proved most beneficial in the development of this area of work and it is generally accepted that substantial progress has been achieved in establishing community relations work as a core theme of the Youth Service curriculum.

Summary:

The curriculum which has been developed within the Youth Services in Northern Ireland includes specific reference to the improvement of community relations. A funding scheme to support cross community contact between young people is administered by the Youth Council for Northern Ireland and the Education and Library Boards.

Comment:

The Youth Services have made a major contribution to the development and practice of improving community relations. Most of the young people who take part in youth work activities also participate in community relations programmes. Recent research highlights that 85% of members of full-time youth clubs were involved in some form of community relations programme; 65% of members of full-time youth clubs were involved in cross community contact. There is evidence of lower up-take by the Protestant community and particularly young male Protestants in community relations initiatives. The Policy Review Group recognised the valuable programmes and models of community relations work already in existence and the commitment of many young people, youth workers and volunteers. However, they identified that opportunities for children and young people to explore community relations issues within a Youth Service context were sometimes limited. It is

anticipated that the JEDI (Joined in Equity, Diversity and Interdependence) initiative will develop a coherent strategy for community relations youth work and education for citizenship within the Northern Ireland youth services.

Decision:

Co-join with the Impact Assessment at 5.1 above.

5.3 Duke of Edinburgh's Award

Policy Summary:

The Duke of Edinburgh's Award is a voluntary non-competitive programme of practical, cultural and adventurous activities, designed to support the personal and social development of young people aged 14-25 regardless of gender, background or ability. It offers an individual challenge and encourages young people to undertake exciting, constructive, challenging and enjoyable activities in their free time.

It is a four section programme with three progressive levels:

- Bronze (for those aged 14 and over);
- Silver (for those aged 15 and over);
- Gold (for those aged 16 and over,

The sections involve:

Service – helping other people in the local community

Skills – covering almost any hobby, skill or interest

Physical Recreation – sports, dance and fitness

Expeditions – training for, planning and completing a journey on foot, cycle, horseback or water

Residential project – a purposeful enterprise with people not previously known to the participant.

Comment:

There is evidence of higher participation by Protestant groups, although a growing number of Catholic groups are becoming involved. Measures are in place to promote the use of alternatives e.g. International Award. The name of the scheme is seen as a "chill" factor in many areas.

Decision:

Impact Assessment is not required but this scheme will be considered as part of the overall Best Value (Inter-Board) review.

5.4 Grant Aid Scheme for Assistance to Voluntary Youth Organisations

Policy Summary:

The board's assistance is confined to recurrent expenditure. The extent of the board's assistance is determined annually in accordance with the funds made available for the board's Youth Service by the Department of Education.

Assistance is calculated on an annual basis normally having regard to such factors as:

- ◆ membership, including age range and evidence of average nightly attendances;

- ♦ other funds available to the youth group from any statutory body;
- ♦ the range of activities, which should reflect the overall needs of the adolescent;
- ♦ the management structure of the group and its basis of support in the district served.

The board considers it important that a youth group should have a properly constituted management committee and normally a group will not be considered for assistance unless it has such a committee. Every assisted group must also have a child protection policy.

In the case of approved uniformed youth organisations the board will require that each unit is affiliated to the relevant National Headquarters.

Comment:

While the board's aim is to facilitate an integrated approach to youth service provision it is noteworthy that no specific applications for registration have come from groups representative of racial minorities. There is evidence that young adults (16+ years) are less likely to benefit from assistance under this policy. While the board assists a number of organisations for children and young people with disabilities there is scope for further development with this group. Consultations have taken place with racial and disability groups to identify barriers to participation and address accessibility issues.

Decision:

An Impact Assessment is not required but will be considered as part of the overall Best Value (Inter-Board) review.

5.5 School Based Youth Centre

Policy Summary:

In June 1976, in recognition of the development of school-based youth work and to ensure the effective management of valuable capital provision in the growing number of purpose-built youth wings, the Department of Education approved, for the first time, the appointment of additional teachers to secondary schools to take charge of school-based youth activities. These supernumerary posts are known as Youth Tutors or Youth and Community Tutors. The establishment of each post is agreed between the Department, the school authority and the board. The functions of the centres include the following:

- ♦ in line with the needs of young people in the community, to prepare and organise community youth activities in the evenings, at weekends and during vacation periods. The activities are designed to meet the identified needs within the context of the Youth Service Curriculum as outlined in the document "Youth Work --A Model for Effective Practice";
- ♦ work in collaboration with youth groups using the school facilities; and

- ♦ work in collaboration with teachers in the school responsible for home-school links, career education, guidance and counselling, work experience, community service, personal and social education projects and the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, etc.

Comment:

This service is only available in the post-primary sector and in a limited number of schools. Concerns have been raised by the Northern Ireland Teachers' Council regarding the conditions of service of teachers employed under the Department of Education Circular No 1998/14.

Decision:

An Impact Assessment is not required but will be considered as part of the overall Best Value (Inter-Board) review.

5.6 Outdoor Education Scheme

Policy Summary:

To assist youth and school groups to avail of outdoor education and social education opportunities and to provide training for Youth Workers and Teachers in Outdoor Education.

Comment:

Actual physical buildings have been identified in some cases as an obstacle to the full participation of some groups, in particular wheel-chair users.

Decision:

An Impact Assessment is not required but will be considered as part of the overall Best Value (Inter-Board) review.

5.7 Summer Scheme

Policy Summary:

To assist youth groups to make provision during the summer holidays.

Comment:

The nature of the summer scheme is such that it appeals to the 8-16 year old age range with older age groups limited to exchanges/residentials. Issues have been raised regarding children with a learning/physical disability in mainstream education, who may be in a Special Unit, which makes it difficult to participate in a mainstream Summer Scheme.

Decision:

An Impact Assessment is not required but will be considered as part of the overall Best Value (Inter-Board) review.

6. SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

Policy Context:

The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full time education suitable to his/her ability and aptitude and any special educational needs. The board has a statutory duty to ensure parents fulfil their

obligation. The role of the Education Welfare Service is to assist the board in discharging this legal obligation.

The Education Welfare Service responds to referrals from schools, parents and other agencies with regard to attendance and to social/emotional and behavioural difficulties that are impinging upon a pupil's access to a full-time education.

All referrals to the Educational Welfare Service relate to children and young people whose attendance at school has fallen below the level of 85% (under review). Such children are vulnerable to social exclusion if the underlying causes of poor school attendance remain unresolved, thus significantly impairing the individual's education and future life chances.

Policy Summary:

The aim of this policy is to ensure that the Education Welfare Service seeks to efficiently and effectively maximise educational opportunity for children and young people to:

- ♦ ensure that parents are aware of their responsibility for ensuring that their children receive an education appropriate to their age, aptitude and ability;
- ♦ work with marginalised children and their families to encourage children and young people to access educational provision;
- ♦ work with schools and other education providers to ensure a continuity of education for children and young people experiencing problems with school;
- ♦ work with other board services and external agencies to contribute to the overall welfare of vulnerable children.

Comment:

There is evidence of higher levels of absenteeism from various groups e.g. traveller children, of more boys than girls and of children with a learning disability and a significant increase in absenteeism of pupils at Year 12 (GCSE year). There is evidence that school age mothers have particular needs in relation to educational opportunities which are primarily met under the board's Home Tuition policy.

Consultation has taken place with affected groups, for example the Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities has input to staff training and has advised on the translation of information leaflets for parents of school age children. A range of traveller support groups have been involved in advising and developing educational services for traveller children. This policy area provides an opportunity to promote equality of opportunity and social inclusion and has been recommended for review.

Decision:

Inter-Board Review.

7. SUSPENSION AND EXPULSION OF PUPILS

Scheme for the Suspension and Expulsion of Pupils from Board Controlled Schools

Policy Summary:

The scheme specifies the procedure to be followed in relation to the suspension and expulsion of pupils from board controlled schools and has been prepared in accordance with statutory provisions.

Comment:

There is evidence of a higher incidence of suspensions and expulsions at the post-primary level, with boys being more likely to be suspended/expelled, particularly boys at Key Stage IV. There is, however, no evidence that the application of the procedure in itself is having a negative impact on any of the equality groups. The board is committed to the promotion of social inclusion and, therefore, will co-operate with the Department of Education in its Equality Impact Assessment "Promotion of inclusion for pupil groups in danger of educational under-achievement".

Decision:

Co-operate with the Department of Education's Impact Assessment "Promotion of inclusion for pupil groups in danger of educational under-achievement".

8. STUDENT SUPPORT

Policy Context:

The Education and Library Boards are empowered under the Education and Library Order (NI) 1986 to provide, in accordance with arrangements approved by the Department of Education, services ancillary to education. This includes the administration of student loans. These services aim to widen access and increase participation by disadvantaged groups and are inherently linked to the Government's policy on Targeting Social Need.

8.1 Free School Meals/Clothing Grant

Policy Summary:

Free school meals are provided as part of the overall school meals service to pupils from socially disadvantaged circumstances (entitlement is based on parental receipt of Income Support or income based job seekers allowance).

The clothing grant is only payable for the purchase of items of School Uniform/PE Clothing for children/young people at the post primary level. Eligibility is also based on parental receipt of Income Support or income based job seekers allowance.

Comment:

All those eligible to receive free school meals and/or clothing grant obtain access to these benefits. There is evidence of higher up-take of free school meals by children attending maintained schools. The clothing allowance is only available to parents of pupils at post-primary level and special schools. Extra provision is required in terms of the provision of meals for children on special diets. Concerns have been raised by racial groups in regard to the clothing grant as items of clothing specified do not always take account of culture and ethnic requirements e.g. wearing of veils.

The Department of Education has identified free school meals policy for Equality Impact Assessment. The board will co-operate with this Impact Assessment.

Decision:

Co-operate with the Department of Education's Impact Assessment "Free School Meals".

8.2 Discretionary Awards

Policy Summary:

The board can make awards in respect of courses approved for discretionary award purposes by the Department of Higher and Further Education, Training and Employment. Such awards are subject to the conditions specified in the current discretionary awards arrangement. Applicants are made aware that the board does not usually have sufficient funds to offer an award to every applicant who is successful in gaining a place on an approved full-time programme of study. Criteria to be applied in the allocation of awards are published by the board. Where an award is not granted an applicant may request the board to review its decision.

Comment:

There is some evidence to suggest that the Department of Higher and Further Education, Training and Employment's regulations which reduce the funding level per applicant has a differential impact on students with disabilities and students with dependants. No significant equality issues have emerged in the implementation of this policy and concerns raised can only be addressed in the context of a review at Department level. The board will co-operate fully with any impact assessment and/or review conducted by the Department of Higher and Further Education, Training & Employment in regard to this policy.

Decision:

A separate Impact Assessment is not required by the board.

9. HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT

Policy:

The board has a statutory obligation to provide assistance in certain circumstances for parents with regard to home to school transport in accordance with arrangements approved by the Department of Education. The Department of Education's approved arrangements in relation to the provision of this service are contained in Department of Education (NI) Circular 1996/41. The purpose of transport assistance is to facilitate eligible pupils of compulsory school age to attend school.

Comment:

The service which the Transport Section delivers is defined within DENI Circular 1996/41 and the joint five board Transport Strategy. Home to School transport was the first service to be reviewed under the Education and Library Boards' Best Value programme.

There is evidence of differing uptake by different groups e.g. age, occasioned by the different applicable statutory walking distance in force for primary and secondary pupils and the ineligibility of nursery and reception pupils. Also there is

evidence that groups have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to this policy issue, namely religious belief, race, age, gender, disability and dependants (school age mothers). The Department of Education has identified this policy for impact assessment. The board will co-join with the Department in this policy review.

Decision:

Co-join with the Department of Education's Impact Assessment "Home to School Transport".

10. SCHOOL MEALS PROVISION

Policy Summary:

The aim of school meals provision is to ensure that all school children in controlled and maintained schools have access to a nutritionally balanced meal during the school day. Meals are provided by the board under arrangements approved by the Department of Education.

In order to effectively provide this service the board has in place a number of policies:

- a) Quality Policy: to consistently provide a varied selection of nutritious food presented in such a manner as to make eating both a healthy and enjoyable experience;
- b) Food Safety Policy: to ensure implementation of good hygiene practices and procedures;
- c) Health & Safety Policy: to ensure a safe and healthy workplace and working environment;
- d) Healthy Eating: to follow government guidelines to promote healthy eating and dispel the misconception that healthy eating is restrictive, unpalatable and less appetising;
- e) Dietary Requirements: to ensure that requirements on religious, ethnic and/or medical grounds are met.

Comment:

There is evidence that where choice is available pupils, particularly boys, are less likely to opt for the healthy option. Where special dietary requirements are being accommodated this may reduce choice. This policy has been identified by the Department of Education for impact assessment. Given the views which emerged during the consultation process and the scope to promote equality of opportunity and social inclusion through this provision, the board will co-operate with the Department in its impact assessment of this policy.

Decision:

Co-operate with the Department of Education's Impact Assessment "School Meals Provision".

11. EMPLOYMENT

Policy Context:

The functions of the Joint Negotiating Council (JNC) for the Education and Library Boards are:

- ♦ to negotiate the terms and conditions of service of all board employees with the exception of teaching staff for whom separate arrangements apply;
- ♦ to negotiate the remuneration of all board employees with the exception of chief executives and teaching staff for whom separate arrangements apply;
- ♦ to achieve by joint consultation the greatest measure of co-operation between Education and Library Boards and the persons other than teachers employed by those boards, with a view to increased efficiency in the provision of services and the well-being of employees.

The Council shall support and promote equality as a core principle underpinning both service delivery and employment relations. The Council has the authority to reach collective agreements. All agreements reached shall be binding on the Education and Library Boards.

The functions of the Teachers' Negotiating Committee (TNC) are:

- ♦ to negotiate the remuneration and terms and conditions of service of teachers in recognised schools in Northern Ireland;
- ♦ to be the vehicle for consultation by the Department of Education on matters relating to teachers' superannuation.

Where policies are peculiar to either the JNC (non-teaching staff) or TNC (teaching staff) this will be specified. *Policies in this section identified for "review" will be reviewed under the auspices of the Joint Negotiating Council and/or the Teachers' Negotiating Committee as appropriate.*

11.1 Appointment and Promotion Procedures (non-teaching staff)

Policy Context:

The Staff Commission for Education and Library Boards has a statutory responsibility to recommend appointment and promotion procedures for officers of boards. The Staff Commission's Code of Employment and Promotion Procedures is currently under review by the Commission, and has been identified for impact assessment. The board has produced practical guidelines to support the implementation of the Code of Employment and Promotion Procedures.

Policy Summary:

To ensure that all candidates (internal or external) are offered equality of opportunity in regard to appointment or promotion within the Education and Library Boards and that the most suitable person(s) is appointed in all instances.

Comment:

Equal opportunities monitoring indicates that there are imbalances within the Education and Library Boards in terms of perceived religious affiliation and gender. The existing policy is currently being reviewed. The Education and Library Boards and recognised trade unions are participating in this review. The board will co-join with the Staff Commission in the impact assessment of this policy.

Decision:

Co-join with the Staff Commission's Impact Assessments "Code of Employment and Promotion Procedures" and "Internal Trawl".

11.2 Appointment and Promotion Procedures (teaching staff in controlled schools)**Policy Context:**

The Board of Governors and the board is committed to ensuring that all applicants for selection will be afforded equality of opportunity.

Policy Summary:

The appointment of staff and the allocation of responsibility points/management allowances are based on suitability for the post, without regard to sex, marital status, race or disability.

Comment:

Equal opportunities monitoring and research reveals that there is an under-representation of women at Principal and Vice Principal levels. There is a significant under-representation of males entering the teaching profession, particularly at the primary level. Teachers in schools are an excepted occupation under the Fair Employment and Treatment (NI) Order 1998.

Decision:

Review.

11.3 Disciplinary Procedures**Policy Summary:**

To ensure that any disciplinary action initiated within the Education and Library Boards is necessary, fair and consistent and that employees are provided with adequate information and reason(s) for disciplinary action.

Comment:

No active monitoring in terms of equality is undertaken. The disciplinary procedure is a standard agreed procedure based on the Labour Relations Agency's Code of Practice. No issues in respect of this policy, or how it is implemented have been raised.

Decision:

No Impact Assessment is required.

11.4 Grievance Procedure

Policy Summary:

To provide the opportunity of having an employee's grievance examined quickly and effectively, and where possible, to have it resolved at the earliest opportunity.

Comment:

No active monitoring in terms of equality is undertaken. This procedure uses a standard agreed format. No issues have been identified.

Decision:

No Impact Assessment is required.

11.5 Flexible Working Arrangements

Policy Summary:

To provide a range of flexible working arrangements consistent with organisational need, which enable staff to more effectively combine work and home life. The range of policies include:

- ♦ flexible working hours;
- ♦ job share;
- ♦ career breaks;
- ♦ part-time working.

Comment:

There is evidence that more women take up job share arrangements etc. These arrangements are family friendly aimed at promoting equality of opportunity. These policies will be reviewed at the negotiating councils to establish if these objectives are being met.

Decision:

Review.

11.6 Premature Retirement

Policy Summary:

To make provision for the early/premature retirement of staff aged 50 years and over on the grounds of either redundancy or in the interests of the efficiency of the service.

Comment:

There are no significant equality of opportunity issues.

Decision:

No Impact Assessment is required.

11.7 Redundancy

Policy Summary:

To ensure that, as far as possible, redundancy situations are avoided within the board and that, where redundancy is unavoidable, a fair procedure is in place to manage the process.

Comment:

No active monitoring in terms of equality is undertaken.

Decision:

No Impact Assessment is required.

11.8 Procedures for Dealing with Principals, Teachers and Vice-Principals whose work is unsatisfactory**Policy Summary:**

The procedures provide Board of Governors with the mechanism for dealing with Principals, Teachers and Vice Principals whose work is deemed to be unsatisfactory. This includes:

- ♦ indicators of unsatisfactory work;
- ♦ notes of guidance on their implementation.

Comment:

The procedures were drawn up jointly by the NI Employing Authorities (Education and Library Boards and CCMS) in consultation with the Department of Education and ratified by the Teachers' Salaries and Conditions of Service Negotiating Committee. No significant equality issues have been identified.

Decision:

No Impact Assessment is required.

11.9 Collective Agreement (TNC)**Policy Summary:**

This agreement deals with the amalgamation of two or more schools and details the arrangements in relation to the transfer of teaching staff from the existing schools to the new school.

Comment:

This agreement is underpinned by a commitment to the principle of fair and equal treatment of all permanent teachers. No issues have been identified in regard to the nine categories.

Decision:

No Impact Assessment is required.

11.10 Staff Leave and Time-Off Provisions**Policy Summary:**

There are a range of leave provisions including:

- ♦ annual leave;
- ♦ study leave;
- ♦ discretionary leave;
- ♦ maternity leave;
- ♦ adoption leave;
- ♦ paternity leave;
- ♦ jury service;

- ♦ time off for trade union activities,

all of which are self explanatory.

Comment:

There are some anomalies across the employee groups (JNC/TNC) and within employee groups (harmonisation of terms and conditions for former Administrative, Executive, Clerical, Professional & Technical and Ancillary & General staff). A review of leave provisions, taking account of the need to harmonise (JNC) will be conducted in consultation with the recognised trade unions.

Decision:

Review.

11.11 Pay Policy

Policy Summary:

To provide appropriate remuneration for duties undertaken.

Comment:

Pay rates are determined for staff covered by the following:

- ♦ National Joint Council;
- ♦ Soulbury Committee;
- ♦ Joint Negotiating Committee for Youth & Community Workers;
- ♦ Joint Negotiating Committee for Local Authority Craft & Associated Employees;
- ♦ Senior Management Pay Review Panel;
- ♦ Joint Negotiating Council;
- ♦ Teachers' Negotiating Committee;
- ♦ Teachers' Pay Review Body

A harmonised pay policy is being developed at the Joint Negotiating Council for former Administrative, Executive, Clerical, Professional & Technical Staff and Ancillary & General staff.

Decision:

Review on-going.

11.12 Staff Appraisal (JNC)

Policy Summary:

Annual discussion on objectives/performance and training and development needs.

Comment:

This policy applies only to former Administrative, Executive, Clerical, Professional & Technical staff (JNC); there are no indications of disproportionate impact as this policy applies to all such staff and is a management tool. In the context of harmonising terms and conditions the Scheme will be examined with a view to the inclusion of former Ancillary & General staff.

Decision:

Review.

11.13 Job Evaluation

Policy Summary:

The duties of a job are 'measured' against eight headings (factors) and are allocated points under each of these headings. These points are then totalled to give an overall 'score'. This 'score' is translated into a salary grade by comparing it with a standard table of salary grades and their relevant 'scores'. The job evaluation scheme is applicable to former AECP&T staff who are paid on National Joint Council spinal column points.

Comment:

In the context of the harmonisation of terms and conditions of former AECP&T and A&G staff, consideration is being given as to which job evaluation scheme to use. The current Greater London Whitley Council Scheme was produced in response to the equal value legislation which specifies that where a job evaluation scheme is in operation, its content and application should be free from discriminatory bias. The alternative scheme under consideration is the National Scheme which has also been equality proofed.

Decision:

No Impact Assessment is required.

11.14 Managing Attendance at Work

Policy Summary:

To clarify the roles of both the employee and the manager in relation to absenteeism, and to explain the standards that are expected of everyone and the procedures to be followed in the case of absence.

Comment:

Female absenteeism is perceived to be higher than male absenteeism. In the Education and Library Boards each case is considered on its merits.

There is no evidence of adverse, differential impact of the operation of this policy on the nine section 75 categories.

Decision:

No Impact Assessment is required.

11.15 Equal Opportunity Policy (JNC)

Policy Summary:

To promote equality of opportunity within the Education and Library Boards and to provide employment equality to all, regardless of religious belief, political opinion, gender, disability and race.

Comment:

This policy aims to promote equal opportunity for all through training, awareness raising, advice-giving to all staff on equality issues and seeks to address specific problems e.g. bullying and harassment. The Equal Opportunity Policy statement is under review in the light of the board's commitments under Section 75. The policy and procedure to combat harassment in the workplace is also under review.

Decision:

On-going review.

11.16 Equal Opportunity Policy (TNC)**Policy Summary:**

To ensure that all eligible teachers have equal opportunity for employment and advancement, irrespective of gender, marital status, disability or race. Selection for employment and advancement will be on the basis of ability, qualifications and aptitude to carry out the duties of the post.

Comment:

This policy aims to promote equality of opportunity in recruitment, training and promotion or in any other ways. The Equal Opportunity statement is under review, particularly in the context of the board's commitments under Section 75. The policy and procedure to combat harassment in schools is also under review. Teachers in schools are an excepted occupation under the Fair Employment and Treatment (NI) Order 1998.

Decision:

Review.

11.17 Training and Development Policy (JNC)**Policy Summary:**

To ensure that all employees have the skills and knowledge to do their jobs effectively and to encourage each employee to develop themselves to their full potential consistent with the needs of the organisation.

Comment:

Differing requirements depending on grade and job type. Issues have emerged regarding availability of training for former A&G staff. In terms of equality, there are issues relating to accessibility, location and timing which could be more family friendly. A comprehensive review will be carried out.

Decision:

Review.

12. LIBRARY SERVICES**Policy Context:**

The public library service in Northern Ireland is delivered via a network of 124 libraries and 32 mobile libraries, spread across the five Education and Library Board areas. The service:

- lends almost 10 million books and other items each year;
- welcomes over 6 million visitors;
- deals with over 1.5 million enquiries;
- provides access to over 350 PC's loaded with a range of information sources and office software.

Each board has a statutory duty to 'provide a comprehensive and efficient library service for persons living, working or undertaking courses of education in its area'. The Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure has responsibility for library policy across the province and for funding the service. The boards also deliver the Schools' Library Service which is funded by the Department of Education.

The Department of Culture, Arts & Leisure is currently undertaking a major review of the Public Library Service in co-operation with the Education and Library Boards. The review will focus on four main areas:-

- establish the current position of the Public Library Service;
- examine the extent to which the Service is fulfilling its aims and objectives and meeting its clients' needs;
- creating an agreed future vision for the Public Library Service, including for example, the effect of the electronic age and potential for public usage;
- making recommendations for an action plan to migrate from the current position to the future vision.

12.1 Electronic Libraries for Northern Ireland

Policy Summary:

The library services of the five boards have a mission to bring enjoyment and lifelong learning to as many people as possible through access to books and other information services by providing high quality library services which are readily accessible and responsive to the changing needs of users.

In recent years ICT has been a major influence on developments in library services across the world in two key areas:

- public access to electronic information and office software, i.e. the provision of CD ROMS and access to the World Wide Web have greatly increased the amount of information available to customers in even the smallest library;
- 'library management systems' i.e. the automation of many library administrative routines to increase efficiency including ordering, cataloguing and receipting new books, counter routines concerned with the lending and return of books.

While the board has a library management system and has introduced some public access to electronic information across the service, provision does not yet extend to every library location.

The People's Network is a recent government initiative which aims to ensure that every public library in Great Britain has sufficient computers with adequate bandwidth and staff trained to assist customers in using computers and accessing electronic information. The People's Network will also facilitate and encourage programmes to digitise printed material to ensure the availability of high quality content on 'The People's Network'.

In this context the Electronic Libraries for Northern Ireland Project has been established to procure, on behalf of the five Education and Library Boards, robust systems that will support and enable the delivery of electronic information services

to the Northern Ireland Community. This will enable the boards to deliver socially inclusive, cost effective, efficient and modern public library and information services.

Comment:

This policy presents a significant opportunity to develop a socially inclusive service that will facilitate many groups to make better use of the library services. Current experience of electronic services indicates factors such as age and disability affect participation levels. There is evidence to suggest that people with disabilities may have different needs e.g. in respect of adaptive technology; older users and those whose first language is not English may require additional staff support. In respect of children's usage, use of the Internet may give rise to Child Protection issues.

Consultations with trade unions have identified concerns in relation to a possible negative equality impact on staff. Within the context of the Private Finance Initiative, there may be a differential impact on staff affected by the transfer of service provision to another employer, in respect of religious belief and/or gender.

The policy is intended to promote social inclusion and equality of access to cultural, information, educational and leisure services via the library network, and to encourage partnerships between government and the wider community. Given the issues raised and in view of the scale and potential impact across the province's library network, the Project Board, on behalf of all five boards, has commenced an equality impact assessment of this policy.

Decision:

Impact Assessment.

12.2 Library Stock

Policy Summary:

The function of a library service is to provide as far as resources allow, books and other material in which readers claim legitimate interest. If a publication has not incurred penalties under the law it should not be excluded from libraries on any moral, political, religious or racial ground alone, to satisfy any sectional interest. The public are entitled to rely upon libraries for access to information and enlightenment upon every field of human experience and activity.

This policy provides a framework for the selection, management and withdrawal of all categories of library stock, including adult, children's, reference, local studies and audio-visual material, to ensure that stock provided meets the needs of the community and gives due weight to the needs of minorities, within budgetary constraints. Stock management is a process which extends from selection to withdrawal and takes account of the widest range of experience, professional expertise, knowledge of present user needs, stock levels and subject coverage, awareness of published reviews, requests and public opinion.

Comment:

Surveys and comments/complaints forms, readers' requests, daily contact with users of the service all inform the stock process. The stock policy aims to promote equality of access to the widest range of stock available. Material in minority

languages and alternative formats is represented in the collection and is provided on request. guidelines and procedures for all stock categories are kept under continuous internal review. This service provision will be included in future reviews of the Library Service, including Best Value.

Decision:

Best Value (Inter-Board) Review.

12.3 Library Service to Rural Areas

Policy Summary:

The board has adopted a variety of approaches to meet the library needs of rural inhabitants. Rather than adopting a standard response based on past practice, the kind of service provided to rural areas is based primarily on an analysis of reading and information needs.

To ensure that a consistent level of service is available to library users across the board, meaningful benchmarks for the provision of static service points have been established. In addition a range of provision exists including the mobile library service, joint provision with other services such as schools or community centres. In future as technology and resources allow, rural information points linked to the library service computer network can be developed.

Comment:

Separate provision is offered to the housebound and people with disabilities. While no specific analysis has been conducted to date of this library provision on the basis of the nine categories, there may be accessibility issues in regard to branch locations, mobile routes and library opening hours. A major review of public library service provision is underway by the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure. The board considers that this service provision should be linked to this review.

Decision:

Best Value (Inter-Board) Review.

12.4 Library Services for the housebound, hospitals and other centres

Policy Summary:

The board provides library services to:

- housebound people;
- hospital patients;
- day centres for the elderly, and those with physical or learning disabilities;
- residential and nursing homes;
- sheltered units;
- people with visual impairment or physical disabilities which prevent them from reading books.

Comment:

This policy aims to provide a specialist service. There is evidence that the main users are people in the older age and/or disability categories. It includes provision of specially designed mobile vans for wheelchair access and a range of services to the visually impaired. A major review of public library service provision is underway

by the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure. The board would intend to link this service provision to this review. The needs of these users will also be considered in the current Impact Assessment of the Electronic Libraries project.

Decision:

Best Value (Inter-Board) Review.

12.5 School Library Service

Policy Summary:

A wide-ranging library service is provided to nursery, primary and special schools. It includes:

- a) stock selection;
- b) mobile library visits;
- c) assistance with school project work;
- d) loan of books to schools;
- e) professional advice support and training on school library best practice and the development of information skills to principals, teachers, school library staff and pupils.

In the post primary sector the board allocates to schools money to be spent on materials and periodicals for the school's library. The allocation is based on the Department of Education guidance which gives the per capita for each type of school or college. Library provision in the post primary sector also includes assistance with project work and stock selection to satisfy curriculum demands and recreational purposes.

Comments:

The provision of service varies between primary and post-primary levels. No significant equality issues have emerged in the implementation of this policy. Boards provide resources in minority languages and in alternative formats to meet the requirements of all pupils. The Library and Information Services Council will publish revised School Library Guidelines later this year. Following these, the policy will be reviewed in the light of their recommendations, and full consideration will be given to equality issues.

Decision:

Best Value (Inter-Board) Review.

13. CURRICULUM SUPPORT

13.1 Curriculum Advice and Support Service to Schools

Policy Summary:

The board provides an advice and support service to all grant-aided schools in its area. This includes further training for all teachers to help them to carry out their duties as effectively and efficiently as possible. Each year the board consults with the governors of each school to identify the support which teachers need. It also

consults with other bodies, including the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS), the Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education (NICIE), the Governing Bodies Association (GBA), the Northern Ireland Council for the Curriculum Examinations and Assessment (CCEA), and the Regional Training Unit (RTU).

As a result of this consultation board officers prepare a programme of advice and support. This can take many forms e.g. within the classroom, working with small groups of teachers and whole staffs in individual schools, and organising and leading in-service courses for teachers in its teachers' and resource centres. For the most part this support is provided by members of the board's advisory and support service.

At present staff in post offer support in the areas listed below and officers liaise with colleagues in other boards to provide support for other subjects not listed:-

- Careers and Vocational Education
- Art & Design
- Early Years Education
- Economic Awareness
- English - Literacy Development
- English as an additional language
- Geography
- Personal, Social And Health Education
- Governor Training
- History
- Information & Communication Technology
- Primary Management and Development
- Post Primary Management
- Home Economics
- Business Studies
- DELTA
- Beginning Teachers and Early Professional Development
- Mathematics - Numeracy Development
- Middle Management
- Modern Languages
- Music
- Pre-School Education
- Pastoral Care
- Physical Education
- Reading Recovery
- Religious Education
- Science
- Special Educational Needs
- Technology and Design
- Education for Mutual Understanding and Cultural Heritage

The board also provides a programme of induction for teachers in their first teaching post and for those returning to the profession.

The board has set up centres where teachers can undertake training and inspect an up-to-date and broad range of teaching materials and learning resources.

Comment:

No significant equality issues have emerged regarding the implementation of this policy. The board will co-operate with the Department of Education in its planned Equality Impact Assessment on the maintenance of the statutory Northern Ireland Curriculum.

Decision:

Co-operate with Department of Education's Impact Assessment "Maintenance of Statutory Northern Ireland Curriculum".

13.2 School Improvement Programme

Policy Summary:

The School Improvement Programme sets out a wide range of measures which are intended to support schools. The Programme was developed by the Department of Education in consultation with boards, CCMS, CCEA, and with some teachers who have experience in previous school improvement initiatives.

The programme sets out:

- a strategy to improve standards in literacy and numeracy;
- a strategy for promoting and sustaining good behaviour in schools;
- measures to improve the quality of school leadership;
- guidance for schools on the development planning process;
- guidance on effective target-setting; and
- guidance prepared by the Education and Training Inspectorate on school self evaluation.

In terms of curriculum support specific literacy and numeracy policies have been developed.

These policies are intended to ensure that the staff in schools and board officers adopt a coherent approach to the promotion and development of literacy and numeracy.

The board seeks to raise standards of literacy and numeracy in consultation with other agencies by:

- assisting schools in identifying needs and setting targets for improvement based on pupils attainment and using these to monitor and evaluate each school's progress;
- assisting schools and board staff in developing and promoting a range of practical teaching strategies based on whole class, group and individual teaching;
- developing early intervention strategies;
- managing and co-ordinating the promotion and development of literacy and numeracy across the curriculum;
- encouraging and developing family and community support programmes for literacy and numeracy achievement.

Comment:

There is evidence to suggest that literacy and numeracy problems are marked among boys. While levels of attainment of both girls and boys across the curriculum have been rising consistently, the rate of improvement in boys' performance has been slower than that of girls. Overall standards of literacy and numeracy are not as high as they need to be, even among young people with good qualifications. The board will co-operate with the Department of Education in its impact assessments "Raising standards of literacy/numeracy through literacy/numeracy strategy" and "Support for low and underachieving schools".

Decision:

Co-operate with the Department of Education's Impact Assessments "Raising standards of literacy/numeracy through literacy/numeracy strategy" and "Support for low and under-achieving schools".

13.3 Music Service**Policy:**

In 1989 the Education Reform (NI) Order 1989 identified instrumental tuition as an optional extra linked to the curriculum, but for which schools and parents could be asked to contribute.

The service was established to nurture the development of music, both individually and within the local community. Towards this end it provides a tuition service to as many schools and pupils as possible within the existing budget and offers area-based ensemble opportunities for students at various stages of their musical development. The music service is provided through a team of qualified Instrumental Tutors.

Comment:

There is evidence to indicate that more girls than boys avail of this service and pupils in Special Schools do not receive tuition. There is evidence of greater interest from boys in brass and percussion instruments.

Decision:

Impact Assessment.

14. OPEN ENROLMENT AND TRANSFER**14.1 Open Enrolment****Policy Summary:**

The Education Reform (NI) Order 1989 introduced the concept of "open enrolment" to Northern Ireland. Prior to 1989 the board was responsible for placing pupils in schools. Post 1989 Boards of Governors are responsible for admissions to their school and parents are permitted to express a statutory preference as to the school which they wish their child to attend. Where applications to a school exceed the approved admissions number, published admissions criteria, drawn up and applied by the Board of Governors, are used to determine which children are admitted. The 1989 Order also established an independent statutory appeals tribunal to which parents can appeal a refusal to admit.

Comment:

No significant equality issues have emerged in the implementation of this statutory procedure. The board will fully co-operate with the Department of Education in its Equality Impact Assessment of this policy and implement, as appropriate, any changes which emerge.

Decision:

Co-operate with the Department of Education's Impact Assessment "Open Enrolment".

14.2 Transfer Procedure**Policy Summary:**

Traditionally, Northern Ireland has had a selective structure of post-primary education i.e. selective grammar schools and non-selective secondary schools. Pupils seek admission to selective grammar schools on the basis of the grades obtained in the Transfer Procedure tests which is the main determinant in admission decisions by Boards of Governors

Comment:

There is evidence to suggest that this policy has a differential and, in some cases, a differential impact on a number of the categories, e.g. religion, gender, race and disability. A major review of this policy is underway by the Department of Education. The Department of Education, in its Equality Scheme, has indicated that an equality impact assessment will be undertaken as an integral part of the development of any policy proposed as a result of this review. The board will co-operate with the Department of Education in any such impact assessment.

Decision:

Co-operate with the Department of Education's Impact Assessment "Selective Structure of Post Primary Education: Transfer Procedure Tests".

**15. FINANCING OF CONTROLLED AND MAINTAINED SCHOOLS
(MAIN POLICY LMS SCHEME)****Summary of Policy:**

The formulaic mechanism used to distribute funding to controlled and maintained schools is based on objective criteria such as the number of pupils, size of premises, social deprivation measure, etc.

Objectives of Policy:

To delegate resources to schools in a manner consistent with their responsibilities provided for under legislation.

Comment:

The Department of Education has recently initiated consultation on a new formulaic mechanism to fund all schools and this will replace the current mechanism. The Board will co-operate with this process. The proposed formula allocates additional resources to Targeting Social Need, to travellers, to Irish medium units, to English as an additional language, to special units, etc.

Decision:

Co-operate with the Department of Education's Impact Assessment "Common Funding Formula for Grant Aided Schools".

16. GOVERNOR TRAINING**Policy Summary:**

The board seeks to provide a range of appropriate training for Governors to ensure the effective and efficient management of schools. During the four year period 1997-2001, a range of training and events dealing with the following issues were organised:

- Recruitment and Selection;
- Finance and Administration;
- Suspension and Expulsion;
- Behaviour Management;
- Health and Safety;
- Salary Policy/Pay Structure;
- Child Protection;
- School Development Planning.

Equality of opportunity features as an important element in a number of the above programmes and/or events.

Comment:

All sessions were evaluated. A survey is being conducted on a five board basis to evaluate the training and its impact on the work of Boards of Governors. It also provides an opportunity for Governors to comment on any issues which they feel were omitted from the programme; and it seeks to establish if Governors did not attend the events organised, their reasons for this. All questions relate to the period 1997-2001.

Decision:

Inter-Board Review.

17. EXCEPTIONAL PROVISION**17.1 English as an Additional Language****Policy Summary:**

Every pupil is entitled to the broad and balanced curriculum offered by the NI curriculum, including bi-lingual children. The English as an Additional Language support service aims to:

- meet the educational needs of all pupils for whom English is not a first language;
- develop the pupil's self-esteem through recognition and acceptance of their cultural identity;
- give pupils access to the curriculum through appropriate support programmes;

- support teachers working with English as a Second Language pupils.

Comment:

There is evidence of greater up-take at primary school level with the main focus on children who do not have English as a first language. The policy is aimed at respecting cultural diversity, promoting equality of opportunity and good relations and seeks to ensure all pupils have access to the NI Curriculum. This policy will be kept under review to ensure that its aims are being fully met.

Decision:

No Impact Assessment is required by the board.

17.2 Home Tuition

Policy Summary:

The board has a statutory duty to make arrangements for the provision of education at school or otherwise for children and young people in its area who, by reason of illness, suspension or expulsion, are out of school for an extended period.

Comment:

This policy is specifically aimed at pupils who are out of school. The reasons for absence primarily fall into the following categories:

- behavioural problems;
- medical reasons;
- pregnancy.

The uptake is highest in the behavioural problems category which shows evidence of more boys than girls and young people at the post-primary level availing of this service provision.

Decision:

No Impact Assessment is required by the board.

17.3 Support for Travellers

Policy Summary

The Department of Education's Circular No 1993/37 sets out the "Policy and Guidelines for the Education of Children from Traveller Families".

The policy is aimed at:

- (i) integrating traveller children and young people into mainstream education services;
- (ii) encouraging schools to develop whole school policies in relation to travellers;
- (iii) providing appropriate access to education and providing adequate levels of support to schools within the resources available.

Comment: The Board has drawn up a Strategy for the Education of Travellers which is based on the above policy. The nature of this strategy leads to identification of differences in individual needs. Ongoing consultation with traveller groups has identified some of the problems created and lead to policy revision where feasible. In the case of travellers the Board is particularly anxious to involve parents in shaping the provision of education to their children. The Board's Support Officer for the Education of Travellers fulfils this role and undertakes the various duties to enhance the provision of education to children and young people from the Irish Traveller Community. The Board has reinforced its commitment to raising the level of attendance of Travellers in schools and their educational attainments by allocating significant additional resources to assist in achieving the desired outcomes.

The Board's Strategy for the Education of Travellers is due to be revised within the next financial year.

Decision: No Impact Assessment is required by the Board.

17.4 **Service Charter**

Policy Summary

- To promote customer care
- To identify general Board standards and monitor performance
- To provide a complaints mechanism

Comment: The policy has been drawn upon as a consequence of the Department of Education Service First Initiative. As this is a new policy there is no evidence available to date to indicate higher or lower participation or uptake by different groups. However, when individuals have specific needs, these will be addressed eg availability of Charter in alternative formats such as Braille, audio tape, larger print and the main minority ethnic languages. The opportunity to further promote equality of opportunity is addressed through ensuring that the policy is understood and is accessible by all.

Decision: An Impact Assessment is not required by the Board.

17.5 **User Consultation Strategy**

The policy sets out the planned and managed process of ensuring that the Board adheres to its duty under Best Value to consult stakeholders at key stages, particularly in setting targets to improve service performance, taking account of any representations received in finalising targets in local performance plans. It is an integral part of the overall corporate strategy of the Board and provides an appropriate co-ordinated corporate consultation mechanism which is used as a basis for consultation exercises throughout the Board.

The overall purpose of the policy is to create a more customer focused culture within the organisation, to ensure that users' perspectives and priorities are reflected in service provision and standards and in developing better services for the future.

Comment: A database has been developed for consultation activity. This is subject to on-going review to ensure that it reflects a balanced approach in the light of the Board's commitment under Section 75. There is no evidence to suggest lower participation by the specified groups. This policy will be kept under review to make certain that its aims are being fully met and that the Board manages consultation in a way that guarantees that it reflects a balanced approach in respect of the equality groups, ie methods employed, frequency, volumes, co-ordination etc

Decision: No Impact Assessment is required by the Board.

18. PROCUREMENT

Policy:

The board has procurement contracts covering the purchase of supplies, services, construction, plant and machinery. The board's policies seek to comply with Section 31 of the Manual of Government Accounting (NI) and in accordance with the requirements of domestic and European legislation and to maximise value for money. Policies specify how such contracts should be processed and awarded.

Comment:

The board procures a range of contracts for the provision of goods and services. The Department of Finance & Personnel is currently conducting a review of public procurement and purchasing arrangements within the Northern Ireland Civil Service, their agencies and Non-Departmental Public Bodies (the board is a NDPB). An integral part of this review is the conduct of an equality impact assessment of current and future procurement policies. The board will co-operate fully with the Department of Finance & Personnel in this Impact Assessment.

Decision:

Co-operate with the Department of Finance & Personnel's Impact Assessment "Procurement".

19. MAINTENANCE OF BOARD'S ESTATE

19.1 Condition Survey

Policy Summary:

All board buildings, regardless of status are surveyed on a five-year cycle. This policy ensures that the condition of all properties is identified so that resources may be allocated on the basis of need and the properties maintained to the highest standards possible, bearing in mind the need to provide a suitable, safe, secure and effective working environment for all users of board premises.

Comment:

The condition of individual elements is categorised and planning for improvement work is given to each area in proportion to the unfitness levels. The condition of individual elements is categorised/graded from 1-5 i.e. from very poor to excellent. Items in category 1 are those in assigned need of repair currently, whilst those in category 5 have a current life expectancy estimated in excess of five years.

There is no evidence of disproportionate impact for all of the categories. However, the results of condition surveys have highlighted the issue of accessibility to mobile classrooms and that more money is having to be spent to maintain older buildings.

A Best Value Review has recently been carried out, the final report is awaited.

Decision:

Best Value (Inter-Board) Review.

19.2 Planned Maintenance**Policy Summary:**

The Building Maintenance Services aims to spend a minimum of 70% of its centrally held maintenance budget on planned maintenance work with the remaining 30% used to carry out work for response maintenance. The results of the systematic surveying of all properties leads to an effective use of resources.

Comment:

The planned maintenance programme is compiled with the needs of all groups in mind and is screened annually to ensure that the Board's obligations are met.

Decision:

Best Value Review.

20. FINANCE**20.1 Procedures on the Accounting and Control of Resources****Policy Context:**

To ensure that resources are recorded consistently and applied only for the purpose for which they are given.

Policy Summary:

Policies specify how such activities should be undertaken and accounted for in a consistent manner.

Comment:

These are normal internal financial control procedures required in any statutory body, and do not give rise to any differential impact.

Decision:

No Impact Assessment is required.

20.2 Procedures on the Allocation of Resources (eg Resource Allocation Plan)

Policy Context:

To ensure that each service area is aware of the financial resources available to it and to allow control and monitoring of resource consumption and achievement of objectives.

Policy Summary:

The Resource Allocation Plan shows the amount allocated to each service area of the board and the objectives to be achieved with these resources. The plan is subject to Department approval.

Comment:

The board exercises discretion on the amount allocated to each service area but this is limited by Department guidance, the historic level of provision and by unavoidable cost increases. The Department generally allocates additional resources for specific areas identified as a priority by government.

The process of examining the board's policies in any individual service area will, as a matter of course, take account of the resources available in that service area. There is therefore, no need to impact assess the complete Resource Allocation Plan.

Decision:

No Impact Assessment is required.

21. OTHER

21.1 Equality Scheme Implementation

Policy Summary:

To ensure the implementation of the Equality Scheme and encourage the mainstreaming of equality issues throughout the Board.

Comment:

This scheme has to be delivered in line with strict guidelines laid down by the Equality Commission. This scheme aims to provide equality of opportunity across all the functions and policies of the board.

Decision:

No Impact Assessment is required.

21.2 Promotion of Child Protection Policy and Procedures

Policy Summary:

To protect vulnerable children and young people by ensuring that all staff employed by the board have guidance on the detection, reporting and multi-disciplinary management of situations where abuse or neglect is evident or suspected and procedures on referring child protection cases to the statutory agencies.

Comment:

Young children and people with disabilities are more vulnerable to abuse.

Decision:

Inter-Board Review.

21.3 Curriculum Reserve Funding, Contingency/Emergency Funding Policy:

To provide additional finance to individual schools, outside of the LMS formula, in recognition of specific circumstances justifying additional support. The criteria are published in the board's LMS Scheme.

Decision:

No Impact Assessment is required.

APPENDIX 1

HOW THE SCREENING PROCESS HAS BEEN CARRIED OUT SO FAR

The Equality Commission guidelines state that “the purpose of screening is to identify those policies which are likely to have significant impact on equality of opportunity so that greatest resources can be directed to those”.

The Education and Library Boards adopted a two phased approach to consultation on the screening of its policies. Phase I involved the specification of **all** board policies and their issue to consultees for comment. The purpose of Phase I was to seek views on, among other things, how the policies affect people in terms of equality of opportunity and invite comment on the four criteria specified in the Equality Commission's guidelines. The four criteria are as follows:

- is there any evidence of higher or lower participation or uptake by different groups?
- is there any evidence that different groups have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to the particular policy?
- is there an opportunity to better promote equality of opportunity or better community relations by altering the policy or working with others in government or in the larger community?
- have consultations with relevant groups, organisations or individuals indicated that particular policies create problems which are specific to them?

The process of screening involved applying the four criteria to board policies having regard to the views expressed at Phase I of the exercise.

HOW POLICIES WERE PRIORITISED FOR EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

The policies considered for impact assessment as a result of the initial screening exercise were placed in priority taking account of factors set out in the Equality Commission's guidelines:

- (a) social need;
- (b) effect on people's daily lives;
- (c) effect on economic, social and human rights.

In addition the board had regard to:

- (d) its own best value programme;
- (e) the timetable established by other relevant statutory agencies e.g. Department of Education;
- (f) the scale of expenditure incurred by the policy.

The objective is that **all** policies identified for impact assessment by the board will be assessed within the five year lifespan of the Equality Scheme.

POLICY SCREENING FORM

Policy: _____

Policy Aim: _____

Policy Context, eg. Relationship with other Board function, statutory agencies

What data are available to facilitate the screening of this policy?

1. Is there any evidence of higher or lower participation or uptake by the following characteristics?

	Yes	No	Not known
Religious belief			
Political opinion			
Racial group			
Age			
Marital status			
Sexual orientation			
Gender			
Disability			
Dependants			

Please comment:

2. Is there any evidence that any of the following groups have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to this policy issue?

	Yes	No	Not known
Religious belief			
Political opinion			
Racial group			
Age			
Marital status			
Sexual orientation			
Gender			
Disability			
Dependants			

Please comment:

3. Have consultations with relevant groups, organisations or individuals indicated that policies of this type create problems specific to them?

	Yes	No
Religious belief		
Political opinion		
Racial group		
Age		
Marital status		
Sexual orientation		
Gender		
Disability		
Dependants		

Please comment:

4. Is there an opportunity to better promote equality of opportunity or community relations by altering the policy, or by working with others, in Government, or in the larger community in the context of this policy?

Yes No

Please elaborate:

5. If the answer to any of the questions in 1 to 4 is yes please indicate whether you consider the policy may significantly impact on the Board's obligation to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity.

Yes No

Please elaborate:

6. Time table for impact assessment.

- a. If the answer to 5 above is **yes** please complete the following assessment by ticking the appropriate box concerned.

	Significant Impact	Moderate Impact	Low Impact
Social Need.			
Effect on people's daily lives.			
Effect on economic, social and human rights.			

b. Is the policy affected by the Best Value Programme.

Yes

No

Please elaborate:

c. Is the policy affected by the timetable established by other relevant statutory agencies in relation to common functions.

Yes

No

Please elaborate:

d. What is the scale of expenditure incurred by the policy.

7. Please indicate whether a full impact assessment is recommended

Yes

No

Please elaborate

8. What data are required in the future to ensure effective monitoring?

9. In the context of question 3 are there any relevant groups which you believe should be consulted? Please specify

10. Any other comments on the policy and/screening exercise?

Screened by: _____

Date: _____

SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION ON BOARD POLICIES

The Board has consulted all the organisations/individuals which were listed in Appendix A of its Equality Scheme. The Board also participated in The Southern Area Public Authority Equality Consultation Event held on 12 February 2001 to obtain feedback on its policies. The Board is grateful to all those who submitted comments on its policies and/or participated in the consultation event. Sources of comments have been withheld, but a list of those who participated in the consultative exercises is detailed at the end of this summary.

Employment Policies (Teaching and Non-Teaching)

Issues raised regarding employment policies including fair employment exemptions. The need to promote equality of opportunity particularly in relation to ethnic minorities and persons with a disability were also raised.

Partnership Approach

The opportunity to develop a co-ordinated approach with regard to a range of policy areas within the Education Sector and Community Groups was highlighted with a view to minimising duplication and maximising the use of resources. Specific reference was made to the improvement of numeracy and literacy.

Procurement/Maintenance of the Board's Estate

Issues raised regarding procurement policies in general as well as the operation of PFI, Best Value, contracts between Board and provider and New Targeting Social Need.

Information Technology

Issues raised regarding accessible formats, and information on policies available in different languages.

Library Services

Availability of stock selection in different languages and related to different cultures. Location of libraries was also raised in relation to ethnic minorities.

Training

The need to promote equality of opportunity through Prejudice Awareness Training was highlighted, particularly in relation to ethnic minorities and people with disabilities.

Finance

Issues relating to school funding, block funding and allocation of resources between different school systems and individual schools.

Curriculum Support/Special Needs

The need to address policies relating to the design, content, delivery and nature of testing and Special Needs were addressed.

Other

Queries were also raised regarding the provision of Curriculum Support, Home to School Transport, School Meals and related services, Protective Clothing, Suspension and Expulsion of Pupils and Youth Service provision for persons with a disability.

Written responses were received from:

- Belfast Institute of Further and Higher Education
- Council for Catholic Maintained Schools
- Northern Ireland Women's European Platform
- Ulster Teachers' Union
- General and Municipal Boilermakers Trade Union
- Gaeloitiuint
- UNISON
- Equality Commission
- Disability Action
- Craigavon Travellers Support Committee
- Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities
- Committee on the Administration of Justice

The report of The Southern Area Public Authority Equality Consultation Event held on 12 February 2001 is available from the Board.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Northern Ireland Act 1998	The Northern Ireland Act, implementing the Good Friday Agreement, received Royal Assent on November 19 1998. <i>Section 75</i> of the Act creates the 'statutory equality duty'.
Section 75	<p>Section 75 of the <i>Northern Ireland Act 1998</i> provides that each 'public authority' is required, in carrying out its functions relating to Northern Ireland, to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">a) between persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status or sexual orientation;b) between men and women generally;c) between persons with a disability and person without;d) between persons with dependants and persons without. <p>Without prejudice to these obligations, a public authority in Northern Ireland is also, in carrying out its functions, to have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group. <i>Schedule 9</i> makes detailed provision for the enforcement of these duties.</p>
Equality Scheme	A document that outlines a public authority's arrangements for complying with <i>Section 75</i> . It must include an outline of the public authority's arrangements for carrying out consultations, monitoring, training, <i>impact assessments</i> , and ensuring access to information and services.
Screening	The procedure for identifying those policies that will be subject to a full equality <i>impact assessment</i> and how these will be prioritised. Its purpose is to identify those policies that are likely to have a significant impact on equality of opportunity so that greatest resources can be devoted to these. It requires a systematic review of existing and proposed policies.
Impact Assessment	Essentially the mechanism that underpins <i>Section 75</i> . The concept is relatively simple however complicated it becomes in practice. Existing and proposed policies are assessed in order to determine whether they have an adverse impact on equality of opportunity for relevant groups.
Mitigating Adverse Impact	In some cases an <i>impact assessment</i> will reveal that a particular policy has an adverse impact on equality of opportunity. Where this happens, ways of delivering the policy outcomes which have a less adverse impact on the relevant

groups, or which better promote equality of opportunity for the relevant groups, must in particular be considered.

Mainstreaming

The re-organisation, improvement, development and evaluation of policy processes so that an equality perspective is incorporated in all policies at all levels and at all stages.

Best Value

The Labour Government, as part of its commitment to modernise Local Government, introduced a Bill "The Local Government Act 1999", more commonly known as "Best Value" which came into effect on 1 April 2000 in England and Wales.

One of the key principles of the Act which primarily centres around a culture of continuous improvement with a major focus on customers and quality, requires organisations to be committed to and effect a programme of "Fundamental Reviews".

The Education and Library Boards in Northern Ireland, in response to the legislation effected in England and Wales, entered into arrangements voluntarily to develop a comprehensive approach to managing Best Value in the Education sector.

Pre-School Education Development Plan

The plan details how the available funded pre-school places are to be secured in the board's area and sets out proposals for capital expenditure at grant-aided schools to assist in securing a number of those places. It also explains the policy on pre-school education and the development of provision over the life of the plan.

Grant-Aided Schools

A school which receives grants from the Department of Education or an Education and Library Board.

Code of Practice on the Identification & Assessment of Special Educational Needs (01.09.1998)

This Code of Practice addresses the identification, assessment, and provision made for all children who may have special educational needs at some time in their school careers, or even earlier. Schools and boards and others exercising relevant statutory functions will need to be able to demonstrate, in their arrangements for children with special educational needs, that they are fulfilling their statutory duty and having regard to the Code.

Special Educational Needs

Special Educational Needs is defined in the legislation as a learning difficulty which calls for special educational provision to be made.

Learning Difficulty

Learning difficulty means that the child has significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of his or her age, and/or has a disability which hinders his or her use of

everyday educational facilities (or, where the child is below school age, would hinder such use if the child were of school age).

Special Educational Provision

Special educational provision means educational provision which is different from, or additional to, the provision made generally for children of comparable age.

Statement

A statement of special educational needs is a document that sets out a child's needs and the special help required. The board will make a statement when it decides that the help a child needs cannot reasonably be provided within the resources normally available to the school. These resources include money, staff time and special equipment. Attached to the statement are copies of all the advice the board got during the statutory assessment.

The People's Network

As part of a commitment to delivering the benefits of lifelong learning to every citizen, the Government has resolved to use the new Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) to deliver those benefits as quickly, as widely and as cost-effectively as possible.

As Secretary of State Chris Smith says, "*they are our street-corner universities*" and, thus, the ideal place give access to these new learning resources.

The People's Network project will connect all public libraries to the Information Superhighway by the end of 2002.

Private Finance Initiative (PFI)

The principal aim of the Private Finance Initiative is to involve the private sector in the provision of public services, shifting the role of the public sector from owner and provider to enabler and purchaser and guardian of the interests of the end-users, the general public. It is driven, in part, by the view that the public sector should focus on its core functions, leaving the private sector to perform those functions which it can often do more cost-effectively and efficiently than the public sector.