



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

SOUTHERN EDUCATION AND LIBRARY BOARD

**ANNUAL REPORT:
1 April 2006 – 31 March 2007**

**Final Report
September 2007**



SELB Youth Service 'Motion Project' which facilitated the involvement of young people with varying abilities in a joint music programme.

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Southern Education and Library Board's Annual Progress Report 2006 2007

The Southern Education and Library Board completed a formal review of its Equality Scheme in 2006 to evaluate its effectiveness in meeting its statutory duties. Arising from this review an action plan was developed to facilitate the continued implementation of the Scheme in the period leading up to the establishment of the new Education and Skills Authority, April 2008.

This Annual Report records the activities undertaken by the Board in furtherance of its equality obligations. It covers the period 1 April 2006 to 31 March 2007.

Key Developments:-

- Regional Ethnic-Minority Achievement Service (EMAS) established in the North Eastern Board, paragraph 3(a) refers;
- Inter-Board/Staff Commission Equality Impact Assessments (EQIAs) advanced to consultation stage, paragraph 3(b) refers;
- Major review of employment policies in preparation for the Employment Equality (Age) Regulations (NI) 2006, paragraph 3(d) refers;
- Equality mainstreamed into the Department of Education's Review of Public Administration (RPA) Human Resource Project;
- Two major seminars organised under the auspices of the Joint Consultative Forum on RPA;
- Interim Action Plan developed to facilitate the implementation of the new Disability Duties;
- Good Relations Policy and Practice finalised during the year and cited by the Equality Commission as an example of good practice.

Main Activities Planned for 2007/08:-

- Review the overall equality strategy to help inform the development of an:-
 - Equality Scheme;
 - Good Relations Strategy; and
 - Disability Action Plan by the new Education and Skills Authority;
- Complete to Stage 4 the on-going EQIAs;
- Consult on and implement the Interim Action Plan ref the new Disability Duties.

INTRODUCTION

Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 (“the Act”) requires public authorities to promote equality of opportunity and good relations. The Southern Education and Library Board (The Board) is fully committed to the fulfilment of the Section 75 obligations imposed by the Act and its Equality Scheme, approved by the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland on the 15th March 2001. The Board completed a formal review of its scheme in 2006 to evaluate its effectiveness in meeting its statutory duties. This Annual Report which records the activities undertaken by the Board in furtherance of its equality obligations, covers the period 1 April 2006 – March 2007.

A summary of the Report will be made available to consultees and the full text will be published on the Board’s website at www.selb.org.

CONTEXT

1. Review of Public Administration

On 22 November 2005, following the Review of Public Administration (RPA), Government announced details for the future management of the education sector. Central to this is the establishment of an Education and Skills Authority (ESA) by April 2008 with its primary function being to support the operational delivery of education across Northern Ireland.

ESA will have responsibility for the functions performed currently by the five Education and Library Boards (ELBs), the Council for the Curriculum Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) and the Regional Training Unit (RTU). It will also have responsibility for the frontline support and related functions currently undertaken by the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS), the Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education (NICIE) and Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta (CnaG), the Council for Irish-Medium Education. It will absorb some of the functions of the Staff Commission, while others will no longer be required. Some functions from within the Department of Education (DE) will also transfer into ESA.

The outcomes of the Review Public Administration will have a major impact on the work of the Board with one of its priorities being to assist the Department of Education and the other stakeholders to help achieve the objectives of the RPA. A report on the HR and Equality aspects is contained at paragraph 12.1 of this report.

2. New Disability Duties

Under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, as amended (‘the Act’) public authorities, when carrying out their functions must have due regard to the need to:-

- Promote positive attitudes towards disabled people; and
- Encourage the participation of disabled people in public life.

The new legal duties also require public authorities to prepare a disability action plan showing how they propose to fulfil the disability duties in relation to their functions.

The Equality Commission has granted an exemption to the Board from the requirement to produce a disability action plan. The Board is still subject to the general duty to have due regard to the need when carrying out its function to fulfil the above duties. The exemption was granted because of the exceptional circumstances arising as a result of the RPA and the fact the Board will cease to exist on the 31 March 2008.

Under the terms of this exemption the Board agreed to implement a programme of work and to submit to the Equality Commission on 31 July 2007 and 31 March 2008, a summary progress report outlining the steps taken as regards that programme of work. The first of these progress reports is contained at Appendix 1 of this document.

1. STRATEGIC IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SECTION 75 EQUALITY DUTIES

The Chief Executive is responsible to the Board for ensuring that the Board fully complies with its Equality Scheme. Each member of the Senior Management Team is responsible to the Chief Executive for ensuring that his/her Business Units fully comply with the Equality Scheme. Operational responsibility for the implementation of the Scheme rests with the Adviser for Equality, Rights and Social Inclusion, Mr Kieran Shields.

To encourage a corporate approach and the mainstreaming of equality considerations into the Board's policy-making process the following arrangements apply:-

- Objectives and targets relating to the statutory duty are incorporated into the Board's Corporate and Business Plans;
- Equality objectives are built into the performance targets of relevant staff and thereafter are reflected in the annual review/appraisal process;
- Progress reports on the implementation of the Equality Scheme are provided to the Board;
- Equality issues are considered at meetings of the Board's Senior Management Team and the Equality Group and the Corporate and Staff Development Group.

The Board has continued to work in partnership with the other Boards and the Staff Commission, which has co-ordinated work on the implementation of the Equality Scheme on an inter-Board basis.

Implementation of the Equality Scheme is a standard item of business on the agenda for the monthly meetings of the Boards' Chief Administrative Officers. During the year the Chief Administrative Officers met on 7 occasions. In addition the Boards'/Staff Commission's equality representatives met on six occasions to progress work on the Equality Schemes.

The DE/NDPB Liaison Group did not meet during the year.

The DCAL/NDPB Liaison Group continued to meet.

During the reporting year the partnership work on-going with the community and voluntary and trade union sectors over the past four years continued as evidenced by meetings of the Joint Consultation Forum to progress the equality agenda across the Boards'/Staff Commission.

2. SCREENING

(a) New Policies Screened

A supplementary report on new policies screened during the period 2005 – 2006 was issued to consultees on the 5 October 2006. For the period April 2006 – March 2007 the position is as detailed in the Equality Commission's template at Appendix 2.

3. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EQIA)

Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) Programme

(a) Department of Education led EQIAs

The Department has conducted a re-screening exercise in relation to its EQIA programme and has indicated that, during April 2007, it intends to send out an analysis document detailing the responses received from consultees and the Department's response to them. The document will also include a revised timetable for any equality impact assessments.

English as an Additional Language (EAL)

For the purpose of conducting this EQIA the Department of Education co-joined with the Education and Library Boards and the Northern Ireland Council for Curriculum Examinations and Assessment. In June 2003 a briefing paper together with a pre consultation response pro forma was issued to consultees to obtain their views on the potential equality issues on the current provision of support for EAL pupils in schools. However, this EQIA was suspended by the Department of Education in consultation with the Boards and CCEA to facilitate an independent review of EAL support.

In January 2007 the Department published for consultation its proposed policy entitled "Supporting ethnic-minority children and young people who have English as an additional language". It provided for the establishment of an Ethnic-Minority Achievement Service (EMAS) to be operational from 1 April 2007, which would deal with issues relating to English as an additional language. The North Eastern Board was chosen by the Department to lead the service on behalf of the five Education and Library Boards until the new Education and Skills Authority was established. The EMAS is made up of a regional support team headed by a senior official and aims to ensure a consistent level of service is provided throughout all schools in Northern Ireland.

Interim Measures to March 2007

- A Translating and Interpreting Service, which is centrally funded for schools was made available to schools from 1 September 2006.
- A new contract for suppliers for the above was put in place from 1 February 2007

Proposed Measures to March 2008

- EMAS is to be centrally funded from 1 April 2007
- A Multi-Lingual Website with information for parents is to be launched in June 2007
- Individual Board commitments to support schools on EAL are to be delivered to the end of school year 2007
- An Economic appraisal for a long term Regional Service is nearing completion and is to be submitted to DE by July 2007
- Regional working, under the revised model, is to be in place from 1 September 2007.

(b) Inter-Board/Staff Commission led EQIAs

The action plan for the period April 2006 – March 2008 recommended the completion to Stage 4 of the EQIAs on:

- Implementation of the Job Evaluation Schemes
- Registration and Grant Aid Schemes for Local Voluntary Youth Groups

During the reporting year the following progress was made:-

Policy: Implementation of the Job Evaluation Schemes

This EQIA is at stage 3 of the process.

Policy: Registration and Grant Aid Schemes for Local Voluntary Youth Groups

This EQIA is at stage 4 of the process.

It is anticipated that consultation will commence on the above EQIAs within the coming months.

The timeframe for the establishment of the new Education and Skills Authority is such that it is unlikely that the Boards' will implement the findings of the EQIAs. Therefore the aim is to identify any adverse impact(s) across the nine equality groups and implement, as appropriate, any short-term measures to mitigate such impacts.

The Boards have agreed that the draft EQIAs will be submitted to the ESA Implementation Team prior to public consultation.

(c) Fundamental Best Value Review – Building Cleaning Project

This Fundamental Best Value review commenced in January 2007. The review is being taken forward by a Central Steering Team and working groups in the areas of:-

- Consultation;
- Finance and Procurement;
- Staffing and Operational Activities; and
- Partnership Arrangements.

The Consultation Working Group has identified a wide range of stakeholders including schools, pupils, parents, cleaning staff, suppliers, trades unions and equality representatives. The equality representatives comprise Section 75 groups including NICEM, Disability Action, Carers' Association and Age Concern.

The consultation is being undertaken through a combination of surveys questionnaires, meetings, focus groups and site visits and this phase should be completed by the end of June 2007. The review is due to be completed in December 2007

(d) Review of Employment Policies

During the year a Working Group was established on an inter-Board/Staff Commission basis to review employment policies, practices and procedures in preparation for the introduction of the Employment Equality (Age Regulations) (Northern Ireland) 2006. The review examined all existing policies.

The following policy changes have been agreed:-

Point of Entry on Salary Scale

All new entrants to be placed on SCP 6 as the minimum point on the scale with SCPs 4 & 5 no longer being used on the Clerical Officer scale (also includes Clerical Officer with Word Processing Duties/Technician 1 posts).

Enhanced Incremental Progression for Qualifications

Remove current practice of providing incremental progression for qualifications and placing all new entrants on SCP 6.

Young Employees' Rates of Pay

Differing rates of pay for 16 and 17 year olds to cease with effect from 1 October 2006.

Occupational Sick Pay

Change existing arrangements for the payment of OSP to include staff over the age of 65.

(e) Annual Leave entitlement in line with Accrued Service for new Entrants

From April 2007 new entrants to be awarded a minimum leave entitlement of 20 days per year (in line with existing entitlement) and after 5 years service 28 days per year. Agreed with effect from 1 April 2007.

(f) Policy on Measures to Combat Harassment

Amendment to paragraph 2.4 of policy (includes inappropriate comments e.g., suggesting that someone is too old (over the hill) etc.

JNC Circular No. 21 – Job Share

Amended to ensure “applications for Job Share are considered on the merits of each individual request taking into account all relevant legislation”.

JNC Circular No. 129 – Career Break

‘Minimum retirement age’ has been replaced with ‘normal retirement age’.

(g) Ongoing EQIA Monitoring Activities – April 2006 – March 2007**Progress Report on the Implementation of Actions as a result of the EQIA
“Electronic Libraries for Northern Ireland (ELFNI)”**

The Electronic Libraries for Northern Ireland programme has established an Intelligent

Customer Unit (ICU) to manage the services on behalf of the 5 Education and Library Boards. A major function of the ICU has been to ensure a robust Benefits Realisation Process is established and as part of that objectives have been set in line with the result of the ELFNI Equality Impact assessment. This process is monitored by the ELFNI Contract Executive.

An update of progress on actions to date as a result of the EQIA is attached in Appendix 3.

(h) Progress Report on the Implementation of Actions as a result of the EQIA “Code of Procedures for Recruitment, Selection and Promotion and Internal Trawl Procedure”

The implementation of the Policy on the Control of Vacancies had significant implications for the outworking of the findings of this EQIA to the extent that to fulfil the Policy and the Public Service Commission’s Guiding Principle No.2 on Managing Vacancies Effectively restrictions were placed on recruitment. In next year’s report which will be the final report on the Board’s Equality Scheme a detailed analysis will be provided on the current state of play on the implementation of the findings of this EQIA.

(i) Work-life Balance Policies

The findings of this review are due to be further considered in the light of (*recent legislative developments*) namely the extension of the right to request flexible working extended from those with children under 6 or with disabled children to those with caring responsibilities which came into effect in April 2007.

(j) 2007 – 08 EQIA Timetable

At this stage there are no EQIAs due to commence during April 2007 – March 2008.

4. TRAINING

The Board would wish to highlight the following training initiatives which occurred during the year:-

Equality Awareness - Section 75

During the year equality awareness programmes for new and existing staff continued.

Equality Awareness - Recruitment and Selection

On an inter-Board basis there were four training sessions for new panel members (47 participants). This training included guidance on the provisions of the Code, the Boards' Equal Opportunities Policy and the legislative provisions related to the promotion of equality of opportunity, equality awareness and good practice as it relates to recruitment and selection. HR staff provided recruitment and selection training to 35 Governors and Principals in 2006/2007.

Briefing Session on the Policy on the Control of Vacancies in relation to RPA

A briefing session on the Policy on the Control of Vacancies, to provide clarity and consistency of implementation, was held on the 14 November 2006 in the Staff Commission offices. Twenty representatives from the education sector employing authorities attended. Guidance was provided on the equality analysis required to ensure information-led decisions on the appropriate method of filling posts.

Employment and Training of New Minorities

The Catering Service provided training to new minorities working mainly on temporary contracts in the school meals service.

5. COMMUNICATION

The methods used to communicate progress on the implementation of our Equality Scheme during this period were as follows:-

- The Board's Five Year Review was submitted to the Equality Commission during June 2006 and has been placed on our website;
- Regular reports to Board members;
- Quarterly Updates/Reports to the Joint Consultative Forum, sample attached as Appendix 4;
- Reports published of JCF seminars held on the RPA, see section 9.

The impact of the approach adopted by the Boards and the Staff Commission has been positive. The community/voluntary and trade union sectors have acknowledged that it has allowed them to actively participate in the implementation of our Equality Schemes.

6. DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

(a) Employment Monitoring

The roll out of the pilot employment monitoring exercise across the five Boards was to be considered in the context of the implementation of the payroll computerisation strategy, however since the South Eastern and Western Boards have not as yet been linked to the new system it has been agreed to recommend that this exercise be taken forward by the new Education and Skills Authority post April 2008.

(b) Section 75 Monitoring Guidance Steering Group

The Boards/Staff Commission were represented on the Equality Commission's Steering Group established to develop Section 75 monitoring guidance. The guidance was issued for consultation during December 2006 with a closing date for responses of 28 February 2007. The Boards/Staff Commission participated in the Equality Commission's consultation events.

(c) Guidance on Equality Considerations – Public Private Partnership Projects (PPPs)

The Boards' Equality Units and the Boards' Solicitors contributed to the Equality Commission's draft guidance on the equality considerations surrounding PPP. The guidance was issued for consultation by the Equality Commission during December 2006 and the Boards participated in the Equality Commission's consultation events.

(d) Guidance for Consulting Children and Youth People

The Boards' were represented on a working group appointed by the Equality Commission to develop guidance for consulting children and young people.

(e) Schools Data

The annual school census is managed by the Department of Education to gather data on religion, gender, age, ethnicity and on pupils with special education needs including the type of disability or other need that such pupils may have.

(f) Geographical Information Systems (GIS)

GIS is a means of displaying data on a geographical basis rather than presenting statistical summaries. GIS is used by several Board Sections such as Youth Service, Transport, Equality and Capital Planning to help them identify the location of service users and any gaps in service. The Traveller Education Support Service gathers attendance and attainment data at a local school level on a monthly basis to augment what the schools are

obliged to return to the Department annually.

The Board's Youth Service provides Northern Ireland Youth Council with statistical data related to various characteristics of both voluntary registered and controlled youth groups. The analysed data is compiled into tailored reports which provide statistical and mapped information on:-

- types of youth provision;
- profile of youth service membership; and
- distribution of provision.

The Youth Service data is integrated with demographic data and analysed by age group and geographical area. This data has proved extremely beneficial in addressing statistical and geographical queries re New TSN, Section 75 – EQIAs etc. In 2006, non-unit based youth provision was added to these annual returns to include detached youth work, Duke of Edinburgh and outdoor education centres as defined by the Registration Group (a sub-committee of the Inter-Board Panel).

7. INFORMATION PROVISION AND ACCESS TO SERVICES

(a) Access to Services

A significant development this year was the establishment of the Ethnic-Minority Achievement Service (EMAS) referred to at paragraph 3(a) of this report. This regional service is also responsible for the following:-

- Providing access to interpreting services;
- Providing translations of important documents, in various languages, for teachers, pupils and their parents;
- Developing a website which will give pupils and their parents information about schooling and the curriculum in Northern Ireland, along with translations of important documents;
- Using 'Information Communication Technology' (ICT) to support the learning needs of pupils whose first language is not English; and
- Producing relevant software through the wide range of facilities available in the 'Learning Northern Ireland' (LNI) package.

The following arrangements which the Board has made to facilitate better access to its services remain in place:-

- Information can be provided on computer disc;
- Information can be provided in Braille (a Braille printer and reader has been installed at Newry Library);
- Information can be provided on audio cassette. An inter-Board/Staff Commission agreement exists with Armagh Talking Newspapers for the provision of a reader service;
- A textphone has been put in place to facilitate contact with members of the public with regard to all the functions of the Board;
- The website has been updated on an on-going basis. This has helped to ensure that it is in compliance with good access standards for people with disabilities. It currently meets the quality assurance standards for accessibility. Other accessibility features include skip links, speech enabled sections, variable text size, access keys and text only;
- Two associated web sites within SELB now have 'Browse Aloud' software installed;
- Equality pages for the website have been created and are regularly updated. These cover recruitment and selection, equality of opportunity and the Board's equality reports;
- During the year Signer/Interpreter services have been provided to deaf parents of children in schools to facilitate parental involvement in transfer arrangements, teacher – parent interviews and parental contact with staff from Educational Psychology Service, Special Education, Youth Service and Education Welfare.

Summary	Sessions	Cost	Average Cost
Interpreters	100	£4,500	£45.00
Signers	12	£400	£33.00
Translation	51	£5,100	£100.00
Totals		£10,000	

(b) Disability Access

In 2006/2007 the Board received £881,000 from the Department of Education, earmarked for the purpose of improving access to school buildings whilst £1,000 was allocated by the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure for similar works at public libraries. £813,000 was spent within the financial year leaving a carryover of £68,500.

Using these earmarked funds and monies from within its 'normal' capital budget, the Board has undertaken a significant programme of improvement works across the Board's estate

to meet the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act. Improvements include such measures as:-

- **Library accessibility improvements**
- **Provision of lifts**
- **Car parking for teaching staff, parents and visitors with disabilities**
- **Provision of level access facilities**
- **Minor works including ramps and handrails**
- **DDA audit of the SELB Estate**

The Youth Service has also worked with young people who had difficulties accessing youth facilities including Outdoor Education Centres. One young person, Sam Gibson, helped staff at Shannaghmore OEC to audit their accessibility and look at potential improvements in the future to help young people with disabilities benefit from their centre.



(c) Persons with dependants

The Education Welfare Service continues to develop their School Age Mothers (S.A.M.) Project. The Project was established to support young women who were pregnant or who have a baby whilst of compulsory school age to continue their education and at the same time have their personal development, antenatal and health care needs addressed. It was set up specifically to address the issue of young women who leave school each year around the time they become pregnant.

Essentially the project provides both individual and group support to young women of compulsory school age, 16 and under or those young women in mainstream education up to age 19 who are pregnant or who have a child to help them continue their education. The project worker also offers limited support through a one off visit to anyone referred to the project who is in further education and will direct them to the relevant agencies where they can access support.

In 2006/2007 the project received 76 referrals, 51 of these were for young women in mainstream education and they are now receiving ongoing support through the project

As well as the individual support, group work sessions with other young women in the same situation are held regularly during school holidays and the summer programme. These events have included the Cook It! Programme, baby massage; first aid; baby play day; healthy eating; sexual health; and relaxation for mums. Transport, childcare and lunch are provided for these sessions.

Peer support is very important to the young women. Many of the young women expressed how they would encourage other young mums to participate in the programme. We know that the young parents that participate in the project face a wide range of difficulties. These include deciding where they are going to live, managing on a very limited income, understanding and learning how to work their way through a whole range of different systems, and looking after their child's needs as well as their own needs. These young women are also at a higher risk of experiencing poor health and poverty. The SAM Project is an opportunity for the project to touch on some of these issues and raise awareness with the young women.

(d) Reasonable Adjustments

20 staff received support and guidance from Welfare Services regarding the adjustments the Board needed to make to help them make an effective return to work.

8. COMPLAINTS

No formal complaints received.

9. CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

The Board has an agreed strategy in place to facilitate individuals and groups affected by existing or proposed policies to engage in the decision making process. The following consultations were completed during the year:

(a) Joint Consultative Forum

The Joint Consultative Forum, established by the Boards/Staff Commission in partnership with NICEM, is an important lynchpin in ensuring effective engagement with the community, voluntary and trade union sectors. Indeed it adds considerable value, because of the diversity of the group, to engagements and consultations. This year it concluded that the primary item of business should be the implications of the Review of Public Administration on the education sector.

For this reason during the year the Joint Consultative Forum (JCF) organised two major seminars on the Review of Public Administration 'Education' The first took place on the 12 June 2006, it aimed 'to raise awareness on the implementation of the Review of Public Administration and explore how equality could be mainstreamed into the process and the policies, practices and procedures of the new Authority'. The keynote speaker was Chris Stewart, Head of the Review of Public Administration Division in the Department of Education. Presentations were given by Grainia Long - Equality Commission, Tim Cunningham - Equality Coalition, Sid McDowell - Public Service Commission and Kevin Doherty - Disability Action. Members from the community, voluntary and trade union sectors took part in a panel led discussion on the role of the community/voluntary sector in the review process. Approximately 50 participants from the community/voluntary, trade unions and public sectors attended the seminar and feedback was very positive. A report of the seminar was compiled and circulated to Forum members, the Department of Education, the Equality Commission and the Public Service Commission.

A second RPA seminar took place on 23 January 2007. This seminar focused on a number of the Department of Education's Policy Proposals in relation to the Review of Public Administration. The keynote speaker was Chris Stewart, Head of the Review of Public Administration Division in DE. Presentations were given by Kevin Doherty, Director of Services, Disability Action and Bernard Cullen, Professor of Philosophy at Queens University, Belfast, Chair of the Staff Commission and member of the Public Service Commission. There were four workshop sessions which provided participants with an opportunity to consider the Department's policy proposals. Approximately 60 participants from the community/voluntary, trade unions and public sectors attended the seminar and

feedback was very positive. A report on the seminar was issued to Forum members, the Department of Education, the Equality Commission and the Public Service Commission. The reports are available on the Staff Commission's website at www.staffcom.org.uk

(b) Youth Summit

NICEM and the Runnymede Trust were appointed by the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM) to undertake a project to support the implementation of the Racial Equality Strategy by running a scoping exercise on the six shared aims of the Strategy. NICEM invited the Boards/Staff Commission to work in partnership with them. A Youth Summit was organised and took place on the 4 May 2006 in Parliament Buildings, Stormont. The Boards selected and supported the 100 young people (aged 15 – 25) who participated in the Summit. A DVD of the event has been compiled by NICEM.

A follow-up seminar on the theme 'Working together to Eliminate Racism' was held on 19 September. The Boards/Staff Commission were represented. A number of government departments and voluntary bodies participated in the event. The seminar provided an opportunity to exchange ideas and information about good practice and case-studies in Participation, Dialogue and Capacity Building: the three aims of the Race Equality Strategy. Copies of the Youth Summit DVD were made available to participants.

(c) Good Relations Policy and Strategy

As part of the Boards'/Staff Commission's consultation exercise on their Good Relations Policy and Strategy a consultation meeting was held on the 2 November 2006. It was attended by eleven consultees representing nine organisations. A report of the meeting was circulated to participants. A number of written responses were also received and the Policy and Strategy were amended to incorporate feedback received.

(d) Disability Discrimination Act 2006 – Disability Duties

One of the duties under the Act is a requirement on Public Authorities to draft and consult upon a Disability Action Plan. The Boards/Staff Commission sought an exemption from the Equality Commission to this aspect of the duties. They agreed to develop an interim Action Plan which would allow them to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people, and encourage participation by disabled persons in public life.

In the Joint Consultative Forum's Quarterly Update, issued in December 2006, consultees were advised of the Boards'/Staff Commission's request to the Equality Commission seeking an exemption. The Boards/Staff Commission will be consulting Disability Groups

on the Interim Action Plan over the coming months. A consultation event has been organised in partnership with Disability Action and MENCAP for 12 June 2007.

10. THE GOOD RELATIONS DUTY

The Board's commitment to the promotion of good relations is integrated with its commitment to the promotion of equality of opportunity, as appropriate, throughout the Equality Scheme.

Good Relations Policy and Strategy

During 2005/06 the Boards/Staff Commission developed a draft policy and strategy aimed at the promotion of good relations. This year the draft was finalised. The Policy and strategy were developed to underpin the Boards'/Staff Commission's commitment to:-

- A Shared Future Policy and Strategic Framework for Good Relations in Northern Ireland, March 2005.
- A Racial Equality Strategy for Northern Ireland, 2005 – 2010.
- Our Equality Schemes being implemented under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

The strategy sets out the context, policy, vision, values and identifies the shared aims which include the promotion of good relations, equal protection, equality of service provision, participation, dialogue and capacity building. A number of actions were identified under each aim, with responsibility allocated, timescales and anticipated outcomes which will facilitate evaluation, monitoring and review.

The Boards/Staff Commission in recognising that this is an ambitious and challenging programme of work, particularly at a time of major organisational change, do not anticipate that it will be fully implemented within the timeframe specified. However, progress made will help inform the Good Relations Strategy of the new Education and Skills Authority.

The Policy and Strategy have been attached as an example of good practice in the Equality Commission's Good Relations Guide.

Good Relations – Racial Equality Work

The four main sections involved in racial equality work are the Ethnic Minority Achievement

Service (EMAS), the Youth Service, Libraries and the Equality, Rights and Social Inclusion (ERSI) Unit.

EMAS works with children and young people and their parents who have educational support needs including assistance with language development. The team works with teaching and non-teaching staff to help schools develop their own skills and capacities to meet the needs of the increasing number of minority ethnic children and young people for whom English is an additional language.

The Youth Service provides advice, guidance, support and training to minority ethnic communities and youth groups on how to promote inclusion and avoid racist/sectarian activity. The Making Links project and the Motion Project (see page 2) brought together young people from various communities and young people with varying abilities to use music and dance as a multi-media approach to promoting good relations.

The Library Service both in school libraries and public libraries provide a wide range of services including internet access, free e-mail accounts, advice and guidance on education, training, employment and family support services and signposting to other essential services. Many of the main libraries also stock foreign language books and resource materials as well as providing information leaflets on how to use the library service in most of the commonly used languages in the southern board area.

The ERSI Unit provides funding through the Peace Programme for projects supporting minority ethnic communities through STEP in Dungannon and Wah Hep in Craigavon. The Unit helps schools in the Extended Schools programme to reach out and include new minorities with support and assistance including English as an Additional Language funding. There is also support and funding provided through the Family Support Project in Brownlow (T4A funded by Atlantic Philanthropies) and the Neighbourhood Renewal programme in Armagh, Coalisland, Craigavon, Dungannon and Newry. The Support Officer and the Adviser also manage the Traveller Education Support Service across both the SELB and WELB areas which helps support schools and Traveller Support Groups in many areas. The Unit employs 6 teachers, a Youth Worker and co-funds the Community Development Post in Newry.

Northern Ireland Anti-Bullying Forum

Statutory and voluntary bodies with a key interest in children and their education have come together to form the Northern Ireland Anti-Bullying Forum. The Forum will co-ordinate anti bullying efforts and raise the profile of the issues among schools and pupils. The strategy formulated by the Forum should ensure greater help not just for children who are bullied but also for those who do the bullying. The members of the Forum are committed to working together to create and promote an environment free from bullying for

children and young people. The Board's Equality Manager chairs the Anti-Racist Task Group which has developed advice and guidance materials for children and young people, for schools and for parents on tackling race-related bullying.

Good Relations – Community Relations Work

The Curriculum team within CASS supports the development of the Schools Community Relations Programme and the Citizenship elements of the revised curriculum which provides advice and guidance to schools on tackling sectarianism and promoting good relations.

The Board's Youth Service also manage the Youth Community Relations programme which during the 2006/2007 year had 1476 young people taking part in cross-community activity (702 Protestant, 766 Catholic).

11. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

11.1 Review of Public Administration - Implementation Process

Within DE a Programme Management Board to oversee implementation of the education aspects of RPA has been established. This Board provides leadership and direction for the review and will manage arrangements to ensure the smooth transition to the new structures.

Within DE different projects were established to take forward the implementation of the various changes. A Human Resource Project Board was established in January 2006 to identify the HR issues arising from RPA in partnership with stakeholders and to develop and implement proposals to address these.

An ESA Implementation Team was also appointed during the year to identify and take forward work on the key preparatory actions needed to establish the Education and Skills Authority and work with the Chief Executive designate, when appointed, to build the new organisation and help to ensure it is operating effectively from April 2008. The Chief Executive Designate took up post on 1 February 2007.

The Boards/Staff Commission are members of the Project Board and identified the importance of a draft Equality Action Plan to ensure equality was mainstreamed into its processes, policies and procedures being developed. An Equality Plan was approved following consultation by the Project Board. A process for the development of HR Policies and Procedures was also approved which specifies how equality could be mainstreamed into all aspects of the work of the HR Project. It requires that:

- Consultees are informed of the proposed programme of work of the HR Project;
- Equality considerations are explored at each key stage of the policy-making process;
- When policies are agreed they are screened and consultees are advised and invited to comment on the screening decision(s), as appropriate; and
- EQIA(s) are conducted as required.

An important component of this draft Plan was to ensure that information is provided to consultees in a timely manner and consultation, as appropriate, takes place with Section 75 groups.

Prior to the development of this Plan the DE had conducted a high level equality screening of the main RPA proposals put forward for the future provision of Education Service under RPA. This screening exercise was not an assessment of the specific outworkings of the proposals. It is intended that the detailed proposals for change will be assessed as they are developed and will, depending on separate equality screening, be subject to separate EQIAs. The high level screening did not identify adverse impacts.

Information on the HR Process, Policies and Procedures

In October 2006 the HR Project Board issued to consultees information on policies and/or procedures being developed by the HR Project Board; the HR implications of RPA; the Equality Plan and the Project Board's proposals in regard to screening. Feedback was invited from consultees. Twelve written responses were received from community and voluntary sector groups. The trade unions were involved in the process as members of the HR Project Board and other workstreams. The Policy on the Control of Vacancies was screened in March 2007. The screening decision is currently being considered by the Education and Skills Authority Implementation Team.

11.2 Mainstreaming Equality in Schools (designation for the purposes of Section 75)

The Equality Commission commissioned the National Foundation for Educational Research Centre (NFER) at Queens University to conduct research into considering options for mainstreaming equality objectives into Northern Ireland schools. A consultation event for Statutory Providers and NDPBs took place on the 8 March 2006. The Equality Representatives from the Boards/Staff Commission attended the consultation event. The

Research Team presented its findings and recommendations at the Equality Commission's conference held on the 22 June 2006. A number of officers from the Boards/Staff Commission attended the Conference.

11.3 Assessing the Equality Commission's Role in the Effectiveness of Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998

The Equality Commission commissioned Professor Colin Harvey, Director of Human Rights at the School of Law, Queens University to assess the Equality Commission's role in the effectiveness of Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. The Boards/Staff Commission were invited to participate in the review. A representative for the Boards/Staff Commission was interviewed by Professor Harvey as part of the review.

11.4 Audit of Compliance by Public Authorities

As part of the Equality Commission's effectiveness review Reeves Associates were commissioned to conduct an Audit of Compliance by Public Authorities. The Staff Commission's Senior Principal Officer (Equality) met with Dr Dory Reeves on two occasions as part of the audit and provided detailed information.

11.5 Section 75 Policies and Practice for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgendered People

The Office of the First and Deputy First Minister funded the Institute for Conflict Research (ICR) and Barry Fitzpatrick to conduct a research project to provide a broad evidence base to assist statutory bodies in effectively considering Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgendered People (LGBT) issues in the development of policy and practice under Section 75. A representative for the Boards/Staff Commission met with Ulf Hansson, Research Officer (ICR) as part of the research project, and a focus group meeting took place on 23 October 2006.

11.6 Mainstreaming Equality of Opportunity for Travellers in Education: Towards a Strategy

The Equality Commission developed a paper on 'Mainstreaming Equality of Opportunity for Travellers in Education: Towards a Strategy'. The Equality Commission issued the paper seeking views and comments by 10 July 2006. The Boards submitted their views on the paper.

New Disability Duties

Summary Progress Report

Introduction

A summary progress report outlining the steps taken to implement a programme of work under the above disability duties.

Under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, as amended (the Act), public authorities, when carrying out their functions must have due regard to the need to:-

- promote positive attitudes towards disabled people; and
- encourage the participation of disabled people in public life.

The new legal duties also require public authorities to prepare a disability action plan showing how they propose to fulfil the disability duties in relation to their functions. The five Boards and Staff Commission have been exempted, by the Equality Commission, from this particular requirement because they will cease to exist on 31 March 2008.

The Boards/Staff Commission have developed an Interim Action Plan which will allow us to implement a programme of work that will hopefully pave the way for the development of a comprehensive Disability Action Plan for the new Education and Skills Authority which it is envisaged will be operational from 1 April 2008.

This interim plan complements work already underway in relation to the implementation of Equality Schemes (under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998) and includes the programme of work agreed with the Equality Commission when our exemptions were granted.

Consultation

A consultation event organised in partnership with Disability Action/Mencap on the interim action plan is planned for Tuesday, 12 June 2007. This consultation event, which will take place at Disability Action, will aim to obtain views on:-

- What consultees think the priorities should be in education in regard to the promotion of equality of opportunity for people with disabilities? and
- How we can work more effectively in partnerships with other organisations to promote disability equality?

Interim Action Plan

The key elements of the above plan and progress to date in its implementation are detailed below:-

Action Measure

Progress

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>1. Review measures already taken and/ or proposed to promote equality of opportunity for people with disabilities.</p> <p>2. Identify the current public life positions, if any, under the remit of the Boards/Staff Commission.</p> <p>3. If such positions exist:
(i) examine how appointments are made to such public life positions;
(ii) explore how disabled people could be encouraged to apply for such positions.</p> <p>4. Conduct an examination of training and guidance on the promotion of equality for people with disabilities.</p> <p>5. Organise a joint seminar with Section 75 Groups to:-

(i) explore how public life positions could be made more accessible to and inclusive of people with disabilities;
(ii) examine how to better promote positive attitudes towards disabled people; and
(iii) identify measures which could be considered for inclusion in the disability action plan for ESA</p> | <p>Review conducted, report available. New screening pro forma, with disability questions introduced May 2007.</p> <p>Review ongoing. Clarification required on what is meant by the term 'public life'.</p> <p>To be undertaken.</p> <p>Partially conducted under measure 1. To be completed.</p> <p>Preliminary arrangements in place for such a seminar in October 2007. Proposal is to organise it under the auspices of the Joint Consultative Forum.</p> |
|--|--|

Conclusion

A copy of the interim action plan, consultation event leaflet and/or the report on the review of measures to promote disability equality is available from the Staff Commission.

EQUALITY COMMISSION FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

**Public Authority Annual Progress Report
2006 - 2007**

This report template includes a number of self assessment questions regarding implementation of the Section 75 statutory duties from **1 April 2006 to 31 March 2007**. Please enter information at the relevant part of each section and ensure that it is submitted electronically (by completing this template) and in writing, with a signed cover letter from the Chief Executive or, in his/her absence, the Deputy Chief Executive to the Commission by **31 August 2007**.

Name of public authority (Enter details below)

Southern Education and Library Board
3 Charlemont Place
The Mall
Armagh
BT61 9AX
T: (028) 37 512200
F: (028) 37 512490
Minicom/Textphone: (028) 37 415 415
Website: www.selb.org

Deleted: www.selb.org

Equality Officer (Enter name and contact details below)

Mr. Kieran Shields
SELB
3 Charlemont Place
The Mall
Armagh
BT61 9AX
T: (028) 37 415381
F: (028) 37 415385
E: kieran.shields@selb.org

Executive Summary

What were the key policy/service developments made by the authority during this reporting period to better promote equality of opportunity and good relations?

- The Regional Ethnic-Minority Achievement Service (EMAS) was established on a regional Five Board basis (paragraph 3 (a) refers);
- The joint Inter-Board/Staff Commission Equality Impact Assessments (EQIAs) advanced to consultation stage, paragraph 3(b) refers;
- Major review of employment policies in preparation for the Employment Equality (Age) Regulations (NI) 2006, paragraph 3(d) refers;
- Equality mainstreamed into the Department of Education's Review of Public Administration (RPA) Human Resource Project;
- Two major seminars organised under the auspices of the Joint Consultative Forum on RPA;
 - Interim Action Plan developed to facilitate the implementation of the new Disability Duties;
 - Good Relations Policy and Practice finalised during the year and cited by the Equality Commission as an example of good practice.

What are the main initiatives planned in the coming year to ensure the authority improves outcomes in terms of equality of opportunity and good relations for individuals from the nine categories covered by Section 75?

- Review the overall equality strategy to help inform the development of an:-
 - Equality Scheme;
 - Good Relations Strategy; and
 - Disability Action Plan by the new Education and Skills Authority;
- Complete to Stage 4 the on-going EQIAs particularly the Youth Service Registration and Grant Aid Scheme for Voluntary Groups;
- Consult on and implement the Interim Action Plan with regard to the new Disability Duties.

Section 1: Strategic Implementation of the Section 75 Duties

Outline evidence of progress made in developing and meeting equality and good relations objectives, performance indicators and targets in corporate and annual operating plans during 2006-07.

The establishment of the combined Equality, Rights and Social Inclusion Unit in April 2006 has helped to mainstream equality issues across all of the Board's departments. The Special Education Section continues to meet the needs of children and young people with special educational requirements by adapting services, improving service delivery and providing additional communication support when required. Training, funding, support, advice and guidance have been used by all Sections to facilitate the uptake of education, youth and library services by Section 75 groupings who have been under-represented in the past.

Specialised training in helping Sections to meet the needs of the Traveller community have been delivered to front line services such as Youth, Libraries and Educational Welfare. The Diversity Awareness Training offered to new employees and requesting Sections has been amended to reflect the new reality of a large and diverse multi-cultural customer base in the Southern area.

Northern Ireland Anti-Bullying Forum

Statutory and voluntary bodies with a key interest in children and their education have come together to form the Northern Ireland Anti-Bullying Forum. The Forum will co-ordinate anti bullying efforts and raise the profile of the issues among schools and pupils. The members of the Forum are committed to working together to create and promote an environment free from bullying for children and young people. The Equality Manager chairs the Anti-Racist Task Group which has developed advice and guidance materials for children and young people, for schools and for parents on tackling race-related bullying.

Section 2: Screening

Provide an update of new/proposed/revised policies screened during the year.

Title of policy subject to screening	Was the <u>F</u>ull Screening Report or the <u>R</u>esult of initial screening issued for consultation? <i>Please enter <u>F</u> or <u>R</u></i>	Was initial screening decision changed following consultation? <u>Y</u>es/<u>N</u>o	Is policy being subject to EQIA? <u>Y</u>es/<u>N</u>o? If yes indicate year for assessment.
Library Opening Hours	F	N	N
Library Branch closures in Waringstown/Money more	F	N	N

Section 3: Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA)

- Provide an update of policies subject to EQIA during 2006/07, stage 7 EQIA monitoring activities and an indicative EQIA timetable for 2007-08.

EQIA Timetable – April 2006 - March 2007

Title of Policy EQIA	EQIA Stage at end March 07 (Steps 1-6)	Outline adjustments to policy intended to benefit individuals, and the relevant equality & good relations categories due to be affected.
Job Evaluation Schemes	3	The timeframe for the establishment of the new Education and Skills Authority is such that it is unlikely that the Boards' will implement the findings of this EQIA. Boards will therefore aim to identify any adverse impact(s) across the nine equality groups and as appropriate implement any short-term measures to mitigate such impacts
Registration and Grant Aid Schemes for Local Voluntary Youth Groups	4	The timeframe for the establishment of the new Education and Skills Authority is such that it is unlikely that the Boards' will implement the findings of this EQIA. Boards will therefore aim to identify any adverse impact(s) across the nine equality groups and as appropriate implement any short-term measures to mitigate such impacts. At the Chief Administrative Officers' meeting of 30 March 2007 it was agreed that the draft EQIA would be submitted to the ESA Implementation Team prior to public consultation.

Ongoing EQIA Monitoring Activities April 2006- March 2007

Title of EQIA subject to Stage 7 monitoring	Indicate if differential impacts previously identified have reduced or increased	Indicate if adverse impacts previously identified have reduced or increased
ELFNI	R	R
Recruitment & Selection	R	R

2007-08 EQIA Time-table

Title of EQIAs due to be commenced during April 2007 – March 2008	Existing or New policy?	Please indicate expected timescale of Decision Making stage i.e. Stage 6
None		

Where the EQIA timetable for 2006/07 (as detailed in the previous annual S75 progress report to the Commission) has not been met, please provide details of the factors responsible for delay and details of the timetable for re-scheduling the EQIA/s in question.

No delays or re-scheduling to report.

Section 4: Training

Outline training provision during the year associated with the Section 75 Duties/Equality Scheme requirements:

A number of training courses and diversity awareness raising programmes were delivered throughout the year including the equality training provided to all new staff during their Corporate Induction day and training for new minorities working in the Catering Service. The Youth Service ran a number of events including the 'United Youth' project, 'Making Links', the 'Trash project' and the 'Motion' project which supported all communities, young people with disabilities and young mothers to take part in youth training and good relations events.

Section 5: Communication

Outline how the authority communicated progress on delivery of the statutory duties during the year and evidence of the impact/success of such activities.

The Board's Five Year Review was submitted to the Equality Commission during June 2006 and has been placed on our website along with equality reports available to the general public. The Equality Manager provides regular reports to Board members and the Senior Management Team. Quarterly Updates/Reports are provided to the Joint Consultative Forum and information is provided to community partnerships such as Children's Services Planning on a regular basis. All of the Board's reports and updates are placed on the Board website and regular bulletins are issued to schools and other service users in youth service and libraries e.g. Southern Outlook magazine.

Section 6: Data Collection & Analysis

Outline any systems that were established during the year to supplement available statistical and qualitative research:

The Board has taken the lead on behalf of the 5 Boards to improve the regular and accurate collection of attendance and attainment data for Traveller children across Northern Ireland. The electronic data collection system will harmonise the previously separate Board reporting systems and improve the accuracy of returns from schools and pre-school playgroups. The updated figures will be presented to the Equality Commission in early October 2007.

Section 7: Information Provision, Access to Information and Services

Detail any initiatives/steps taken during the year to improve access to services including provision of information in accessible formats:

The Board continued to support the Armagh Talking Newspaper, the provision of Braille facilities in Newry library, Signers, Interpreters, Translators and web-based foreign language materials for all service users who need information in more accessible formats. The Board has made good progress in widening the number and range of core leaflets which are available in foreign languages e.g. this year the Library Service 'Acceptable Usage' policy was translated into the 6 main community languages in the Southern Board area.

The Board has improved both the availability of information in a variety of formats including the number of languages and the range of information available to the general public. Existing websites have been improved and updated and new sites such as the Ethnic Minority Achievement Service www.education-support.org.uk have provided new information to children and young people and their parents on how to access and benefit from educational support services in 16 languages.

Section 8: Complaints

No formal complaints were received.

Section 9: Consultation and Engagement

Provide details of the measures taken to enhance the level of engagement with individuals and representative groups during the year:

A number of Board Services continued their established practice of consulting and engaging with adults, children and young people either through service reviews (Special Education), future planning (Children and Young People's Services) or pre-programme consultation (Youth Service). The Equality, Rights and Social Inclusion Unit participated in youth consultations for the new Family Support Project in Craigavon which elicited 4,000 responses from young people across the target area through an anonymous school-based survey. The Board also attended

public meetings on the Peace 3 programme, Neighbourhood Renewal, Extended Schools and Community Safety. Public consultations and equality impact assessments have been held with a variety of special interest groups and the general public and Signers have been provided during service reviews such as the Youth work Strategy review, as a means of assisting young people with hearing impairments to participate.

Section 10: The Good Relations Duty

Provide details of additional steps taken to implement or progress the good relations duty during the year. Please indicate any findings or expected outcomes from this work:

Good Relations is promoted in the area through the Schools' Community Relations Programme, the Youth Service Community Relations Programme, the Library Service Inclusion Project and the Citizenship curriculum. Positive engagement with ethnic minority communities continued through the Animate project, STEP, Wah Hep and other local groups including the Children's Services Planning BME Working Group, the Family Support Project in Brownlow and the Good Relations Forum in Newry. This has helped the Board to quickly and effectively establish needs, identify gaps in provision and to work with these partner organisations in developing projects to meet such needs. The Board assisted STEP and Wah Hep to access EU funds through the Peace II Extension Programme.

Section 11: Additional Comments

11.1 Review of Public Administration - Implementation Process

Board Officers participated in the planning groups on a five Board basis to assist the RPA Implementation Team in making progress towards the establishment of the new Education and Skills Authority.

**Progress Report on the Implementation of Actions to be taken
as a result of the ELFNI Equality Impact Assessment.**

ACTION	PROGRESS TO DATE
<p>1 Websites will be identified and signposted which provide reliable, accurate information relevant to the needs of consultees and other library users</p>	<p>5 Board Information Publishing and Website (IPAW) Group was established in April 2002 and continues to operate</p> <p>Validation system set up for quality assurance of websites, in use since September 2002. All boards are contributing to the process and an extensive list of information links has been created.</p> <p>A newly designed www.ni-libraries.net portal implemented on 1st April 2007 will offer direct access to <i>Northern Ireland Legislation</i> website and <i>Online Library</i>.</p> <p><i>Online Library</i> (see Action 12 below) offers access to 14 online reference resources. These are available to library users from home as well as in the library.</p> <p>Training in <i>Online Library</i> is provided for library staff, school library staff and school teachers. In the coming year this training will be offered to school pupils and members of the public.</p>
<p>2 Libraries will provide ICT taster sessions</p>	<p>ICT tester sessions now part of core activities.</p> <p>An example of the type of work being taken forward is that in NEELB a new formula for assisting the public with ICT was introduced in August 2006. The sessions are called <i>Start Sessions</i> and cover the three topics Computers, Internet and Email. Until March 2007, 225 one-to-one sessions were delivered to members of the public by library staff.</p>

ACTION	PROGRESS TO DATE
3 Disability awareness training will take place	Training delivered on disability awareness in all Boards including generic training, awareness of the needs of the people with specific disabilities and training in the use of assistive technology.
4 Equality awareness training will be delivered to all staff	All Boards deliver equality awareness training.
5 Boards will deliver training to staff in the use of the adaptive technology which has been installed	Each of the Boards is taking training in the use of adaptive technology forward.
6 Research and consultation to assess the specific needs of local minority ethnic groups in each Board area will take place	<p>Work is continuing to address the needs of local minority ethnic groups. The acceptable use policy for the operation of public access computers is available in a number of languages. Specific examples of ongoing work include:</p> <p>SELB have produced handouts and lists of useful websites in 4 community languages.</p> <p>SEELB has made registration forms available in Chinese. Chinese book collections in Bangor and Newtownbreda Library for adults and children. Books in Lithuanian and Polish are being purchased for Lisburn City Library.</p> <p>In NEELB:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NICEM – involvement with this group in Ballycastle & Coleraine Libraries; • Ballymoney Inter-Ethnic Group – Ballymoney library staff part of this group; • Ballymoney Inter-Ethnic Group – welcome evening for new arrivals; • Ballymoney Library & PSNI – welcome evening every

ACTION	PROGRESS TO DATE
	<p>Thursday with tea/coffee;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ballymoney Library & Causeway Institute FHE – English classes every Thursday evening; • Meeting held at Greenisland Library with Polish Police Inspector and members of Polish community • Antrim Library contacts and involvement with the Antrim Aware Group • Polish and Jamaican story telling in Antrim Library
<p>7 Groups and individuals including minority ethnic groups will be asked to contribute to the identification and validation of websites</p>	<p>The IPAW (See 1 above) Group made contact with a number of groups before this reporting period but no real progress has been made.</p>
<p>8 Taster sessions and specific marketing will encourage older people to use ELFNI</p>	<p>Now part of libraries' core activities. Examples of this during the past year included 'Help the Aged' courses held in a number of libraries in SEELB-Tullycarnet, Downpatrick, Lisburn. ICT sessions were held in a number of libraries across Northern Ireland as part of Silver Surfers day and there are ongoing one to one sessions for older clients.</p>
<p>9 The service provider will carry out annual technology reviews which will include adaptive technology</p>	<p>Following an earlier review of assistive technology 142 large screen TFT monitors were implemented in March 2007 across all libraries in Northern Ireland. The Electronic Libraries PPP Service Provider, Amey, is required to carry out regular technology reviews and this includes assistive technology. A software application product, Browse Aloud is available through the NI-libraries web portal which speech enables the website. This software application is designed to assist in the navigation of the site for people: With Low literacy and reading skills; Where English is not the first language; Dyslexic Community; and People with mild visual impairment. As part of planning for a full refresh of the technology used for the Peoples Network to commence in the autumn of 2007 consideration is being given</p>

ACTION	PROGRESS TO DATE
	to how assistive facilities can be further developed.
10 Discussion will take place with the Service Provider as to whether it is possible to adjust the software settings on PCs across a large network	Discussions have taken place – currently adjustments generally not possible but issue being considered as part of a refresh of all the technology due to commence in the autumn of 2007.
11 Further research will be carried out into the needs of hospital patients	Included in Tomorrow's Libraries.
12 Access at home via ELFNI to fee-charging electronic information services to which libraries subscribe will be investigated.	A number of electronic resources have been identified and subscription arrangements made. These services are available via the NI-Libraries.net web portal. This “Online library” includes health databases, newspaper archives, encyclopaedias, dictionaries including language dictionaries, Ability magazine (information on technology for disabled people)

- conduct an examination of training and guidance provided on the promotion of equality of opportunity for people with disabilities;
- outline the current range of public life positions, if any, for which they are currently responsible;
- explore, in consultation with disability groups, how such positions could be made more accessible to and inclusive of people with disabilities.

A report on this work will be submitted to the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, Section 75 consultee groups and to the Education and Skills Authority.

This work will prepare the necessary groundwork for the Education and Skills Authority and facilitate it in meeting its requirement to develop and consult upon a disability action plan within its first six months of operation.

The education authorities would wish to emphasise that they are only seeking an exemption from the legal requirement to produce a disability action plan for the reasons specified above. They will, in the interim, take steps to promote positive attitudes towards disabled persons and encourage their participation in public life.

Draft Good Relations Policy and Strategy

The Education and Library Boards/Staff Commission have developed a draft Good Relations Policy and Strategy which will pave the way for the development of a more comprehensive Good Relations Strategy which can be taken forward by the new Education Skills Authority.

The draft policy and strategy was issued to consultees in June 2006. Six written responses were received and a consultation event took place on 2 November 2006 at which nine organisations were represented.

Changes to the Strategy in the light of the feedback received are currently being considered.

Consultees suggested that, where good practice has been developed, consideration should be given as to how this can be communicated to a wider audience. The redrafted policy and strategy will be made available in due course.

Joint
Consultative
Forum

Education Sector

Quarterly Update

Appendix 4

December 2006

Steering Group

The last meeting of the Steering Group was postponed primarily because work on the RPA policy proposals was taking longer than originally anticipated. The Forum Officers met on 21 November and agreed that a meeting of the Forum should take place in January 2007. There are a number of business items on which progress has been made. These are reported on below:

Review of Public Administration (RPA) : Policy Proposals

The Joint Consultative Forum has organised a seminar on the DE policy proposals emerging from the RPA. Further information on the proposals, together with a programme for the seminar, are attached.

New Chief Executive Designate

Gavin Boyd has been appointed Chief Executive Designate of the Education and Skills Authority.

Mr Boyd, who has been Chief Executive of CCEA since 2000, will take up the new role early in the new year. As Chief Executive Designate of the new Authority he will spearhead one of the UK's largest public sector organisations, with a budget of £30 billion.

The new authority will become operational in 2008 and will replace the five Education and Library Boards and the range of other education organisations funded by the Government.

English as an Additional Language (EAL)

The Department of Education is in the final stages of developing a policy for children whose first language is not English and who have significant difficulty with English. This is known as English as an Additional Language (EAL).

The intention of the policy is to assist the promotion of equality of opportunity for children for whom English is an additional language by enabling them to access the Northern Ireland curriculum.

It is anticipated the policy should be finalised by early 2007.

An Ethnic Minority Achievement Service (EMAS) incorporating EAL will be established from 1 April 2007. This single regionalised service will use the guidelines from the EAL policy to address the issues surrounding EAL provision and ensure the correct level of EAL support throughout all schools across Northern Ireland.

An interpretation service and translation of documents service will be set up in early 2007 through the EMAS. This will establish access to interpreting services and provide key documents in various languages for teachers, EAL pupils and their parents.

The total allocation for EAL is £3.4m for 2006/07. DE has given Boards earmarked funding of £834k for 2006/07 and schools just over £2.5m through the Common Funding Formula. In addition, £100k has been allocated for interpreting and translation services through the Children and Young People's Funding Package.

The October 2005 census figures indicated that there are now 2,679 EAL children and young people in schools in Northern Ireland, an increase of 623 on the October 2004 census figures.

In 2005/06, out of 703 EAL children and young people in post primary schools, 148 had special educational needs. An analysis of EAL pupils by SEN is only available for post primary schools in 2005/06. In 2006/07, this analysis will be available for both primary and post primary schools. This information will not be ready until mid December 2006.

Revision of Religious Education (RE) Core Syllabus

The EQIA on the RE Core Syllabus has been completed. The Minister has accepted proposals from the four main Churches for a revised core syllabus for religious education (RE). When the new syllabus is introduced from September 2007 it will include Christianity, morality and, for the first time, World Religions. The Department of Education has advised that the EQIA Results document will be issued to those consultees who responded and will be available on its website at www.deni.gov.uk (follow link to 'curriculum and assessment' then 'RE Core Syllabus').

Disability Action Plans

Under the Disability Discrimination (NI) Order 2006, public authorities, when carrying out their functions, must have due regard to the need to:-

- promote positive attitudes towards disabled persons; and
- encourage participation by disabled persons in public life.

The Education Authorities, namely the five Boards, CCMS, Youth Council and the Staff Commission fully recognise the importance of the disability duties proposed under the Order and accept that they have an important contribution to make to ensure people with disabilities enjoy equal respect and full inclusion in society. The education authorities, however, would question whether the effort involved in preparing a disability action plan in the present context and validating it is disproportionate to its impact on promoting positive attitudes towards disabled persons and encouraging participation by disabled persons in public life in Northern Ireland. The effort in preparing and consulting on such a plan when they will only be in existence until 31 March 2008 is, in the view of the education authorities, disproportionate. It is noted that the ESA will be obliged within its first six months of operation to develop and submit its disability action plan to the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland.

For this reason the education authorities have written to the Equality Commission seeking to be exempted from producing such a plan and proposing that in this interim period, they will:

- review measures they have already taken or are in the process of taking to promote positive attitudes towards people with disabilities in public life;

Shared Aim 5: Dialogue			
Action	Responsibility	Timescale	Anticipated Outcome
5.1 Actively promote dialogue to encourage good relations to tackle racism and sectarianism and to promote equality of opportunity e.g. anti-racism and/or anti-sectarianism initiatives.	Equalities Manager	On-going	Evidence that Board officers have developed opportunities internally and externally to promote dialogue as a means of reconciling differences within our society.
5.2 Encourage communication, tolerance and trust across Northern Ireland but particularly in areas where communities are living apart.	Equalities Manager	On-going	Evidence that Officers participation in wider Good Relations initiatives has been positive and valued.
5.3 Encourage, through dialogue, a greater understanding of the complexity of our history.	CASS Advisers	On-going	Improved understanding and mutual respect between different communities.
5.4 Host, co-manage or help to organise at least one major cultural diversity event.	Equalities Manager	January 2008	Raised awareness of cultural diversity.
Shared Aim 6: Capacity Building			
Action	Responsibility	Timescale	Anticipated Outcome
6.1 Work with community and voluntary sector organisations to provide advice, guidance and support on Board services to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Migrant workers • Asylum seekers and refugees and their families. and to help them develop their own capacity.	Extended Schools Coordinators	Jan 07 - March 08	Increase awareness by ethnic minority people and groups of services available. Improved uptake of services.
6.2 Seek to identify best practice from other countries and adopt that practice, in consultation with appropriate consultee groups, to inform the development of community development and good relations work within the Boards and in schools.	Equalities Manager		Implementation of established best practice.

GOOD RELATIONS POLICY AND STRATEGY for Education and Library Boards

2006 -2008

Draft Version

Shared Aim 5: Dialogue			
Action	Responsibility	Timescale	Anticipated Outcome
5.1 Actively promote dialogue to encourage good relations to tackle racism and sectarianism and to promote equality of opportunity e.g. anti-racism and/or anti-sectarianism initiatives.	Equalities Manager	On-going	Evidence that Board officers have developed opportunities internally and externally to promote dialogue as a means of reconciling differences within our society.
5.2 Encourage communication, tolerance and trust across Northern Ireland but particularly in areas where communities are living apart.	Equalities Manager	On-going	Evidence that Officers participation in wider Good Relations initiatives has been positive and valued.
5.3 Encourage, through dialogue, a greater understanding of the complexity of our history.	CASS Advisers	On-going	Improved understanding and mutual respect between different communities.
5.4 Host, co-manage or help to organise at least one major cultural diversity event.	Equalities Manager	January 2008	Raised awareness of cultural diversity.
Shared Aim 6: Capacity Building			
Action	Responsibility	Timescale	Anticipated Outcome
6.1 Work with community and voluntary sector organisations to provide advice, guidance and support on Board services to: • Migrant workers • Asylum seekers and refugees and their families. and to help them develop their own capacity.	Extended Schools Coordinators	Jan 07 - March 08	Increase awareness by ethnic minority people and groups of services available. Improved uptake of services.
6.2 Seek to identify best practice from other countries and adopt that practice, in consultation with appropriate consultee groups, to inform the development of community development and good relations work within the Boards and in schools.	Equalities Manager		Implementation of established best practice.

GOOD RELATIONS POLICY AND STRATEGY for Education and Library Boards

2006 -2008

Draft Version