



Northern
Ireland
Office

Section 75 Northern Ireland Act 1998

Annual Progress Report

1 April 2009 – 31 March 2010

NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE

Annual Progress Report on Section 75 of the NI Act 1998 and Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Order (DDO) 2006

This report template includes a number of self assessment questions regarding implementation of the Section 75 statutory duties from **1 April 2009 to 31 March 2010**. This template also includes a number of questions regarding implementation of Section 49A of the DDO from the **1 April 2009 to 31 March 2010**. Please enter information at the relevant part of each section and ensure that it is submitted electronically (by completing this template) to Amanda Coffey by 9 September 2010.

In completing this template it is essential to focus on the application of Section 75 and Section 49. This involves progressing the commitments in your equality scheme or disability action plan which should lead to outcomes and impacts in terms of measurable improvement for individuals from the equality categories. Such outcomes and impacts may include changes in public policy, in service provision and/or in any of the areas within your functional remit.

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Section 75 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 and what outcomes were achieved?

This progress report covers the period 1 April 2009 to 31 March 2010.

Implementation of Section 75 Duties

The Northern Ireland Office (NIO) is committed to its statutory duties under Section 75. The implementation of Section 75 is an ongoing responsibility for all staff within the NIO and its agencies.

On 9 March 2010, the political parties in Northern Ireland agreed that policing and justice functions should devolve to the Northern Ireland Assembly on 12 April 2010. This was subsequently approved by both Houses of Parliament. The responsibility for policing and justice in Northern Ireland now lies with the Northern Ireland Assembly and the Executive. However, the information contained within this Departmental Report reflects the arrangements of the Northern Ireland Office as they were throughout the reporting period, including those relating to policing and justice functions.

The following paragraphs provide a summary of key policy/service developments made by the NIO's core business areas and Agencies, as they were during this reporting period, to better promote equality of opportunity and good relations and to achieve specific outcomes.

The Northern Ireland Office

Key activities during 2009-10 included:

- The NIO Diversity Secretariat revised the Department's Diversity Strategy and Action Plan. The Diversity Steering Group, established under this strategy,

continued to set strategic direction for diversity in the Department. Champions at Board level continued to support staff in the areas of disability, ethnic minorities and sexual orientation. These areas were also covered by staff networks. During 2009, an additional network was set up for staff with responsibilities as Carers;

- The Department extended its diversity bursary scheme, originally developed for staff with disabilities, to include applications from black and ethnic minority, lesbian, gay, bi-sexual and transgender civil servants. The scheme provided funding for a planned two year training and development programme linked with taking forward the NIO's diversity agenda;
- The Department participated in two benchmarking exercises. The first through *Stonewall*, the GB charity set up to promote the equality for lesbian, gay and bi-sexual people; the second through *A:Gender*, the Civil Service diversity network for transgender staff; and
- Throughout 2009/10, the Department continued rollout of its diversity awareness programme.

Progress made on key policy and service delivery throughout the year and set out in detail in this report included:

- Ongoing review of staff training and information requirements with regard to equality responsibilities;
- Provision of information in accessible formats including child-friendly literature;
- An independent review on the Impact of Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 on the Criminal Justice Sector in Northern Ireland was carried out by the Criminal Justice Inspectorate;

- State Pathology Branch representatives took advice from DFP and PSD on equality statement for inclusion in recruitment competitions;
- Screening exercises were undertaken on a wide-range of policies (see section 2 below for details); and
- Meetings were held with the Equality Commission to seek advice on fair employment legislation.

On 17th December 2008 the UK ratified the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings. The Convention is a comprehensive treaty focusing mainly on the protection of victims of trafficking and the safeguarding of their rights. It also aims to prevent trafficking and to prosecute traffickers.

As a result of this, on 1st April 2009 the Northern Ireland Office put in place a pilot scheme for victims of human trafficking found in Northern Ireland. The scheme delivers Convention-directed support to potential victims of human trafficking who have entered into the process but have not yet had a final decision made about their status. This decision making process is known as the National Referral Mechanism (NRM).

The Department also made amendments to the Representation of the People (Northern Ireland) (Amendment) Regulations 2010 which will make it easier for some individuals with disabilities to register to vote.

During 2009/10 there was a major restructuring of the roles and responsibilities of the three branches and individual staff within Criminal Justice Services Division. In addition, the devolution of justice presented many challenges in preparing for the significant changes in related practices, procedures and policies required under the devolved administration. As the Division has responsibility for a number of agencies and bodies (the *Probation Board Northern Ireland*, the *Youth Justice Agency*, *Forensic Science Northern Ireland*, the *Compensation Agency*, the *State Pathologist's Department*, the *Parole Commissioners Northern Ireland*, the *Prisoner Ombudsman*,

and the *Independent Monitoring Boards*), it was necessary to review related monitoring roles including Section 75 responsibilities.

In March 2010, the temporary 50:50 police recruitment provisions were renewed for a further year in order to enable the PSNI to continue progress towards the target of 30% Catholic composition by March 2011. As at 1 April 2010, Catholic composition within PSNI was 28.43%

The Northern Ireland Prison Service

The Northern Ireland Prison Service (NIPS) has in place a comprehensive diversity strategy. Targets have been set to improve participation by under represented groups: to have, by 2011, 35% of applicants from a Roman Catholic background and 40% female. The last competition for recruitment to operational grades was for the Operational Support Grade in 2007/08. 36.5% of applicants were women and 26% were Roman Catholic. As of 31 March, 2010, 51.3% of appointments were female and 26.5% were Roman Catholic.

Under the Department's Corporate Social Responsibility programme, NIPS staff and service users supported a range of other organisations including *NI Hospice*, preparation of Reindeer Food packs at Christmas, and outreach programmes such as, "*Prison, Me! No Way!*" The latter is a diversionary project primarily to educate the community, particularly young people of secondary school age, about the realities of life in prison and thereby to raise awareness and attempt to divert them from involvement in criminal activities.

Other steps taken by NIPS include:

- Consulting with the Equality Commission on affirmative action on advertising campaigns (both newspaper and radio).

- Maintaining free telephone calls for all to ensure family links are maintained;

- Widening the range of choice in Tuck Shops to better cater for prisoners who require different personal products and dietary needs, as a result of nationality or otherwise.
- Completing a programme of work to allow Equality and Diversity committees to review all equality monitor of foreign nationals requiring different personal products and those with specific dietary needs.
- Creating an Older Prisoner Unit at Magilligan, to address mobility issues and improve access to the full range of facilities.
- Developing a disability survey for staff in consultation with the Employers for Disability in Northern Ireland (EFDNI), to improve understanding of disability issues for staff and prisoners and learn more about attitudes to disability within the service.
- During the period of this report, all Prison staff were surveyed on disability related issues to find out: how many staff consider they have a disability; and to learn more about the issues they are dealing with within the organisation.
- NIPS facilitated a series of Prisoner Focus Groups on disability throughout this period, across prison establishments. The main issues being highlighted were around mobility, particularly for the older prisoners and the difficulties faced moving around the establishment.

During the period of the report, NIPS also made progress on delivery of a more gender-specific approach to custody.

The Women's Project Team continued to work through a comprehensive action plan to drive implementation of both the strategy and the standards. Progress in 2009/10 included, for example, the delivery of gender-specific training for staff working with

women prisoners; a pilot of new, less intrusive, search procedures for women prisoners; the launch of an Extended Visits Scheme for Mothers and Children which provides opportunities for mothers to engage and bond with their children in as normal an environment as possible; the inclusion of the specific needs of women prisoners as a key element of the Resettlement Pathways Model, including the addition of 2 new pathways – supporting those who have been abused, raped or who have experienced domestic violence (Pathway 8), and supporting those who have been involved in prostitution (Pathway 9).

Youth Justice Agency

During the year the Youth Justice Agency (YJA) contributed to the overall equality work of the Department in a number of ways. Activities included:

- The YJAs Juvenile Justice Centre system became fully operational, providing information on restraints and interventions in the centre and a full management information system became operation for 2010/11, which will enable the YJA to record workload and outcomes by relevant Section 75 categories;
- A communications strategy for engaging with local communities; and
- Child protection training has been delivered to all staff.

Forensic Science Northern Ireland

Forensic Science Northern Ireland introduced new facilities for staff to address accessibility issues, which included installation of new push button doors, additional signage in Braille and a new fire alarm system which sounds and flashes.

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?

Following devolution of policing and justice powers to the Northern Ireland Assembly on 12 April 2010, equality and diversity issues relating to policing and justice will transfer to the Department of Justice in Northern Ireland.

The Northern Ireland Office (NIO) remains responsible for overseeing the Northern Ireland devolution settlement and representing Northern Ireland interests at UK Government level and UK Government interests in Northern Ireland. The department also has responsibility for national security in respect of Northern Ireland as well as Human Rights, elections and legacy issues (including current ongoing public inquiries).

The NIO has a staff complement of around 175, with offices in both Belfast and London. The Crown Solicitors Office in Belfast, which provides legal services in Northern Ireland to all Whitehall departments and to other public bodies in Northern Ireland, is also part of the Northern Ireland Office.

The NIO will receive support for corporate services from a larger department in Whitehall. As such, the Department is expected to become a full participant in the diversity programme and networks of this department. Work has already commenced to prepare for this transition.

Post-devolution of policing and justice functions, the NIO carries out a significantly reduced number of functions relating to Northern Ireland. One area where the NIO intends to act to improve equality outcomes is through the introduction of legislation to bring the procedures in place at local government elections in Northern Ireland in line with those at other elections. This will include making it easier for some individuals with disabilities to obtain an absent vote and add the Blind Person's SmartPass and the 60+ SmartPass to the list of acceptable photographic identification at local elections.

Please give examples of changes to policies or practices which have resulted in outcomes. If the change was a result of an EQIA please tick the appropriate box in column 3 and reference the title of the relevant EQIA in the space provided below:

	Outline change in policy or practice which have resulted in outcomes	Tick if result of EQIA
Persons of different religious belief	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • External diversity events advertised on Departmental Intranet. 	
Persons of different political opinion		
Persons of different racial groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Departmental Board level Race champion supports BEM staff network. • External diversity events advertised on Departmental Intranet 	
Persons of different age		
Persons with different marital status		
Persons of different sexual orientation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NI Prison Service Pilot Sexual Orientation Awareness Training, offered to operational staff in February 2010; collaboration with Rainbow which discussed the barriers for LGB people, the health concerns and the legislative changes. • NI Prison Service proposed pilot support and helpline service for LGBT prisoners and staff. • Board level LGBT champion supports LGBT staff network. • External diversity events advertised on Departmental Intranet. 	
Men and women generally	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of gender-specific standards, and a guide for staff working with women prisoners. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tailoring of a range of policies and procedures to meet the gender specific needs of women prisoners, including policy in relation to visits with children, and searching. • Delivery of gender-specific training for staff working with women prisoners. 	
Persons with and without a disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NI Prison Service Employers for Disability NI (EFDNI) Confidential Helpline for staff. • 14 NI Prison Service staff have undergone RNID Deaf Awareness Training and 4 staff now trained to BSL Level 2. • Regulations governing electoral procedures in Northern Ireland have been amended to make it easier for some individuals with disabilities to register to vote. • Departmental Board level Disability champion supports disability staff network. • External diversity events advertised on Department Intranet. • Updated Regulations provide that the Chief Electoral Officer must ensure that so far as reasonable and practicable every polling station in Northern Ireland is accessible to voters with disabilities. 	
Persons with and without dependants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Departmental Board level Carers Champion appointed to support Carers Staff Network. • External diversity events advertised on Departmental Intranet. 	

Section 1: Strategic Implementation of the Section 75 Duties

Please 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 2009-10

Equality and good relations are an important part of the practices of the Department and work continues to mainstream equality issues in policy making. Throughout the year there were a number of examples of how the Department made progress in developing and meeting key equality objectives and related targets.

The Northern Ireland Office

Equality screening was carried out in 2009/10 on the “A Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland: Next Steps” consultation document. The outcome was that it was screened out and an EQIA was not judged necessary.

Equality screening was also carried out in 2009/10 on the policy covering the maximum number of consecutive terms of appointment a member of the Independent Monitoring Board can serve. The outcome was that policy was screened out and an EQIA was not judged necessary.

Northern Ireland Prison Service

In the Northern Ireland Prison Service (NIPS), senior management continued to demonstrate their commitment to equality and diversity. The Diversity Champion presented a diversity update on a quarterly basis to the Prison Service Management Board. NI Prison Service also introduced a regular update on diversity at the Personnel Governors Forum and the Operational Management Board. In addition, bi-monthly Equality & Diversity Committees were held in each prison establishment.

NIPS engaged with the wider Civil Service on equality and diversity issues through the cross-departmental Section 75 working group; the cross-border Public Protection

Advisory Group; as members of the NIO Diversity Steering Group; Disability Action; the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland; and Business in the Community.

On 10 December 2009, the Director General of the Prison Service and the Head of Equality and Diversity addressed the prestigious '*Diversity & Equality in Government*' Conference held in London.

Equality and diversity messages were reinforced through issue of the 'Notice to Staff' prior to the new performance management cycle. Also, during this period the Prison Service introduced changes in the reporting system for Prison Grades to improve its effectiveness following consultation with staff. The Performance Standards Framework was adapted to guide managers on the types of actions, behaviours and competencies (with due regard to equality and diversity) expected to be displayed by prison staff at varying levels of responsibility. In addition, equality and diversity references were included in the competency frameworks to be adopted by Non-Prison Grade staff within the Service.

NIPS revised its Dignity at Work policy to assist members of staff who believed that their dignity at work has been abused, and to challenge inappropriate behaviour appropriately and in a safe and supportive environment. The document included much clearer definitions of what does and does not constitute harassment and bullying and placed a greater emphasis on the rights, roles and responsibilities of staff and managers when dealing with these issues.

Mediation continued to play an integral part in the NIPS Harassment and Bullying procedures. NIPS was encouraged by the high uptake of this service during the pilot and record that, from 2008 to 31 March 2010, the number of harassment and bullying cases reduced by 70% and the number of Industrial Tribunal claims by 30%.

The NIPS's Disability Liaison Officer worked with Employers for Disability NI (EFDNI) in developing the Disability Survey (mentioned above) and also launched an Employee Advice line to act as a confidential source of support and advice for NIPS employees.

State Pathologists Department

To strengthen existing arrangements, the State Pathologist's Department met the Equality Commission to agree that staff within that Department should be included on the list of those monitored under fair employment legislation.

Youth Justice Agency

The Youth Justice Agency (YJA) made progress in a number of areas. The Agency implemented a system to measure satisfaction levels of young people and families with the services they received from the Agency which included the development of Management information system.

The Agency also implemented:

- a monitoring system to measure compliance with Section 75 of the NI Act 1998 for the Juvenile Justice Centre (as an initial phase of a wider compliance programme);
The new database was developed and young people's section 75 details were collated for all Section 75 categories except political opinion and sexual orientation.
- opportunities for young people without education, employment or training at time of referral to the Agency, to access such services during their period of engagement;
Opportunities were provided throughout the operational directorates. However, this proved difficult to measure in the absence of a case management system. All young people in the Juvenile Justice Centre attend full time education or vocational training.
- Reviewed and updated the Agency's Child Protection Policy and Procedures and deliver updated staff training in conjunction with the "Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups" legislation.

The Review of Child Protection Policy and Procedures was completed and NSPCC delivered training to all YJA staff.

Forensic Science Northern Ireland

In the Department's 2008/09 Progress Report, it was noted that a major project to provide new accommodation for Forensic Science Northern Ireland was in train. An Equality Impact screening exercise was due to be undertaken to determine if the use of the related criteria might lead to any significant equality issues in relation to the categories defined under Section 75. This issue is now devolved and is the responsibility of the newly formed Department of Justice.

Section 2: Screening

Please 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>Yes/No</u>	Is policy being subject to EQIA? <u>Yes/No</u> ? If yes indicate year for assessment.
The knowing or reckless misuse of personal data introducing custodial sentences	F	N	N
Consultation on filling casual vacancies on District Councils.	R	N	N
Improving electoral registration procedures in Northern Ireland	R	N	N
Code of Practice for Victims and Witnesses of Crime.	R	N	N
Internal Public Protection Arrangements – Instructions to Governors. (NIPS)	R	N	N
NIPS Interim Offender Management Practice Manual	R	N	N
NIPS Interim Parole Review Guide	R	N	N
NIPS Interim Sentence Calculation Guidance – Public Protection Sentences	R	N	N

The Carriage of Explosives Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2010 (SPD)	N GB carried out a 12 week consultation and the consultees included representatives from the Explosives Industry with links to NI.	N	N
The Identification and Traceability of explosives Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2010 (SPD)	N A joint consultation was carried out with HSE	N	N
Pyrotechnical Articles (Safety) Regulations 2009 (SPD) (SPD)	N A joint consultation was carried out with the Department of Business Innovation and Skills.	N	N
Working Together to Protect Crowded Places Guidance Documents – March 2010	N A UK-wide public consultation was conducted on these documents by the Home Office.	N	N
Arrangements for notification of sex offenders from jurisdictions outside the UK	R	Now a devolved matter	N
Best practice for practitioners in the use of special measures and interviewing and supporting witnesses pre-trial	R	N	N
Local Partnership Working on Policing and Community Safety	R	Now a devolved matter	
Sports Law and Spectator Controls	F	Now a devolved matter	Now a devolved matter

Section 3: Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA)

Please provide an update of policies subject to EQIA during 2009-10, stage 7 EQIA monitoring activities and an indicative EQIA timetable for 2010-11

EQIA Timetable – April 2009 - March 2010

Title of Policy EQIA	EQIA Stage at end March 09 (Steps 1-6)	Outline adjustments to policy intended to benefit individuals and the relevant Section 75 categories due to be affected.

- Where the EQIA timetable for 2009-10 (as detailed in the previous annual Section 75 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.

Ongoing EQIA Monitoring Activities April 2009- March 2010

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

- Please outline any proposals, arising from the authority’s monitoring for adverse impacts, for revision of the policy to achieve better outcomes the relevant equality groups:

2010-11 EQIA Time-table

Title of EQIAs due to be commenced during April 2010 – March 2011	Existing or New policy?	Please indicate expected timescale of Decision Making stage i.e. Stage 6

Section 4: Training

Please outline training provision during the year associated with the Section 75 Duties/Equality Scheme requirements including types of training provision and conclusions from any training evaluations.

Training on equality issues and how they impact on the work played an important role across the Department and its agencies. The Department has built on previous work, including mandatory training, to ensure skills and knowledge levels are maintained. During 2009/10 various training programmes were progressed to assist the delivery of equality issues across the Department and its Agencies.

In local areas staff engaged with local community groups such as the Peace and Reconciliation Organisation in Foyle and the Travellers' Support Group to assist in the delivery of work plans with young people both in delivery of programmes and providing reparation opportunities.

The PSNI and the UK Border Agency trained their staff on the operation of the National Referral Mechanism. The NIO also facilitated training for Women's Aid staff on how to look after victims of sexual trafficking.

Criminal Justice Directorate carried out two training seminars, one on good practice relating to consultations and one on Consulting Children and Young People. About 30 staff attended each seminar.

The Northern Ireland Prison Service Training Team continued to work with a range of stakeholders to help ensure that training met diversity needs and reflected changes in policy and strategy. Workshops were held with Diversity experts to ensure that issues were being addressed effectively.

The diversity training package continued to be rolled out as a corporate training priority and was compulsory. The training was a permanent module in all new entrant training courses in which new entrants were required to demonstrate their competence through a written assessment. It is included in the induction training for all newly promoted staff.

The programme was adapted for prisoners and was piloted with female prisoners in Hydebank Wood.

In addition, NIPS rolled out a programme of gender-specific training for staff working with women prisoners. This was targeted at relevant staff, across a wide range of disciplines and includes issues such as mental health awareness; the possible affects of abuse and domestic violence on women, the effects of imprisonment of a mother on her children; and issues in relation to self-harm. Guidance on these issues was also provided in the Guide for Staff Working with Women Prisoners, published in July 2009. Representatives of the Women's Project Team and staff in Ash House also participated in a new training programme, Sex Workers in Prison, developed by colleagues in England and Wales as a response to the new gender-specific Pathway 9.

Child protection training was delivered to all grades of staff throughout the Youth Justice Agency, which explored issues relating to Section 75 duties.

In the Forensic Science Agency, 161 staff completed Diversity Awareness training, 2 staff completed EQIA training and 1 staff member received a training update on Equality Law.

Section 5: Communication

Please outline how the authority communicated progress on delivery of the Section 75 Duties during the year and evidence of the impact/success of such activities.

Communicating progress in relation to delivery of section 75 duties is important to the Northern Ireland Office. Equality issues were regularly communicated as part of the Department's internal communication processes which includes structured team meetings and a staff intranet system.

During 2009/10 the Department communicated progress on delivery against section 75 in a number of ways that complimented the existing communications processes already in place.

A wide range of information and guidance on equality issues and in particular Section 75 matters is included on the NIO intranet. Overall progress throughout the year is presented through the Annual Progress Report.

Bulletins are provided on the Departmental Intranet to advise staff of diversity events and activities, both within the Department and in the community.

The work of the Diversity Steering Group was communicated to staff through publication of meeting minutes on the Departmental Intranet. In addition, the board level diversity champions continued to show their support through magazine articles and attendance at diversity events.

A Human Trafficking Stakeholder Reference Group was established with representatives from NIO, PSNI, UK Borders Agency and the two service providers, Migrant Helpline and Women's Aid. This group met quarterly to discuss and deal with emerging issues stemming from the scheme. This led to timely interventions on several issues relating to the scheme.

A full evaluation of the scheme was also completed in-year and this highlighted the impact and success of the scheme by detailing good practice in place as well as recommendations for improvement.

Equality updates were also given to the Northern Ireland Prison Service Management Board each quarter and through Equality & Diversity Committees bi-monthly meetings, in each establishment. NIPS reported on a quarterly basis to the NIO on its progress in developing new policies and on equality monitoring against the Equality Scheme commitments.

Operational staff met bi-monthly to review equality monitoring data in order to identify potential areas for concern or identify positive outcomes in relation to equality of opportunity. Stakeholders and representatives from Section 75 categories attended and made a considerable contribution to NIPS work in this area.

The Foreign National Strategy continued to be implemented across the Service and, as a result, NIPS reviewed and improved the current translation and interpreter services and introduced the provision of Newspapers in Reception areas for foreign national prisoners waiting in holding rooms while being processed.

Local Equality & Diversity Committees developed a programme of equality and diversity events and seminars and strengthened links with representative organisations in the voluntary sector. For example, during Anti Racism Workplace Week (19-23 October) each of the Equality & Diversity Committees planned events on specific days to reinforce NIPS' anti racism position, to raise awareness and celebrate diversity within the organisation. The events were opened by each Governing Governor and arranged and participated in by both staff and service users. NIPS were supported by An Munia Tober; Arts Ekta; the Chinese Welfare Association; representatives from each Chaplaincy & Pastoral Care Team; the Indian Community Centre; NICEM; and representatives from the Coleraine Borough Council, Multi-cultural Forum.

In December 2009 the Director General of the Prison Service and the HR Head of Equality and Diversity addressed the 'Diversity & Equality in Government' Conference.

Following the publication of the Prison Reform Trust report on 'Learning Disability and Learning Difficulty' the Prison Service initiated a 'Round Table' discussion with key interest groups to develop a Northern Ireland Criminal Justice response to the issues raised in the report. The outcome was that a multi-agency steering group was convened to carry forward and develop this work across the Criminal Justice System (CJSNI).

The Steering group approved the formation of four working groups on;

- Screening;
- Training;
- Interventions; and
- Information Sharing.

Section 6: Data Collection & Analysis

Please outline any systems that were established during the year to supplement available statistical and qualitative research or any research undertaken/commissioned to obtain information on the needs and experiences of individuals from the nine categories covered by Section 75, including the needs and experiences of people with multiple identities.

A report on the Impact of Section 75 of the NI Act 1998 on the criminal justice system in Northern Ireland was published in May 2009 by the Criminal Justice Inspectorate.

One of the recommendations from the Criminal Justice Inspectorate NI Section 75 Report was that the criminal justice system should consider the establishment of a consultative forum on criminal justice matters encompassing the major criminal justice agencies represented on the Criminal Justice Board.

The Criminal Justice Board's Equity and Diversity Sub Group gave a progress report to the Board in December 2009. The Board has since agreed to the establishment of a Consultative Methods Working Group to prepare draft guidelines on best practice in consultation for the criminal justice system. Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action (NICVA) was contacted to gauge interest in joining the Working Group.

In addition, equity monitoring in custody suites is in place and now that Causeway DSM1 is operational the link can be made between Causeway and the Police NICHE system. However the response rates for some categories remain low and would need to increase significantly for a reasonable period before statistically reliable conclusions could be drawn. The Criminal Justice Board and Equity and Diversity Sub-Group have considered the issue and Police are taking action to build higher response rates.

There were also two Agency specific recommendations were made:

1. It was recommended that the Probation Board should take steps to extend appropriate Section 75 monitoring across its various functions and in particular its work with adjudicated offenders and its community development fund; and
2. The Youth Justice Agency should review two categories of the core areas which were not currently being monitored.

These recommendations now relate to devolved functions and are for the consideration of the Department of Justice.

2009/10 was the Custodial Services management information system's first full year in operation. This enabled the Juvenile Justice Centre to look at incidents and sanctions to ensure fairness and equality of treatment in respect of gender and religion.

This year also saw the completion of the Youth Justice Agency management information system which will enable the Youth Justice Agency to record and follow all young people working with the Youth Justice Agency.

Please outline any use of the Commission's Section 75 Monitoring Guide

The Department continued to use the Equality Commission's Section 75 monitoring guidance to assist the delivery of its equality commitments.

Northern Ireland Prison Service completed extensive work to broaden the amount of data captured by the Prison Records and Information System (PRISM). NIPS continued to monitor data on seven out of the nine Section 75 categories relating to service users and all nine categories relating to staff.

In May 2009, NIPS established a multi disciplinary Working Group on Managing Stress, which included representation from the two Trade Unions. The Group worked closely to Health and Safety Executive (HSE) advice in developing a NIPS Stress Management Action Plan and Stress Policy. During the period of this report, the HSE Stress Indicator Tool was issued to all staff.

During the period of this report NIPS also surveyed staff on disability related issues, to learn more about the sorts of issues they are dealing with within the organisation. The total number of staff surveyed was 2409 with 18% submitting a response. The survey gave staff with disabilities the opportunity to identify their requirements and to make comments and suggestions to help us continue to enhance the workplace environment, policies and practices. It also gave non-disabled staff the opportunity to put forth their views and suggestions. In addition, the first in a series of Prisoner Focus Groups on disability were held throughout September – December 2009 across establishments.

Using data provided by the NIO, *Stonewall* carried out a lesbian, gay and bi-sexual equality assessment of Departmental policies and business practice to identify areas for improvement. A similar exercise was undertaken by *A:Gender* in relation to transgender equality. NIO was placed 121st in *Stonewall's Workplace Equality Index* for 2010 – a list of the best employers for LGB people in Britain. This was a significant

leap forward compared with the previous year's ranking of 199th and, in terms of points, NIO was very close to the organisations which made it into the top 100.

Section 7: Information Provision, Access to Information and Services

Please provide details of any initiatives/steps taken during the year, including take up, to improve access to services including provision of information in accessible formats.

NIO adheres to its responsibilities under the Minority Languages Act and provides translations as requested within policy boundaries.

All staff who attended Departmental diversity awareness training were advised of their responsibilities to provide reasonable adjustments for those with disabilities. They were also informed of the availability of the Departmental Disabled Persons' Liaison Officer in relation to the provision of reasonable adjustments, including access to Braille and sign language services.

Northern Ireland Prison Service

NIPS included diversity as a standard item on the six monthly Full Staff meetings held at Prison Service HQ. The 'Make a Difference' Steering Group provided quarterly updates to the Prison Service Management Board and a standard diversity item has been added to the monthly Personnel Governors forum including updated workforce statistics.

NIPS and NIO worked jointly to promote disability equality throughout the Department and utilised the help of the newly appointed NIO Board Champion for Disability, who was also the Director of the NIPS. The NIO introduced a new Diversity Bursary Scheme which was also made available to NIPS staff. This provided a tailored package to help prepare staff with a disability, or who are from a Black or Minority Ethnic background; or who are Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, Trans-Gender or Intersex for future opportunities at the next substantive grade and possibly beyond.

In taking forward the development of gender-specific policies and procedures for women prisoners, NIPS was mindful of the need to provide information in a range of formats. For example, the Ash House Information Leaflet, given to women at court, was translated into seven languages.

Youth Justice Agency

The Department provided information in a format that met the receiver's needs. For example:

- In 2009/10 the Youth Justice and Probation Unit began developing, in consultation with young people and other service providers, a child friendly version of the Juvenile Justice Centre Rules;
- State Pathology Branch representatives took advice from DFP and PSD on equality statement for inclusion in recruitment competitions; and
- Newspaper notices and advertisements notified readers that information is available in a number of formats.

The Youth Justice Agency continued to use translation and interpreting services to assist young people and their families where English is not their first language. For example worksheets were translated into Lithuanian to assist a young person working with the Youth Justice Agency to address their offending behaviour.

Leaflets were made available in many languages for victims of crime to assist their participation in the youth conference process.

Youth Justice Agency staff liaised closely with the Disability forum and Autism NI to establish work practices to assist young people with learning difficulties. In one instance staff identified that as a result of a learning disability there may be an issue about a young person's fitness to plea. As of 31 March 2010, this matter was ongoing but is now the responsibility of the devolved Department of Justice.

Forensic Science Northern Ireland

Forensic Science launched a new website, introduced “Disability friendly” new front doors and a fire alarm system is now accompanied by flashing lights.

Section 8: Complaints

Please identify the number of Section 75 related complaints:

- **received and resolved by the authority (including how this was achieved);**
- **which were not resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant;**
- **which were referred to the Equality Commission.**

No complaints were received during the period of this report, from April 2009 to March 2010.

Section 9: Consultation and Engagement

Please provide details of the measures taken to enhance the level of engagement with individuals and representative groups during the year.

Please outline any use of the Commission's guidance on consulting with and involving children and young people.

The Department has a Diversity Management Steering Group chaired by two diversity champions. Membership includes volunteers from various grades across the range of business areas, members of staff networks, trade union and HR representatives. The forum discusses diversity issues and makes recommendations to senior managers/Departmental board in improving diversity within the Department.

The Department has diversity networks for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and trans staff; ethnic minorities; disabled staff; and carers. These provide a platform for consultation, supporting colleagues and arranging awareness events. The last such event in 2009 was on the theme of "Diversity at Christmas", with staff donating gifts to the Salvation Army/St. Vincent de Paul annual family appeal. Age Concern/Help the Aged and the Simon Community were given the opportunity to showcase their charities at the event.

The Department also set up a Human Trafficking Stakeholder Reference Group with representatives from NIO, PSNI, UK Borders Agency and the two service providers, Migrant Helpline and Women's Aid. This group met quarterly to discuss and deal with emerging issues stemming from the scheme.

Working closely with PSNI, Crimestoppers and the Department of Education during 2009, Criminal Law Branch in the NIO delivered a knives awareness campaign for school children. The campaign featured the delivery of a drama commissioned specifically for the event. Criminal Law Branch worked closely with C21, a local drama company, to create a purpose written piece which incorporated interaction with young people and encouraged them to offer their own views. C21 also met with victims'

families and young people, including young offenders, to assist them in developing the script.

One of the recommendations from the Criminal Justice Inspectorate NI Section 75 Report was that the criminal justice system should consider the establishment of a consultative forum on criminal justice matters encompassing the major criminal justice agencies represented on the Criminal Justice Board.

The Criminal Justice Board's Equality and Diversity Sub Group gave a progress report to the Board in December 2009. The Board has since agreed to the establishment of a Consultative Methods Working Group to prepare draft guidelines on best practice in consultation for the criminal justice system. Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action (NICVA) has been contacted to gauge interest in joining the Working Group. Discussions are on-going.

In addition, equity monitoring in custody suites is in place, and now that Causeway DSM1 is operational the link can be made between Causeway and the Police NICHE system. However the response rates for some categories remain low and would need to increase significantly for a reasonable period before statistically reliable conclusions could be drawn. The Criminal Justice Board and Equity and Diversity Sub-Group have considered the issue and Police are taking action to build higher response rates.

Criminal Justice Strategy Division engaged with G4S, the service provider for electronic monitoring in Northern Ireland, to ensure that they collect information on a number of Section 75 categories for individuals who have been subject to an electronic monitoring requirement.

Northern Ireland Prison Service

In taking forward the delivery of a more gender-specific approach to custody, NIPS engaged with both prisoners and staff through a number of focus groups designed to inform the development of policy and procedures to address the specific needs of women prisoners. As a partner, with NIO and the Probation Board for Northern Ireland,

in the development of the draft Strategy for the Management of Women Offenders, NIPS participated in a consultation exercise in relation to that work. This included workshops with community representatives, and with staff and prisoners at Hydebank Wood. In progressing the custodial strand of that strategy, NIPS also consulted on its Gender-specific Standards for Working with Women Prisoners.

Youth Justice Agency

During the year the Youth Justice and Probation Unit worked to produce a child-friendly version of the Juvenile Justice Centre Rules. This was progressed through the Northern Ireland Youth forum in consultation with young people and other community groups.

Community groups including Barnardos and Include Youth were engaged by the Criminal Justice Services Division to carry out consultations with young people.

The Youth Justice Agency Business Plan included measures to increase community consultation and communication, including through:

- opportunities for young people, families, communities and victims
- Encouraging greater engagement with local communities in delivering our services
- a communications strategy to promote the role and successes of the Agency to a wide audience

During 2009/10, the Youth Justice Agency organised a photographic competition for young people in co-operation with Harrison Photography and the Co-operative. The theme of the competition was respect and the young people had to enter photographs which showed what respect meant to them. Entries covered: the elderly, family and community and the environment and, were received from across Northern Ireland. This competition raises the profile and awareness of the Youth Justice Agency with schools

and young people, and helped show young people in a positive light within their wider community. A prize giving was held at Hillsborough Castle and the prizewinners were reported widely in local press.

During the year, local awareness raising events and open days were held across the Youth Justice Agency's local offices. Community Services offices in Downpatrick, West Belfast, Bangor, Lisburn and Ballymena and the Youth Conference Service offices in Omagh and Ballymena held events, with local MLA's and community organisations, being invited to hear about the work of the Agency.

Staff within Community Services were closely linked with a wide range of community forums such as, Community Safety partnerships, anti-social behaviour forums and other local community initiatives, to enable the organisation to hear and respond to the concerns of the community in relation to youth crime.

The Youth Justice Agency also delivered a parents group which enabled parents, with young people in custody, to get together, share their views and meet with the Chief Executive.

Section 10: The Good Relations Duty

Please 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.

The Department worked with Business In The Community (BITC) to develop a Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Strategy and Action Plan. This covered a range of activities to help support and enrich the wider Community (through activities such as volunteering), supporting and developing individuals to their full potential (through activities such as mentoring) and working to minimise our negative affect on the environment (awareness sessions and sustainability activities).

- Please outline any use of the Commission's Good Relations Guide.

The Department promoted good relations wherever possible as part of everyday duties. This is done through effective partnership working, good communication and sharing of information and expertise.

Section 11: Additional Comments

Please provide any additional information/comments

Annual Report 1 April 2009 / 31 March 2010

'Disability Duties' Questions

1. **How many action measures** for this **reporting period** have been?

8

Fully
Achieved

1

Partially
Achieved

1

Not
Achieved

2. Please outline the following detail on all actions that have been fully achieved in the reporting period.

2 (a) Please highlight what **public life measures** have been achieved to encourage disabled people to participate in public life at National, Regional and Local levels:

Level	Public Life Action Measures	Outputs ¹	Outcomes / Impact ²
National ³			
Regional ⁴			
Local ⁵			

¹ **Outputs** – defined as act of producing, amount of something produced over a period, processes undertaken to implement the action measure e.g. Undertook 10 training sessions with 100 people at customer service level.

² **Outcome / Impact** – what specifically and tangibly has changed in making progress towards the duties? What impact can directly be attributed to taking this action? Indicate the results of undertaking this action e.g. Evaluation indicating a tangible shift in attitudes before and after training.

³ **National** : Situations where people can influence policy at a high impact level e.g. Public Appointments

⁴ **Regional**: Situations where people can influence policy decision making at a middle impact level

⁵ **Local** : Situations where people can influence policy decision making at lower impact level e.g. one off consultations, local fora.

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

	Training Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
1	On 2 November twelve members of NIPS staff completed the RNID deaf awareness training 'Start to Sign'.	NIPS staff can now identify the causes of deafness, identify different types of deafness, understand the social and medical models of deafness and demonstrate ways to communicate positively with people who are deaf or hard of hearing.	Better understanding of the issues and legislation relating to people with disabilities. Promoting positive attitudes of people with disabilities and encourage positive role models.
2	Delivery of Equality & Diversity training, which includes disability awareness, to NIO staff.	Almost all staff, excluding NIPS staff who have separate training (as detailed above), have participated in the course.	Increase staff awareness of disability matters, including responsibilities under DDA. Staff awareness of availability of reasonable adjustments increased. Promotion of positive attitudes towards people with disabilities.

2(c) What Positive attitudes **action measures** in the area of **Communications** were achieved in this reporting period?

	Communications Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
1	Reinforcement of Department's commitment to disability through appointment of Disability Champion at Departmental Board level.	Disability champion supports work of disability network. Champion encourages sharing of views on issues affecting staff with disabilities.	Promotion of positive attitudes towards people with disabilities.
2	Continuous review of external and internal Departmental communication policies, practices and procedures to meet the needs of people with disabilities.	Textphone service available and details included on Departmental letterheads. Internet/Intranet sites AA compliant. Publications can be provided in alternative formats to meet individual needs.	Departmental information more accessible to people with sensory impairments.

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

	Encourage others Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
1	<p>Issuing a disability survey for NIPS staff in consultation with the Employers for Disability in Northern Ireland (EFDNI) which is designed to help the Prison Service better understand the disability issues for staff and prisoners and learn more about attitudes to disability within the Service.</p> <p>The views of service users were elicited through Focus Groups on disability issues.</p>	<p>Survey results and better understanding of the needs of NIPS staff and service users.</p>	<p>Improved facilities and access to NIPS facilities and services.</p>

2 (e) Please outline **any additional action measures** that were fully achieved other than those listed in the tables above:

	Action Measures fully implemented (other than Training and specific public life measures)	Outputs	Outcomes / Impact
1	Forensic Science have installed new disabled friendly front doors.	Push button door	Provides ease of access for those with mobility problems.
2	Forensic Science Braille notices placed on washroom doors.	Signposted doors	Provides identification for Braille readers/those with sight problems.
3	Forensic Science Fire Alarm sounding now accompanied with flashing lights.	Fire Alarm sounding also includes flashing lights	Alarm now evident to those with hearing difficulties.

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

	Action Measures partly achieved	Milestones⁶ / Outputs	Outcomes/Impacts	Reasons not fully achieved
1	Participation in Cabinet Office Summer Development Programme for disabled graduates.	Provision of placement annually for disabled graduate	Disabled graduates encouraged to consider applying for Civil Service Fast stream.	No suitable placement available in 2009/10.

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

	Action Measures not met	Reasons
1	New Managers' guide on disability matters	Corporate HR in DFP producing corporate disability guidance. NIO aligning with DFP policies in preparation for devolution.

⁶ **Milestones** – Please outline what part progress has been made towards the particular measures; even if full output or outcomes/ impact have not been achieved.

5. What **monitoring tools** have been put in place to evaluate the degree to which actions have been effective / develop new opportunities for action?

(a) Qualitative

(b) Quantitative

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

- made any **revisions** to your plan during the reporting period or
- taken any **additional steps** to meet the disability duties which were **not outlined in your original** disability action plan / any other changes.

Please delete: Yes / No

If yes please outline below:

	Revised/Additional Action Measures	Performance Indicator	Timescale
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			

7. Do you intend to make any further **revisions to your plan** in light of your organisations annual review of the plan? If so, please outline proposed changes?
