



**Business Services
Organisation**

Providing Support to Health and Social Care

Equality scheme

Drawn up in accordance with Section 75 and Schedule 9 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998

This document is available in a range of formats on request. Please contact us with your requirements (see page 10 for contact details).

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2 Franklin Street
Belfast
BT2 8DQ
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Approved by the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland on 9 August 2011.

Foreword

Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 (the Act) requires public authorities, in carrying out their functions relating to Northern Ireland, to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity and regard to the desirability of promoting good relations across a range of categories outlined in the Act¹.

In our equality scheme we set out how the Business Services Organisation proposes to fulfil the Section 75 statutory duties.

We will commit the necessary resources in terms of people, time and finance to make sure that the Section 75 statutory duties are complied with and that the equality scheme is implemented effectively, and on time.

We commit to having effective internal arrangements in place for ensuring our effective compliance with the Section 75 statutory duties and for monitoring and reviewing our progress.

We will develop and deliver a programme of communication and training with the aim of ensuring that all our staff and board members are made fully aware of our equality scheme and understand the commitments and obligations within it. We will develop a programme of awareness raising for our consultees on the Section 75 statutory duties and our commitments in our equality scheme.

We, the chair and the Chief Executive of the Business Services Organisation, are fully committed to effectively fulfilling our Section 75 statutory duties across all our functions (including service provision, employment and procurement) through the effective implementation of our equality scheme.

We realise the important role that the community and voluntary sector and the general public have to play to ensure the Section 75 statutory duties are effectively implemented. Our equality scheme demonstrates how determined we are to ensure there are opportunities, for people affected by our work, to positively influence how we carry out our functions in line with our Section 75 statutory duties. It also offers the means whereby persons directly

¹ See section 1.1 of our Equality Scheme.

affected by what they consider to be a failure, on our part, to comply with our equality scheme, can make complaints.

On behalf of Business Services Organisation and our staff we are pleased to support and endorse this equality scheme which has been drawn up in accordance with Section 75 and Schedule 9 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and Equality Commission guidelines.



Alexander Coleman
Chair



David Bingham
Chief Executive

Date: 28 April 2011

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Chapter 1 Introduction

Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998

1.1 Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 (the Act) requires the Business Services Organisation to comply with two statutory duties:

Section 75 (1)

In carrying out our functions relating to Northern Ireland we are required to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between

- persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status or sexual orientation
- men and women generally
- persons with a disability and persons without
- persons with dependants and persons without.

Section 75 (2)

In addition, without prejudice to the obligations above, in carrying out our functions in relation to Northern Ireland we are required to have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group.

“Functions” include the “powers and duties” of a public authority². This includes our employment and procurement functions. Please see below under “Who we are and what we do” for a detailed explanation of our functions.

How we propose to fulfil the Section 75 duties in relation to the relevant functions of the Business Services Organisation

1.2 Schedule 9 4. (1) of the Act requires the Business Services Organisation as a designated public authority to set out in an equality scheme how it proposes to fulfil the duties imposed by Section 75 in relation to its relevant functions. This equality scheme is intended to fulfil that statutory requirement. It is both a statement of our arrangements for fulfilling the Section 75 statutory duties and our plan for their implementation.

² Section 98 (1) of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

1.3 We are committed to the discharge of our Section 75 obligations in all parts of our organisation and we will commit the necessary available resources in terms of people, time and money to ensure that the Section 75 statutory duties are complied with and that our equality scheme can be implemented effectively.

Who we are and what we do

The Business Services Organisation was established on 1 April 2009 to support organisations working across the HSC in Northern Ireland.

It is made up of a total of 13 different service areas, which in turn are grouped into 5 Directorates (Operations, Legal Services, Finance, Human Resources and Corporate Services, and Customer Care and Performance).

The Business Services Organisation earns its income from the provision of services which are paid for by other HSC organisations, including the HSC Board, Trusts and other agencies in the HSC community, including the Department of Health, Social Services & Public Safety (DHSSPS). 'Customers' of the Business Services Organisation are those customers and clients (organisations and individuals) who use or pay for our services. Our customers will therefore include those members of the public who interact directly with the organisation, for example, in obtaining new medical registration cards.

In the following, the work of each service area is briefly summarised. Appendix 1 provides a detailed list of functions for each of these.

1 Family Practitioner Services

This service area provides a range of services relating to patients, GPs, dentists, opticians, and pharmacists. These include administering the registration of patients with Health and Social Care in Northern Ireland as well as call/recall services for cancer screening programmes. The unit also calculates and makes payments to dentists, GPs, opticians and pharmacists.

2 HSC Pension Service

HSC Pensions administer the HSC Pension Scheme which provides retirement benefits to HSC employees, GPs, dentists and employees of other organisations in Northern Ireland that are approved to join our scheme, eg. Hospices. Currently we have approximately 56,000 members.

3 Counter Fraud and Probity Services

This service area provides a range of services to the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS) as well as HSC organisations. These include carrying out criminal investigations into cases of suspected fraud; carrying out a range of checking functions to ensure that GPs, Dentists, Opticians and Community Pharmacist claims for payment are correct; administering payments in relation to the Healthy Start Scheme; checking claims made by patients for free dental treatment and free sight tests and glasses; revising and developing policies for probity work and fraud investigations carried out; and leading and developing fraud awareness work across all HSC organisations.

4 Procurement and Logistics Service

The services provided to HSC organisations in this area include sourcing; procurement operations; warehouse operations; warehouse stock management; warehouse customer care; and the Community Care Appliance Service, which involves supplying goods direct to patients to assist them to live within their own dwelling.

5 Information Technologies Services

This service area provides regional Information and Communication Technology (ICT) services to Health and Social Care in Northern Ireland. The unit acts as a regional centre for expertise across a broad range of ICT areas. It provides direct services but also has a vital role in the coordination of ICT development across critical areas such as security, business continuity, applications delivery, and ICT infrastructure development. The unit also plays a key role in the procurement, award and management of contracts for the provision of regional ICT equipment, software and services.

Responsibility for ICT strategy and planning now resides with the HSC Board but the unit continues to have a key input to the development of ICT strategy and policy within HSC.

6 Legal Services

The Directorate of Legal Services provides legal services to HSC organisations in Northern Ireland. These include legal representation in court and tribunal proceedings; legal advice and training; administering legal payments; and engaging counsel and other experts to assist in the provision of our services.

7 Financial Services

The Finance Directorate has a strategic role within the Business Services Organisation to ensure that funds are secured to enable the achievement of the Business Services Organisation's vision, aim and strategic objectives and that there is a clear framework for financial accountability and control throughout the Business Services Organisation.

The Finance Directorate has an operational role within the Business Services Organisation for the delivery of all financial services, including payroll, accounts payable, income collection, management of debt, banking and cash flow, management accounting and final accounts.

The Directorate also delivers a range of financial services to external clients within the HSC in Northern Ireland.

In addition, the Directorate is responsible for ensuring the Business Services Organisation's compliance with the three core controls assurance standards namely, Governance, Risk Management and Financial Management and coordinating the delivery of the remaining non-core standards within the specified timetable.

The Finance Team is responsible for the provision of the statutory final accounts of Business Services Organisation in accordance with DHSSPS guidance and applicable accounting standards. It also provides monitoring information to the Department on a monthly basis.

8 Human Resources Services

The unit provides a range of Human Resources services to the Business Services Organisation and a number of external clients within the HSC.

The main services relate to: recruitment and selection; employee relations; training and development of staff; workforce development; and policy development.

9 Corporate Services

This service area provides a range of corporate services to the Business Services Organisation and external clients in relation to health and safety; controls assurance; facilities management; and information governance. It likewise leads on dealing with complaints, the development of the Business Services Organisation website and it supports policy development in the organisation.

10 Internal Audit Service

The unit provides an Internal Audit service to HSC organisations. An annual programme of audits is developed for and delivered to each client organisation. An audit report is produced following each audit, providing an independent opinion on the area under review and making recommendations for improvement.

11 Customer Relations and Service Improvement

The Customer Relations and Service Improvement unit carries out a range of functions relating to the customers of the Business Services Organisation. 'Customers' of the Business Services Organisation are those organisations and individuals who use or pay for Business Services Organisation services. The functions of the unit include facilitating the creation and agreement of contracts with customer organisations; facilitating the development of productive working relationships with the main customers of the Business Services Organisation and the various Business Services Organisation departments; facilitating performance management; managing the business planning and risk management processes as well as the creation of the Annual Report.

12 Office for Research Ethics Committees

The Office for Research Ethics Committees in Northern Ireland provides a service which reviews research involving patients or their data to ensure that it is managed ethically and in the best interest of the patient. It does this by use of committees who are trained in ethical review of research but are composed of members who do this voluntarily and with impartiality.

13 Equality Services

The role of the Equality Unit is to support the Business Services Organisation and other HSC organisations in mainstreaming equality, diversity and human rights in their work. This includes providing training; support in policy development and implementation (equality screening and equality impact assessments); developing good practice initiatives; preparing equality schemes, action plans and annual reviews of progress; and providing information and briefings to staff.

Chapter 2 Our arrangements for assessing our compliance with the section 75 duties (Schedule 9 4. (2) (a))

2.1 Some of our arrangements for assessing our compliance with the Section 75 statutory duties are outlined in other relevant parts of this equality scheme, including our monitoring arrangements, assessment of impact of policies arrangements, consultation, publication, and complaints.

In addition we have the following arrangements in place for assessing our compliance:

Responsibilities and reporting

2.2 We are committed to the fulfilment of our Section 75 obligations in all parts of our work.

2.3 Responsibility for the effective implementation of our equality scheme lies with the Chief Executive. The Chief Executive is accountable to the Business Services Organisation's Board for the development, implementation, maintenance and review of the equality scheme in accordance with Section 75 and Schedule 9 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, including any good practice or guidance that has been or may be issued by the Equality Commission.

2.4 If you have any questions or comments regarding our equality scheme, please contact in the first instance, Paula Smyth the Director of People and Place at the address given below and we will respond to you as soon as possible:

Business Services Organisation
2 Franklin Street
Belfast
BT2 8DQ

telephone: (028) 9536 3007 for Text Relay prefix with 18001

email: Paula.Smyth@hscni.net

Website: <http://bso.hscni.net>

2.5 Objectives and targets relating to the statutory duties will be integrated into our strategic and operational business plans³.

2.6 Employees' job descriptions and performance plans reflect their contributions to the discharge of the Section 75 statutory duties and implementation of the equality scheme, where relevant. The personal performance plans are subject to appraisal in the annual performance review.

2.7 The Business Services Organisation prepares an annual report on the progress we have made on implementing the arrangements set out in this equality scheme to discharge our Section 75 statutory duties (Section 75 annual progress report).

The Section 75 annual progress report will be sent to the Equality Commission by 31 August each year and will follow any guidance on annual reporting issued by the Equality Commission.

Progress on the delivery of Section 75 statutory duties will also be included in our (organisational) annual report.

2.8 The latest Section 75 annual progress report is available on our website <http://bso.hscni.net> or by contacting

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2.9 We liaise closely with the Equality Commission to ensure that progress on the implementation of our equality scheme is maintained.

2.10 The Business Services Organisation has in place further arrangements for taking forward implementation of its Equality Scheme:

³ See Appendix 4 'Timetable for measures proposed' and section 2.11 of this equality scheme.

- Equality Forum to drive the equality and diversity agenda across the organisation, in particular the mainstreaming of equality in all its work.
- HSC Organisations Equality Partnership Forum, convened by the Business Services Organisation
- Quarterly reporting to Senior Management Team/Board on progress against Service Delivery Plans and Corporate Plan.

Action plan/action measures

2.11 The Business Services Organisation has developed an action plan to promote equality of opportunity and good relations. This action plan does not form part of the approved equality scheme.

2.12 The action measures that make up our action plan are relevant to our functions. They have been developed and prioritised on the basis of an audit of inequalities. The audit of inequalities gathered and analysed information across the Section 75 categories⁴ to identify the inequalities that exist for our service users and those affected by our policies⁵.

2.13 Action measures are to be specific, measurable, linked to achievable outcomes, realistic and time bound. Action measures include performance indicators and timescales for their achievement.

2.14 Our action plan has been developed for a period of 2 years in order to align with our corporate and business planning cycles. Implementation of the action measures is incorporated into our business planning process.

2.15 We will seek input from our stakeholders and consult on our action plan before we send it to the Equality Commission and thereafter when reviewing the plan as per 2.16 below.

2.16 We will monitor our progress on the delivery of our action measures annually and update the action plan as necessary to ensure that it remains effective and relevant to our functions and work.

⁴ See section 1.1 of this equality scheme for a list of these categories.

⁵ See section 4.1 of this equality scheme for a definition of policies.

2.17 The Business Services Organisation will inform the Commission of any changes or amendments to our action plan and will also include this information in our Section 75 annual progress report to the Commission. Our Section 75 annual progress report will incorporate information on progress we have made in implementing our action plans/action measures.

2.18 Once finalised, our action plan will be available on our website <http://bso.hscni.net> or by contacting

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If you require it in an alternative format please contact us on the details provided.

The Business Services Organisation's Internal Audit Unit includes screening as an item in audit plans where appropriate.

Chapter 3 Our arrangements for consulting

(Schedule 9 4. (2) (a)) - on matters to which a duty (S75 (1) or (2)) is likely to be relevant (including details of the persons to be consulted).

(Schedule 9 4. (2) (b)) on the likely impact of policies adopted or proposed to be adopted by us on the promotion of equality of opportunity.

3.1 We recognise the importance of consultation in all aspects of the implementation of our statutory equality duties. We will consult on our equality scheme, action measures, equality impact assessments and other matters relevant to the Section 75 statutory duties.

3.2 We are committed to carrying out consultation in accordance with the following principles (as contained in the Equality Commission's guidance '*Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 – A Guide for Public Authorities (April 2010)*')

3.2.1 All consultations will seek the views of those directly affected by the matter/policy, the Equality Commission, representative groups of Section 75 categories, other public authorities, voluntary and community groups, our staff and their trades unions and such other groups who have a legitimate interest in the matter, whether or not they have a direct economic or personal interest.

Initially all consultees (see Appendix 3), as a matter of course, will be notified (by email or post) of the matter/policy being consulted upon to ensure they are aware of all consultations. Thereafter, to ensure the most effective use of our and our consultees' resources, we will take a targeted approach to consultation for those consultees that may have a particular interest in the matter/policy being consulted upon and to whom the matter/policy is of particular relevance. This may include for example regional or local consultations, sectoral or thematic consultation etc.

3.2.2 Consultation with all stakeholders will begin as early as possible. We will engage with affected individuals and representative groups to identify how best to consult or engage with them.

We will ask our consultees what their preferred consultation methods are and will give consideration to these. Methods of consultation could include:

- Face-to-face meetings
- Focus groups
- Written documents with the opportunity to comment in writing
- Questionnaires
- Information/notification by email with an opportunity to opt in/opt out of the consultation
- Internet discussions or
- Telephone consultations.

This list is not exhaustive and we may develop other additional methods of consultation more appropriate to key stakeholders and the matter being consulted upon.

3.2.3 We will consider the accessibility and format of every method of consultation we use in order to remove barriers to the consultation process. Specific consideration will be given as to how best to communicate with children and young people, people with disabilities (in particular people with learning disabilities) and minority ethnic communities. We take account of existing and developing good practice, including the Equality Commission's guidance *Let's Talk Let's Listen – Guidance for public authorities on consulting and involving children and young people (2008)*.

Business Services Organisation services are largely provided to all section 75 groups, however ethnic minority groups are most likely to be users of Registration to General Medical Services.

Information will be made available, on request, in alternative formats⁶, in a timely manner, usually within 20 working days (unless third party timescales dictate otherwise, e.g. translation providers). We will ensure that such consultees have equal time to respond.

3.2.4 Specific training is provided to those facilitating consultations to ensure that they have the necessary skills to communicate effectively with consultees.

⁶ See Chapter 6 of our equality scheme for further information on alternative formats of information we provide.

3.2.5 To ensure effective consultation with consultees⁷ on Section 75 matters, we will develop a programme of awareness raising on the Section 75 statutory duties and the commitments in our equality scheme by undertaking the following:

- We will include a comprehensive explanation of our statutory duties including commitments made in our Equality Scheme in the consultation documentation, or, where appropriate, alternative steps will be taken to raise such awareness, e.g. public consultation meetings.
- We will produce an accessible document outlining the functions of the Business Services Organisation and the commitments in our Equality Scheme.
- In addition the Business Services Organisation will consider arrangements for ongoing engagement with consultees via an Advisory Group.

3.2.6 The consultation period lasts for a minimum of twelve weeks to allow adequate time for groups to consult amongst themselves as part of the process of forming a view. However, in exceptional circumstances when this timescale is not feasible (for example implementing EU Directives or UK wide legislation, meeting Health and Safety requirements, addressing urgent public health matters or complying with Court judgements), we may shorten timescales to eight weeks or less before the policy is implemented. We may continue consultation thereafter and will review the policy as part of our monitoring commitments⁸.

Where, under these exceptional circumstances, we must implement a policy immediately, as it is beyond our authority's control, we may consult after implementation of the policy, in order to ensure that any impacts of the policy are considered.

3.2.7 If a consultation exercise is to take place over a period when consultees are less able to respond, for example, over the summer or Christmas break, or if the policy under consideration is particularly complex, we will give consideration to the feasibility of allowing a longer period for the consultation.

⁷ Please see Appendix 3 for a list of our consultees.

⁸ Please see below at 4.27 to 4.31 for details on monitoring.

3.2.8 We are conscious of the fact that affected individuals and representative groups may have different needs. We will take appropriate measures to ensure full participation in any meetings that are held. We will consider for example the time of day, the appropriateness of the venue, in particular whether it can be accessed by those with disabilities, how the meeting is to be conducted, the use of appropriate language, whether a signer and/or interpreter is necessary, and whether the provision of childcare and support for other carers is required.

3.2.9 We make all relevant information available to consultees in appropriate formats to ensure meaningful consultation. This includes detailed information on the policy proposal being consulted upon and any relevant quantitative and qualitative data.

3.2.10 In making any decision with respect to a policy adopted or proposed to be adopted, we take into account any assessment and consultation carried out in relation to the policy.

3.2.11 We provide feedback to consultees in a timely manner. A feedback report is prepared which includes summary information on the policy consulted upon, a summary of consultees' comments and a summary of our consideration of and response to consultees' input. The feedback is provided in formats suitable to consultees. (Please see also 6.3)

3.3 A list of our consultees is included in this equality scheme at Appendix 3. It can also be obtained from our website at <https://bso.hscni.net> or by contacting

The Equality Unit
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2 Franklin Street
Belfast, BT2 8DQ
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3.4 Our consultation list is not exhaustive and is reviewed on an annual basis to ensure it remains relevant to our functions and policies.

We welcome enquiries from any person/s or organisations wishing to be added to the list of consultees. Please contact the Equality

Unit to provide your contact details and have your areas of interest noted or have your name/details removed or amended. Please also inform us at this stage if you would like information sent to you in a particular format or language.

Chapter 4 **Our arrangements for assessing, monitoring and publishing the impact of policies**

(Schedule 9 4. (2) (b); Schedule 9 4. (2) (c);
Schedule 9 4. (2) (d); Schedule 9 9. (1);
Schedule 9 9.(2))

Our arrangements for assessing the likely impact of policies adopted or proposed to be adopted on the promotion of equality of opportunity (Schedule 9 4. (2) (b))

4.1 In the context of Section 75, ‘policy’ is very broadly defined and it covers all the ways in which we carry out or propose to carry out our functions in relation to Northern Ireland. In respect of this equality scheme, the term policy is used for any (proposed/amended/existing) strategy, policy initiative or practice and/or decision, whether written or unwritten and irrespective of the label given to it, eg, ‘draft’, ‘pilot’, ‘high level’ or ‘sectoral’.

4.2 In making any decision with respect to a policy adopted or proposed to be adopted, we take into account any assessment and consultation carried out in relation to the policy, as required by Schedule 9 9. (2) of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

4.3 The Business Services Organisation uses the tools of **screening** and **equality impact assessment** to assess the likely impact of a policy on the promotion of equality of opportunity and good relations. In carrying out these assessments we will relate them to the intended outcomes of the policy in question and will also follow Equality Commission guidance:

- the guidance on screening, including the screening template, as detailed in the Commission’s guidance ‘*Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 – A Guide for Public Authorities (April 2010)*’ and
- on undertaking an equality impact assessment as detailed in the Commission’s guidance ‘*Practical guidance on equality impact assessment (February 2005)*’.

Screening

4.4 The purpose of screening is to identify those policies that are likely to have an impact on equality of opportunity and/or good relations.

4.5 Screening is completed at the earliest opportunity in the policy development/review process. Policies which we propose to adopt will be subject to screening prior to implementation. For more detailed strategies or policies that are to be put in place through a series of stages, we will screen at various stages during implementation.

4.6 The lead role in the screening of a policy is taken by the policy decision maker who has the authority to make changes to that policy. However, screening will also involve other relevant team members, for example, equality specialists, those who implement the policy and staff members from other relevant work areas. Where possible we will include key stakeholders in the screening process.

4.7 The following questions are applied to all our policies as part of the screening process:

- What is the likely impact on equality of opportunity for those affected by this policy, for each of the Section 75 equality categories? (minor/major/none)
- Are there opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity for people within the Section 75 equality categories?
- To what extent is the policy likely to impact on good relations between people of a different religious belief, political opinion or racial group? (minor/major/none)
- Are there opportunities to better promote good relations between people of a different religious belief, political opinion or racial group?

4.8 In order to answer the screening questions, we gather all relevant information and data, both qualitative and quantitative. In taking this evidence into account we consider the different needs, experiences and priorities for each of the Section 75 equality categories. Any screening decision will be informed by this evidence.

4.9 Completion of screening, taking into account our consideration of the answers to all four screening questions set out in 4.7 above, will lead to one of the following three outcomes:

1. the policy has been 'screened in' for equality impact assessment
2. the policy has been 'screened out' with mitigation⁹ or an alternative policy proposed to be adopted
3. the policy has been 'screened out' without mitigation or an alternative policy proposed to be adopted.

4.10 If our screening concludes that the likely impact of a policy is 'minor' in respect of one, or more, of the equality of opportunity and/or good relations categories, we may on occasion decide to proceed with an equality impact assessment, depending on the policy. If an EQIA is not to be conducted we will nonetheless consider measures that might mitigate the policy impact as well as alternative policies that might better achieve the promotion of equality of opportunity and/or good relations.

Where we mitigate we will outline in our screening template the reasons to support this decision together with the proposed changes, amendments or alternative policy.

This screening decision will be 'signed off' by the appropriate policy lead within the Business Services Organisation.

4.11 If our screening concludes that the likely impact of a policy is 'major' in respect of one, or more, of the equality of opportunity and/or good relations categories, we will normally subject the policy to an equality impact assessment.

⁹ Mitigation – Where an assessment (screening in this case) reveals that a particular policy has an adverse impact on equality of opportunity and / or good relations, a public authority must consider ways of delivering the policy outcomes which have a less adverse effect on the relevant Section 75 categories.

This screening decision will be 'signed off' by the appropriate policy lead within the Business Services Organisation.

4.12 If our screening concludes that the likely impact of a policy is 'none', in respect of all of the equality of opportunity and/or good relations categories, we may decide to screen the policy out. If a policy is 'screened out' as having no relevance to equality of opportunity or good relations, we will give details of the reasons for the decision taken. This screening decision will be 'signed off' by the appropriate policy lead within the Business Services Organisation.

4.13 As soon as possible following the completion of the screening process, the screening template, signed off and approved by the senior manager responsible for the policy, will be made available on our website <http://bso.hscni.net> and on request by contacting

The Equality Unit
Business Services Organisation
2 Franklin Street
Belfast, BT2 8DQ
Tel: (028) 9536 3961 for Text Relay prefix with 18001
Email: Equality.Unit@hscni.net

4.14 If a consultee, including the Equality Commission, raises a concern about a screening decision based on supporting evidence, we will review the screening decision.

4.15 Our screening reports are published quarterly [see below at 4.20 - 4.22 and 4.23 for details].

Equality impact assessment

4.16 An equality impact assessment (EQIA) is a thorough and systematic analysis of a policy, whether that policy is formal or informal, and irrespective of the scope of that policy. The primary function of an EQIA is to determine the extent of any impact of a policy upon the Section 75 categories and to determine if the impact is an adverse one. It is also an opportunity to demonstrate the likely positive outcomes of a policy and to seek ways to more effectively promote equality of opportunity and good relations.

4.17 Once a policy is screened and screening has identified that an equality impact assessment is necessary, we will carry out the EQIA in accordance with Equality Commission guidance. The equality impact assessment will be carried out as part of the policy development process, before the policy is implemented.

4.18 Any equality impact assessment will be subject to consultation at the appropriate stage(s). (For details see above Chapter 3 “Our Arrangements for Consulting”).

Our arrangements for publishing the results of the assessments of the likely impact of policies we have adopted or propose to adopt on the promotion of equality of opportunity

(Schedule 9 4. (2) (d); Schedule 9 9. (1))

4.19 We make publicly available the results of our assessments (screening and EQIA) of the likely impact of our policies on the promotion of equality of opportunity and good relations.

What we publish

4.20 Screening reports

These are published quarterly. Screening reports detail:

- All policies screened by the Business Services Organisation over the three month period
- A statement of the aim(s) of the policy/policies to which the assessment relates
- Consideration given to measures which might mitigate any adverse impact
- Consideration given to alternative policies which might better achieve the promotion of equality of opportunity;
- Screening decisions, i.e:
 - whether the policy has been ‘screened in’ for equality impact assessment.
 - whether the policy has been ‘screened out’ with mitigation or an alternative policy proposed to be adopted.
 - whether the policy has been ‘screened out’ without mitigation or an alternative policy proposed to be adopted.

- Where applicable, a timetable for conducting equality impact assessments
- A link to the completed screening template(s) on our website

4.21 Screening templates

For details on the availability of our screening templates please refer to 4.13.

4.22 Equality impact assessments

EQIA reports are published once the impact assessment has been completed. These reports include:

- A statement of the aim of the policy assessed
- Information and data collected
- Details of the assessment of impact(s)
- Consideration given to measures which might mitigate any adverse impact
- Consideration given to alternative policies which might better achieve the promotion of equality of opportunity
- Consultation responses
- The decision taken
- Future monitoring plans.

How we publish the information

4.23 All information we publish is accessible and can be made available in alternative formats on request. Please see 6.3 below.

Where we publish the information

4.24 The results of our assessments (screening reports and completed templates, the results of equality impact assessments) are available on our website <http://bso.hscni.net> and by contacting The Equality Unit

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Belfast, BT2 8DQ

Tel: (028) 9536 3961 for Text Relay prefix with 18001

Email: Equality.Unit@hscni.net

4.25 In addition to the above, screening reports (electronic link or hard copy on request if more suitable for recipients) which include all policies screened over a 3 month period are also sent directly to all consultees on a quarterly basis.

4.26 We will inform the general public about the availability of this material through communications such as press releases where appropriate.

Our arrangements for monitoring any adverse impact of policies we have adopted on equality of opportunity
(Schedule 9 4. (2) (c))

4.27 Monitoring can assist us to deliver better public services and continuous improvements. Monitoring Section 75 information involves the processing of sensitive personal data (data relating to the racial or ethnic origin of individuals, sexual orientation, political opinion, religious belief, etc). In order to carry out monitoring in a confidential and effective manner, the Business Services Organisation follows guidance from the Office of the Information Commissioner and the Equality Commission.

4.28 We monitor any adverse impact on the promotion of equality of opportunity of policies we have adopted. We are also committed to monitoring more broadly to identify opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity and good relations in line with Equality Commission guidance.

4.29 The systems we have established to monitor the impact of policies and identify opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity and good relations are:

- The collection, collation and analysis of existing relevant primary quantitative and qualitative data across all nine equality categories on an ongoing basis
- The collection, collation and analysis of existing relevant secondary sources of quantitative and qualitative data across all nine equality categories on an ongoing basis
- An audit of existing information systems, where appropriate, within one year of approval of this equality scheme, to identify the extent of current monitoring and take action, where appropriate, to

address any gaps in order to have the necessary information on which to base decisions

- Undertaking or commissioning new data if necessary.

4.30 If over a two year period monitoring and evaluation show that a policy results in greater adverse impact than predicted, or if opportunities arise which would allow for greater equality of opportunity to be promoted, we will ensure that the policy is revised to achieve better outcomes for relevant equality groups.

4.31 We review our EQIA monitoring information on an annual basis. Other monitoring information is reviewed generally on an annual basis also, unless specified otherwise (for example, if a project has a duration of two years, monitoring information may be reviewed as part of the evaluation after the completion of the project).

Following the audit of existing information systems, additional arrangements may be put in place if the audit identifies a need to do so.

Our arrangements for publishing the results of our monitoring (Schedule 9 4. (2) (d))

4.32 Schedule 9 4. (2) (d) requires us to publish the results of the monitoring of adverse impacts of policies we have adopted. However, we are committed to monitoring more broadly and the results of our policy monitoring are published as follows:

4.33 EQIA monitoring information is published as part of our Section 75 annual progress report [see 2.7]

4.34 Other monitoring information will be made available on our website <http://bso.hscni.net> and a notification that they are available will be sent to consultees by email with the exception of quantitative monitoring information that may otherwise compromise the identity of individuals (for example if only small numbers of people are involved).

4.35 All information published is accessible and can be made available in alternative formats on request. Please see below at 6.3 for details.

Chapter 5 Staff training

(Schedule 9 4.(2) (e))

Commitment to staff training

5.1 We recognise that awareness raising and training play a crucial role in the effective implementation of our Section 75 duties.

5.2 Our Chief Executive wishes to positively communicate the commitment of the Business Services Organisation to the Section 75 statutory duties, both internally and externally.

To this end we have introduced an effective communication and training programme for all staff and will ensure that our commitment to the Section 75 statutory duties is made clear in all relevant publications.

Training objectives

5.3 The Business Services Organisation will draw up a detailed training plan for its staff which will aim to achieve the following objectives:

- to raise awareness of the provisions of Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, our equality scheme commitments and the particular issues likely to affect people across the range of Section 75 categories, to ensure that our staff fully understand their role in implementing the scheme
- to provide those staff involved in the assessment of policies (screening and EQIA) with the necessary skills and knowledge to do this work effectively
- to provide those staff who deal with complaints in relation to compliance with our equality scheme with the necessary skills and knowledge to investigate and monitor complaints effectively
- to provide those staff involved in consultation processes with the necessary skills and knowledge to do this work effectively
- to provide those staff involved in the implementation and monitoring of the effective implementation of the Business Services Organisation equality scheme with the necessary skills and knowledge to do this work effectively.

Awareness raising and training arrangements

5.4 The following arrangements are in place to ensure all our staff and board members are aware of and understand our equality obligations.

- We will develop a summary of this equality scheme and make it available to all staff.
- We will provide access to copies of the full equality scheme for all staff; ensure that any queries or questions of clarification from staff are addressed effectively.
- Staff in the Business Services Organisation will receive a briefing on this equality scheme within six months of scheme approval.
- The Section 75 statutory duties form part of induction training for new staff.
- Focused training is provided for key staff within the Business Services Organisation who are directly engaged in taking forward the implementation of our equality scheme commitments (for example those involved in research and data collection, policy development, service design, conducting equality impact assessments, consultation, monitoring and evaluation).
- Where appropriate, training will be provided to ensure staff are aware of the issues experienced by the range of Section 75 groups.
- When appropriate and on an ongoing basis, arrangements will be made to ensure staff are kept up to date with Section 75 developments.

5.5 Training and awareness raising programmes will, where relevant, be developed in association with the appropriate Section 75 groups and our staff.

In order to share resources and expertise, the Business Services Organisation will, where possible, work closely with other bodies and agencies in the development and delivery of training.

Monitoring and evaluation

5.6 Our training programme is subject to the following monitoring and evaluation arrangements:

- We evaluate the extent to which all participants in this training programme have acquired the necessary skills and knowledge to achieve each of the above objectives.
- The extent to which training objectives have been met will be reported on as part of the Section 75 annual progress report, which will be sent to the Equality Commission.

We will also monitor the number of staff trained, the equality profile of staff trained, as well as the job roles of staff trained.

Chapter 6 Our arrangements for ensuring and assessing public access to information and services we provide

(Schedule 9 4. (2) (f))

6.1 We are committed to ensuring that the information we disseminate and the services we provide are fully accessible to all parts of the community in Northern Ireland. We keep our arrangements under review to ensure that this remains the case.

6.2 We are aware that some groups will not have the same access to information as others.

In particular:

- People with sensory, learning, communication and mobility disabilities may require printed information in other formats.
- Members of ethnic minority groups, whose first language is not English, may have difficulties with information provided only in English.
- Children and young people may not be able to fully access or understand information.

Access to information

6.3 To ensure equality of opportunity in accessing information, we provide information in alternative formats on request, where reasonably practicable. Where the exact request cannot be met we will ensure a reasonable alternative is provided.

Alternative formats may include Easy Read, Braille, audio formats (CD, mp3 or DAISY), large print or minority languages to meet the needs of those for whom English is not their first language.

The Business Services Organisation liaises with representatives of young people and disability (including people with a learning disability) and minority ethnic organisations and takes account of existing and developing good practice.

We will respond to requests for information in alternative formats in a timely manner, usually within 20 working days (unless third party timescales dictate otherwise, e.g. translation providers).

For those not fluent in English, we have arrangements in place for accessing a regional contract for translation and interpreting services. We also have access to the Regional Interpreting

Service for all Health and Social Care Organisations throughout Northern Ireland.

We will also seek to draw on the learning of regional work and that of other HSC organisations in how best to meet the information needs of the above groups.

6.4 In disseminating information through the media we will seek to advertise in the press where appropriate.

Access to services

6.6 We are committed to ensuring that all of our services are fully accessible to everyone in the community across the Section 75 categories.

The Business Services Organisation also adheres to the relevant provisions of current anti-discrimination legislation.

6.7 We also ensure public access to our services through arrangements outside and inside our buildings such as providing signage, lowered reception desks and disabled car parking space.

Assessing public access to information and services

6.8 In line with our general arrangements for monitoring (see 4.31) we also monitor across all our functions, in relation to access to information and services, to ensure equality of opportunity and good relations are promoted.

6.9 This includes monitoring and reviewing complaints information and soliciting feedback from users (such as through surveys and user fora).

Chapter 7 Timetable for measures we propose in this equality scheme

(Schedule 9 4. (3) (b))

7.1 Appendix 4 outlines our timetable for all measures proposed within this equality scheme. The measures outlined in this timetable will be incorporated into our business planning processes.

7.2 This timetable is different from and in addition to our commitment to developing action plans/action measures to specifically address inequalities and further promote equality of opportunity and good relations. We have included in our equality scheme a commitment to develop an action plan. Accordingly, this commitment it is listed in the timetable of measures at Appendix 4. For information on these action measures please see above at 2.11 – 2.18.

Chapter 8 Our complaints procedure

(Schedule 9 10.)

8.1 The Business Services Organisation is responsive to the views of members of the public. We will endeavour to resolve all complaints made to us.

8.2 Schedule 9 paragraph 10 of the Act refers to complaints. A person can make a complaint to a public authority if the complainant believes he or she may have been directly affected by an alleged failure of the authority to comply with its approved equality scheme.

If the complaint has not been resolved within a reasonable timescale, the complaint can be brought to the Equality Commission.

8.3 A person wishing to make a complaint that the Business Services Organisation has failed to comply with its approved equality scheme should contact
The Complaints & Whistleblowing Manager
Business Services Organisation
2 Franklin Street
Belfast
BT2 8DQ
Or email: Complaints.bso@hscni.net
Or to discuss an issue in the first instance, please ring (028) 9536 0698

Section 75 complaints are integrated into the general complaints procedure within the Business Services Organisation.

8.4 We will in the first instance acknowledge receipt of each complaint within two working days.

8.5 The Business Services Organisation will carry out an internal investigation of the complaint and will respond substantively to the complainant within one (1) month of the date of receiving the letter of complaint. Under certain circumstances, if the complexity of the matter requires a longer period, the period for response to the complainant may be extended to two (2) months. In those

circumstances, the complainant will be advised of the extended period within one month of making the complaint.

8.6 During this process the complainant will be kept fully informed of the progress of the investigation into the complaint and of any outcomes.

8.7 In any subsequent investigation by the Equality Commission, the Business Services Organisation will co-operate fully, providing access in a timely manner to any relevant documentation that the Equality Commission may require.

Similarly, the Business Services Organisation will co-operate fully with any investigation by the Equality Commission under subparagraph 11 (1) (b) of Schedule 9 to the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

8.8 The Business Services Organisation will make all efforts to implement promptly and in full any recommendations arising out of any Commission investigation.

Chapter 9 Publication of our equality scheme

(Schedule 9 4. (3) (c))

9.1 Our equality scheme is available free of charge in print form and alternative formats from:

Equality Unit
Business Services Organisation
2 Franklin Street
Belfast, BT2 8DQ
Tel: (028) 9536 3961 for Text Relay prefix with 18001
Email: Equality.Unit@hscni.net

9.2 Our equality scheme is also available on our website at:
<http://bso.hscni.net>

9.3 The following arrangements are in place for the publication in a timely manner of our equality scheme to ensure equality of access:

- We will make every effort to communicate widely the existence and content of our equality scheme. This may include press releases, prominent advertisements in the press, the internet and direct mail shots to groups representing the various categories in Section 75.
- We will email a link to our approved equality scheme to our consultees on our consultation lists. Other consultees without e-mail will be notified by letter that the scheme is available on request. We will respond to requests for the equality scheme in alternative formats in a timely manner, usually within 20 working days (unless third party timescales dictate otherwise, e.g. translation providers).
- Our equality scheme is available on request in alternative formats such as Easy Read, Braille, large print, audio formats (CD, mp3, DAISY) to meet the needs of people with a disability, in minority languages to meet the needs of those not fluent in English and in a format and language that is accessible to children and young people.

9.4 For a list of our stakeholders and consultees please see Appendix 3 of the equality scheme, visit our website at <http://bso.hscni.net>

or contact the Equality Unit
Business Services Organisation
2 Franklin Street
Belfast, BT2 8DQ
Tel: (028) 9536 3961
Email: Equality.Unit@hscni.net

Chapter 10 Review of our equality scheme

(Schedule 9 8. (3))

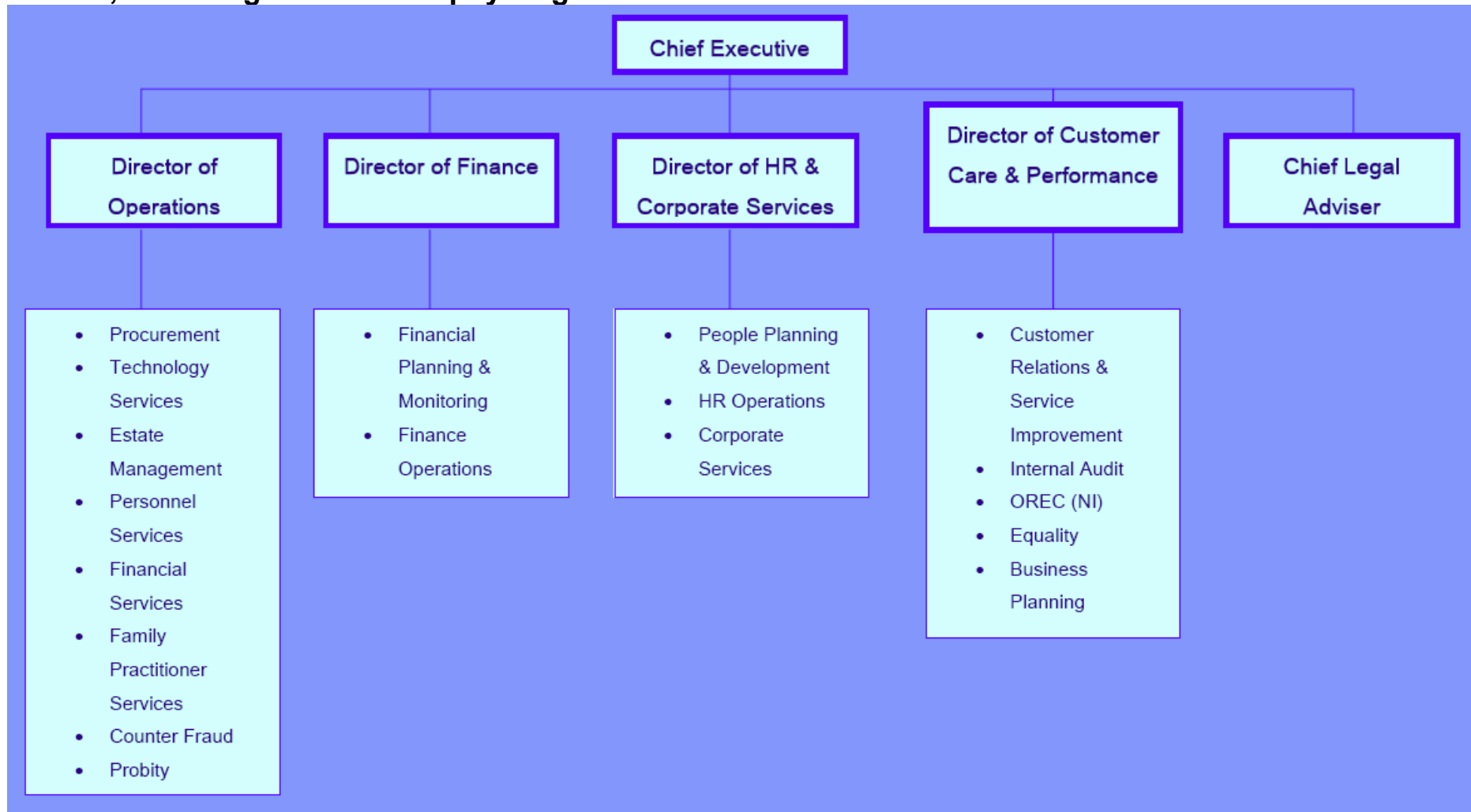
10.1 As required by Schedule 9 paragraph 8 (3) of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 we will conduct a thorough review of this equality scheme. This review will take place either within five years of submission of this equality scheme to the Equality Commission or within a shorter timescale to allow alignment with the review of other planning cycles.

The review will evaluate the effectiveness of our scheme in relation to the implementation of the Section 75 statutory duties relevant to our functions in Northern Ireland.

10.2 In undertaking this review we will follow any guidance issued by the Equality Commission. A report of this review will be made public by placing it on our website and by informing our consultees via email or post of its availability. It will also be sent to the Equality Commission.

Appendix 1 Organisational chart

Director of Operations: Teresa Molloy; Director of Finance: Patrick Anderson; Director of Human Resources & Corporate Services: Hugh McPoland; Director of Customer Care & Performance: Karen O'Loan; Chief Legal Adviser: Alphy Maginness



Appendix 2 Example groups relevant to the Section 75 categories for Northern Ireland purposes

Please note, this list is for illustration purposes only, it is not exhaustive.

Category	Example groups
Religious belief	Buddhist; Catholic; Hindu; Jewish; Muslims, people of no religious belief; Protestants; Sikh; other faiths. For the purposes of Section 75, the term “religious belief” is the same definition as that used in the <i>Fair Employment & Treatment (NI) Order</i>¹⁰. Therefore, “religious belief” also includes any <i>perceived</i> religious belief (or perceived lack of belief) and, in employment situations only, it also covers any “<i>similar philosophical belief</i>”.
Political opinion ¹¹	Nationalist generally; Unionists generally; members/supporters of other political parties.
Racial group	Black people; Chinese; Indians; Pakistanis; people of mixed ethnic background; Polish; Roma; Travellers; White people.
Men and women generally	Men (including boys); Trans-gendered people; Transsexual people; women (including girls).
Marital status	Civil partners or people in civil partnerships; divorced people; married people; separated people; single people; widowed people.
Age	Children and young people; older people.
Persons with a disability	Persons with disabilities as defined by the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.
Persons with dependants	Persons with personal responsibility for the care of a child; for the care of a person with a disability; or the care of a dependant older person.
Sexual orientation	Bisexual people; heterosexual people; gay or lesbian people.

¹⁰ See Section 98 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, which states: “*In this Act... “political opinion” and “religious belief” shall be construed in accordance with Article 2(3) and (4) of the Fair Employment & Treatment (NI) Order 1998.*”

¹¹ *ibid*

Appendix 3 **List of consultees** (Schedule 9 4. (2) (a))

Consultation list
Organisation
Action Cancer
Action Mental Health
Action MS
ADOPT
Advice NI
Advocate for Older People
Afro-Community Support Organisation
Age Concern Help the Aged NI
Age Sector Platform
AIDs Helpline (NI)
Alliance Party of Northern Ireland
Al-Nisa Womens Group
Al-Nure Craigavon Asian Women's & Childrens
Alzheimer's Disease Society NI
An Munia Tober
Antrim Borough Council
ARC (NI)
Ards Borough Council
Armagh City and District Council
Armagh Phillipine Association
Armagh Travellers Support Group
Arthritis Care
Aspergers Network
Association of Chief Officers of Voluntary Associations
Autism Initiatives NI
Autism NI
Aware Defeat Depression
Ballymena Borough Council
Ballymena Community Forum
Ballymoney Borough Council
Banbridge District Council

Consultation list
Organisation
Banbridge Youth Arts & Information Centre
Bangladesh Welfare Association
Barnardos
Belfast Carers Centre
Belfast City Council
Belfast Hebrew Congregation
Belfast HSC Trust
Belfast Islamic Centre
Belfast Jewish Community
Black Youth Network
BMER Family Support Service Barnardos
Britain's General Union (GMB)
British Association of Occupational Therapists
British Association of Social Workers (NI Office)
British Deaf Association (NI)
British Dental Association (NI) Branch
British Dietetic Association
British Medical Association
British Orthodontic Society
British Psychological Society
British Red Cross
Brook Northern Ireland Advisory Centre
Bryson Group
Bytes Project
CAP (Changing Ageing Project)
Cara-friend
Carers Northern Ireland
Carrickfergus Borough Council
Castlereagh Borough Council
CAUSE
Centre for Voluntary Action Studies
CFNI (Community Foundation NI)
Chartered Society of Physiotherapy
Chest, Heart and Stroke Association

Consultation list
Organisation
Chief Officers 3rd Sector
Childline NI
Children in Northern Ireland
Children's Law Centre NI
Chinese Lay Health Project Barnardos
Chinese Welfare Association
Church of Ireland
Citizens Advice Regional Office
Coleraine Borough Council
Colin Glen Trust
Committee on the Administration of Justice
Community Development and Health Network
Community NI
Community Practitioners & Health Visitors Association
Community Relations Council
Community Work Education & Training Network
Contact A Family
Cookstown District Council
Council for Ethnic Equality
Craigavon Area Talking Newspaper
Craigavon Asian Women's & Children's Association
Craigavon Borough Council
Craigavon Ethnic Minorities Support Group
Craigavon Travellers' Support Committee
Craigavon Vietnamese Group
Crossroads Caring For Carers
CRUSE
Cystic Fibrosis Trust
DARD (Department of Agriculture and Rural Development) Equality Branch
Deaf Talkabout (Belfast Telegraph)
Department for Regional Development
Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure
Department of Education - Strategy and Equality Unit

Consultation list
Organisation
Department of Employment and Learning
Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment
Department of Finance and Personnel
Department of Social Development
Department of the Environment
Derry City Council
Derry Travellers' Support Group
Derry Well Woman
DHSSPS (Department of health, social services and public safety)
Diabetes UK Northern Ireland
Disability Action
Down & Connor Family Ministry
Down District Council
Down's Syndrome Association
Dungannon & South Tyrone Borough Council
Dungannon Visually Impaired Club
DUP
Eagle Project
Early Years Organisation
East Belfast Community Development Agency
Education and Skills Authority Implementation Team
EGSA (Educational Guidance Service for Adults)
Employers' Forum on Disability
Enable NI
Epilepsy Action
Equality Coalition
Equality Commission for Northern Ireland
Extern
Extra Care
FACE - Inclusion Matters
Falls Community Council
Family Planning Association NI
Federation of Clinical Scientists
Federation of Experts by Experience

Consultation list
Organisation
Fermanagh District Council
Fermanagh Women's Network
First Key
Forum For Action On Substance Abuse
Foyle Down's Syndrome Trust
Foyle Friend
Foyle Multi Cultural Forum
Gay and Lesbian Youth Northern Ireland
Gingerbread NI
Glen Road Heights Women's Group
Glencraig Camphill Community
Green Party
Guru Nanak Ji Sikh Community
Headway
Helm Housing
Homeless Support Unit
HSC Board
ICO NI
Include Youth
Independent Health Care Providers
Indian Community Centre
Institute of Governance, QUB
Integrated Services for Children and Young People
Japan Society of NI
Karen Mortlock Trust
La Societa Italiana Irlanda Del Nord
Larne Borough Council
Latinoamerica Unida
Law Society NI
Lesbian Advocacy Services Initiative
Lesbian Line
Limavady Borough Council
Lisburn City Council
Macmillan Cancer Relief

Consultation list
Organisation
Magherafelt District Council
Magherafelt Women's Group
Mandarin Speakers Association
Marie Curie Cancer Care
MENCAP
Men's Advisory Project
Men's Health Forum
Mental Health Review Tribunal
Methodist Church in Ireland
Migrant Support Area
Mind Yourself
Mindwise
Mindwise New Vision
Mir Galleries Persian Cultural Centre
Moyle District Council
Multicultural Forum (Coleraine)
Multi-Cultural Resource Centre
Multiple Sclerosis Society
Muscular Dystrophy Group
National Autistic Society NI
National Deaf Children's Society
Nederlandse Vereniging in Noord Ireland
Newry & Mourne District Council
Newry & Mourne Senior Citizens' Forum
Newry & Mourne Women
Newry and Mourne Deaf Club
Newry Interagency Consortium for Travellers
Newtownabbey Borough Council
NHS Confederation on Learning Disability
NI Association For Mental Health
NI Blood Transfusion Service
NI Commissioner for Children and Young People
NI Committee of Irish Congress of Trade Unions
NI Council for the Homeless

Consultation list
Organisation
NI Federation of Housing Associations
NI Fire & Rescue Service
NI Guardian ad Litem Services Agency
NI Health and Social Services Interpreting Service
NI Hospice
NI Housing Executive
NI Human Rights Commission
NI Local Government Association
NI Medical and Dental Training Agency
NI Practice & Education Council for Nursing and Midwifery
NI Social Care Council
NI Statistics and Research Agency
NI Women's European Platform
NI Youth Forum
NIACRO (Northern Ireland Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders)
NIAPN (Northern Ireland Anti-Poverty Network)
NIPSA
North Down Borough Council
North West Community Network
North West Ethnic Communities Association
North West Forum of People with Disabilities
Northern Area Children and Young People's Committee
Northern HSC Trust
Northern Ireland Ambulance Service Trust
Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities
Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action
Northern Ireland Deaf Youth Association
Northern Ireland Filipino Community in Action
Northern Ireland Gay Rights Association
Northern Ireland ME Association
Northern Ireland Muslim Family Association
Northern Ireland Office
Northern Ireland Office - Human Rights And Equality Unit

Consultation list
Organisation
Northern Ireland Pakistani Cultural Association
Northern Ireland Volunteer Development Agency
NSPCC
NUS-USI Northern Ireland Student Centre
OFMDFM (Office of the First minister and Deputy minister)
Oi-Kwan Chinese Women's Group
Oi-Yin Bangor Women's Group
Older Peoples Advocate NI
Omagh District Council
Omagh Ethnic Minority Group
Omagh Women's Area Network
Orchardville Society
Pakistani Community Welfare Association
Parents Advice Centre
Parents and Professionals and Autism
Parents Education as Autism Therapists (PEAT)
Parkinson's Disease Society
Patient Client Council
Pharmaceutical Society of NI
Playboard
Police Service of Northern Ireland
Polish Association NI
Positive Futures
Praxis
Presbyterian Church in Ireland
Press for Change
Princes Trust
Probation Board NI
Progressive Unionist Party
Prospects
Public Health Agency
Queen's University Belfast- Equal Opportunities Unit
Queer Space
Rainbow Project

Consultation list
Organisation
RCN
Regulation & Quality Improvement Authority
Relatives & Residents Associations
RNIB
RNID
Royal College of GPs
Royal College of Midwives
Rural Development Council
Sai Pak Community Group
Salvation Army
Samaritans Belfast
SARN
Save the Children
Scouting Association NI
SDLP
SENSE NI
Shelter
Sikh Community Project
Sikh Women and Childrens Association
Simon Community
Sinn Fein
Socialist Party
South Eastern Education & Library Board (SEELB)
South Eastern HSC Trust
South West Belfast Community Forum
Southern HSC Trust
Special EU Programs Body (SEUPB)
Sperrin Lakeland Senior Citizens' Consortium
Staff Commission for Education and Library Boards
STEP (South Tyrone Empowerment Prog.)
Strabane District Council
Stroke Association
Sustainable Northern Ireland Programme
The Baha'I Council for Northern Ireland

Consultation list
Organisation
The Cedar Foundation
The Commission for Victims and Survivors
The Egyptian Society of Northern Ireland
The Guide Dogs for the Blind Association
The HIV Support Centre
The Northern Ireland Prison Service
The Omnibus Partnership
The Orchard Social Club for Visually Impaired People
The Society of Chiropodists & Podiatrists
The Society of Radiographers
The Women's Centre
Threshold
Tiny Life
Training for Women Network
Trauma Advisory Panel
Traveller and Gay
Triangle Housing Association Ltd
Ulster Cancer Foundation
Ulster Chemists Association
Ulster Quaker Service Committee
Ulster Scots Agency
Ulster Unionist Party
Ulster-Scots Heritage Council
Unison
UNITE
University of the 3rd Age
University of Ulster
Victim Support
Vietnamese Association
Voice of Young People in Care
Voluntary Service Bureau
Wah Hep Chinese Community Association
WAVE Trauma Centre
West Belfast Partnership

Consultation list	
Organisation	
Western Equality & Human Rights Office	
Women Of The World	
Women's Aid Federation NI	
Women's Forum NI	
Women's Information Group	
Women's Resource and Development Agency	
Women's Support Network	
Workers Educational Association	
Young Carers' Project	
Youth Action NI	
Youth Council for Northern Ireland	
Youthnet	

Appendix 4 Timetable for measures proposed (Schedule 9 4.(3) (b))

Measure (example)	Lead responsibility (example)	Timetable (example)
<i>Section 75 Annual Progress Report [2.7]</i>	<i>Chief Executive and Director of Customer Care and Performance</i>	<i>31 August (annually)</i>
<i>Action plan</i>		
<i>Consultation on draft action plan [2.15]</i>	<i>Equality Manager</i>	<i>Dec 2010 to Feb 2011</i>
<i>Finalised action plan published [2.18]</i>	<i>Equality Manager/Chief Executive</i>	<i>May 2011</i>
<i>Delivery of Action Plan [2.11]</i>	<i>Directors and Equality Manager</i>	<i>May 2011 to Mar 2013</i>
<i>Arrangements for monitoring progress in place [2.16]</i>	<i>Chief Executive and Director of Customer Care and Performance</i>	<i>May 2011</i>
<i>Consultation list reviewed and updated [3.4]</i>	<i>Equality Manager</i>	<i>Nov 2010 and ongoing</i>
<i>Screening timetable [4.4]</i>	<i>Directors</i>	<i>ongoing</i>
<i>Screening Reports [4.15]</i>	<i>Equality Manager</i>	<i>quarterly from May 2011</i>
<i>EQIA timetable [4.16] rolling (based on screening outcomes)</i>	<i>Equality Manager</i>	<i>ongoing</i>
<i>Monitoring</i>		
<i>Review of monitoring information [4.31]</i>	<i>Directors</i>	<i>annually</i>

<i>Publication of monitoring information</i> <i>[4.33;4.34]</i>	<i>Directors</i>	<i>annually</i>
<i>Training</i> <i>Development of summary scheme</i> <i>[5.4]</i> <i>Development of overall training programme</i> <i>[5.5]</i> <i>Focussed training</i> <i>[5.4]</i> <i>Update training</i> <i>[5.4]</i> <i>Evaluation of training</i> <i>[5.6]</i>	<i>Equality Manager</i> <i>Equality Manager and Directors</i> <i>Equality Manager</i> <i>Equality Manager</i> <i>Equality Manager</i>	<i>within 6 months of scheme approval</i> <i>annually</i> <i>annually</i> <i>ongoing</i> <i>ongoing</i>
<i>Assessing access to information and services</i> <i>[6.9]</i>	<i>Directors</i>	<i>annually</i>
<i>Communication of equality scheme</i> <i>[9.3]</i> <i>Notification of consultees</i> <i>[9.3]</i>	<i>Chief Executive</i> <i>Chief Executive</i>	<i>within 6 months of scheme approval</i> <i>within 6 months of scheme approval</i>
<i>Review of equality scheme</i> <i>[10.1]</i>	<i>Chief Executive</i>	<i>within 5 years after approval</i>

Appendix 5 Glossary of terms

Action plan

A plan which sets out actions a public authority will take to implement its Section 75 statutory duties. It is a mechanism for the realisation of measures to achieve equality outcomes for the Section 75 equality and good relations categories.

Audit of inequalities

An audit of inequalities is a systematic review and analysis of inequalities which exist for service users and those affected by a public authority's policies. An audit can be used by a public authority to inform its work in relation to the Section 75 equality and good relations duties. It can also enable public authorities to assess progress on the implementation of the Section 75 statutory duties, as it provides baseline information on existing inequalities relevant to a public authority's functions.

Consultation

In the context of Section 75, consultation is the process of asking those affected by a policy (ie, service users, staff, the general public) for their views on how the policy could be implemented more effectively to promote equality of opportunity across the 9 categories. Different circumstances will call for different types of consultation. Consultations could, for example, include meetings, focus groups, surveys and questionnaires.

Equality impact assessment

The mechanism underpinning Section 75, where existing and proposed policies are assessed in order to determine whether they have an adverse impact on equality of opportunity for the relevant Section 75 categories. Equality impact assessments require the analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data.

Equality of opportunity

The prevention, elimination or regulation of discrimination between people on grounds of characteristics including sex, marital status, age, disability, religious belief, political opinion, dependants, race and sexual orientation.

The promotion of equality of opportunity entails more than the elimination of discrimination. It requires proactive measures to be taken to secure equality of opportunity between the categories identified under Section 75.

Equality scheme

A document which outlines a public authority's arrangements for complying with its Section 75 obligations. An equality scheme must include an outline of the public authority's arrangements for carrying out consultations, screening, equality impact assessments, monitoring, training and arrangements for ensuring access to information and services.

Good relations

Although not defined in the legislation, the Equality Commission has agreed the following working definition of good relations: 'the growth of relations and structures for Northern Ireland that acknowledge the religious, political and racial context of this society, and that seek to promote respect, equity and trust, and embrace diversity in all its forms'.

Inequality

Where something an organisation does has a differential or unfair impact on anyone in any of the groups listed in **Section 75** definition below.

Mainstreaming equality

The integration of equal opportunities principles, strategies and practices into the every day work of public authorities from the outset. In other words, mainstreaming is the process of ensuring that equality considerations are built into the policy development process from the beginning, rather than being bolted on at the end. Mainstreaming can help improve methods of working by increasing a public authority's accountability, responsiveness to need and relations with the public. It can bring added value at many levels.

Monitoring

Monitoring consists of continuously scrutinising and evaluating a policy to assess its impact on the Section 75 categories.

Monitoring must be sensitive to the issues associated with human rights and privacy.

Public authorities should seek advice from consultees and Section 75 representative groups when setting up monitoring systems.

Monitoring consists of the collection of relevant information and evaluation of policies. It is not solely about the collection of data, it can also take the form of regular meetings and reporting of research undertaken. Monitoring is not an end in itself but provides the data for the next cycle of policy screening.

Northern Ireland Act

The Northern Ireland Act, implementing the Good Friday Agreement, received Royal Assent on 19 November 1998. Section 75 of the Act created the statutory equality duties.

Policy

The formal and informal decisions a public authority makes in relation to carrying out its duties. Defined in the New Oxford English Dictionary as 'a course or principle of action adopted or proposed by a government party, business or individual'. In the context of Section 75, the term **policies** covers all the ways in which a public authority carries out or proposes to carry out its functions relating to Northern Ireland. Policies include unwritten as well as written policies.

Screening

The procedure for identifying which policies will be subject to equality impact assessment, and how these equality impact assessments will be prioritised. The purpose of screening is to identify the policies which are likely to have a minor/major impact on equality of opportunity so that greatest resources can be devoted to improving these policies. Screening requires a systematic review of existing and proposed policies.

Section 75

Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act provides that each public authority is required, in carrying out its functions relating to Northern Ireland, to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between:-

- persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status and sexual orientation;
- men and women generally;
- persons with a disability and persons without; and
- persons with dependants and persons without.

Without prejudice to these obligations, each public authority in carrying out its functions relating to Northern Ireland must also have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group.

Appendix 6 Detailed descriptions of functions

1 Family Practitioner Services

- Maintains the lists of patients registered with general medical and dental practitioners, including registering patients and assigning patients who can't get a doctor to accept them as a patient to a practice
- Administers regional cancer screening services, involving call/recall services for breast, cervical and bowel cancer screening
- Calculates and makes payments to dentists, GPs, opticians and pharmacists
- Provides information derived from registrations and payments to the HSC Board, DHSSPS, Public Health Agency and other government department and Agencies
- Provides professional advisory services related to payments and registrations to the HSC Board, DHSSPS, Public Health Agency and the general public.

2 HSC Pensions Service

HSC Pensions administer the HSC Pension Scheme which provides retirement benefits to HSC employees, GPs, dentists and employees of other organisations in Northern Ireland that are approved to join our scheme, for example, Hospices. Currently we have approximately 56,000 members. Our services include:

- Responsibility for paying lump sums and pensions promptly and correctly to approximately 29,000 existing pensioners.
- Processing and administering claims for new retirements, applications for ill-health retirements, transfers of benefits from one scheme to another eg. employees transferring from HSC to Civil Service, local government etc. and refunds of contributions to people who have left the Scheme.
- Publicising and encouraging awareness of the Scheme among employers and HSC staff via newsletters, booklets, leaflets, seminars, website.

- Maintaining member records throughout their membership of the Scheme.
- Dealing with all forms of communication from various sources such as members, employers, representative bodies, The Pension Advisory Service and Pensions Ombudsman.

3 Counter Fraud and Probity Services

The Counter Fraud and Probity Services of the Business Services Organisation provide a range of services to the health and social care sector:

Counter Fraud Service

- Carrying out criminal investigations into cases of suspected fraud against the Health Service in Northern Ireland.

Probity Service

- Carrying out a range of checking functions to ensure that GPs, Dentists, Opticians and Community Pharmacist claims for payment by Health Service are correct.

Healthy Start Scheme

- Payment of claims for milk supplied to the under 5's.
- Payment for administration of the Healthy Start Voucher Scheme for NI.
- Operation of the Healthy Start Vitamins Scheme for NI

Patient Health Charges

- Checking claims made by patients for free dental treatment and/or free sight tests and glasses.

Counter Fraud and Probity Policy

- Revising and developing policies for probity work and fraud Investigations carried out.
- Leading and developing fraud awareness work across all Health Organisations.

4 Procurement and Logistics Service

The services provided to HSC organisations include:

- Procurement – Sourcing: this is the formal tendering, contracting and contract management of all contracts let by Business Services Organisation PaLS on behalf of HSC organisations.
- Procurement – Operations: this is the day-to-day ordering of goods and services for HSC organisations.
- Warehouse Operations – this is the day-to-day operation of a large warehouse.
- Warehouse Stock Management – this is the management of stock levels and ordering of goods for the regional warehouse.
- Warehouse Customer Care – this is the day-to-day management and operation of the ordering of goods from the warehouse and the liaison with staff in other HSC organisations on a daily basis regarding their day-to-day needs.
- Community Care Appliance Service: this is the supply of goods direct to patients to assist them to live within their own dwelling. The service involves the storage and distribution of aids for daily living direct to patients or for collection by carers or Allied Health Professionals (Occupational Therapists, District Nurses etc.).

5 Information Technologies Services

The services provided by the unit include:

Hardware, Software and Systems*

- Assessing, specifying and providing expert advice on the procurement of hardware, software and systems to meet clients' requirements. This includes advising on the procurement of software packages to support functions of Business Services Organisation and clients, eg. HR, procurement packages, Patient Administration System;

- Preparation, distribution, installation and configuration of hardware, software and systems;
- Maintenance and disposal of hardware, software and systems;
- Ensuring the integrity and security of hardware, software and systems;
- Development of new software to meet business needs.

Other

- Development of policies relating to above functions;
- Providing expert advice or making suggestions for improvements to existing systems for efficiency and/or improved functionality;
- Ensuring the integrity and security of data held on ITS systems;
- Maintenance and security of communication systems and software, eg. email account system, websites
- Management of contracts with suppliers;
- Delivery of a range of projects (reporting to HSCB as commissioner) - each project potentially having different impact on HSC employees and on patients or clients using HSC services;
- Business continuity planning – working out how to continue business in the event of a disaster or major fault.

*Examples:

Hardware: desktop computers, laptops, printers

Software: Microsoft office tools

Systems: Servers, network equipment

6 Legal Services

The Directorate of Legal Services as part of the Business Services Organisation provides legal service to HSC organisations in Northern Ireland. Our services include:

- Legal representation in court and tribunal proceedings, including child care cases, clinical negligence claims, employers and public liability claims and employment law matters
- Legal advice and training in relation to the legal duties and responsibilities of HSC organisations
- Administering legal payments, including the payment of damages and claimants' costs following settlement of claims
- Engaging counsel and other experts to assist in the provision of our services.

7 Financial Services

The Finance Directorate has a strategic role within the Business Services Organisation to ensure that funds are secured to enable the achievement of the Business Services Organisation's Vision, Aim and Strategic Objectives and that there is a clear framework for financial accountability and control throughout the Business Services Organisation.

The Finance Directorate has an operational role within the Business Services Organisation for the delivery of all financial services, including payroll, accounts payable, income collection, management of debt, banking and cash flow, management accounting and final accounts.

The Directorate delivers a range of financial services to external clients under annual service level agreements, and also delivers financial services to Trusts and the HSC Board in respect of Clinical Negligence; Bursaries; Research Grant Distributions and Treasury Banking Services, and Artscare.

In addition, the Directorate is responsible for ensuring the Business Services Organisation's compliance with the three core controls assurance standards namely, Governance, Risk Management and Financial Management and coordinating the delivery of the remaining non-core standards within the specified timetable.

The Finance Team is responsible for the provision of the statutory final accounts of Business Services Organisation in accordance with DHSSPS guidance and applicable accounting standards. It

also provides monitoring information to the Department on a monthly basis.

Services include:

- prepare annual audited financial statements and statutory financial returns and monthly monitoring information to various bodies, e.g. Department, HM Revenue & Customs on behalf of the Business Services Organisation and certain other HPSS organisations;
- financial and management accounting services to the Business Services Organisation's Directorates and Business Units, small agencies and other HPSS bodies;
- monitoring against financial plans, and providing financial management information for the Board, its Committees, the Senior Management Team, and budget holders;
- payment of invoices and expenses;
- collection of income;
- payroll services;
- treasury and central banking services management for Boards and Trusts;
- student nurses bursaries fund management;
- administration of clinical negligence central fund;
- production of financial plans such as budgets, capital plans, cashflow profiles and forecasts, and business cases;
- advice on costing and pricing;
- ad hoc financial exercises and Board Sub Committees.

8 Human Resources Services

This unit provides a range of Human Resources services to the Business Services Organisation and a number of external clients within the HSC. A summary of the main Human Resources services is provided below:

- Recruitment and Selection; to administer the recruitment and selection of staff
- Employee relations; to provide advice and guidance to managers on all issues relating to the employment of staff for example, to provide advice on terms and conditions, to facilitate and where necessary conduct formal processes such as disciplinary, grievance, capability etc and to engage and consult with the recognised Trade Unions on relevant matters
- Training and Development; to identify, facilitate and where appropriate provide relevant training and development to staff in the organisation
- Workforce Development; to develop plans for the future number of staff and skills required for the organisation
- Policy Development; to design and implement a range of Human Resources policies for customers.

9 Corporate Services

This service area provides a range of corporate services to the Business Services Organisation and external client organisations:

- Health and Safety; to ensure compliance with legislation relating to the health and safety of staff within Business Services Organisation
- Controls assurance; to ensure that Business Services Organisation is compliant with DHSSPS standards
- Facilities Management; to ensure effective facilities management services across Business Services Organisation sites
- Information Governance; to ensure an effective Information governance culture within the Business Services Organisation

It likewise leads on dealing with complaints and the development of the Business Services Organisation website. The unit also supports policy development in the organisation.

10 Internal Audit Service

The Internal Audit Unit provides an Internal Audit service to Health and Social Care organisations. An annual programme of audits is developed for and delivered to each client organisation.

An audit report is produced following each audit, providing an independent opinion on the area under review and making recommendations for improvement.

11 Customer Relations and Service Improvement

The Customer Relations and Service Improvement section of the Customer Care and Performance Directorate carries out the following functions:

- Facilitates the creation and agreement of Service Level Agreements (contracts) with customer organisations of the Business Services Organisation.
- Facilitates the development of productive working relationships with the main customers of the Business Services Organisation and the various internal departments who provide services. (The ways in which we do this would include setting up forums with customers so we can work together to improve quality of service and obtaining customer feedback through surveys etc.)
- Develops and manages performance management framework and systems of the Business Services Organisation and ensures that appropriate service improvement plans are in place.
- Manages the creation of the Corporate Strategic Plan (this plan describes the main work of an organisation over a period of time and the approach that will be taken to carry it out).
- Responsible for the Business Services Organisation Corporate Strategic and Service Delivery Planning processes.
- Manages the corporate Risk Management processes.
- Co-ordinates the annual Controls Assurance Standards Programme (these are standards which the DHSSPS

requires Health and Social Care Organisations to be assessed against).

- Manages the creation of the Business Services Organisation Annual Report.

12 Office for Research Ethics Committees

The Office for Research Ethics Committees Northern Ireland provides a service which:

- Provides ethical advice to researchers who need access to patients, their medical records or data, so that the research is managed ethically and in the best interest of the patient. It does this by use of committees who are trained in ethical review of research and are composed of members who do this voluntarily and with impartiality.
- Reviews a range of research including clinical trials of drugs, new medical technology and equipment as well as studies involving best practice and treatment. The research reviewed may involve the vulnerable such as people with learning difficulties, other disabilities, serious illness and children in the care of the social services.
- Ensures that a research study is not started without a favourable ethical opinion, and without which the researcher cannot publish in scientific or medical research journals, or develop a new drug or other treatment.
- Provides administrative support and training to three Research Ethics Committees composed of up to 18 volunteer members per committee.
- Recruits voluntary committee members by a Public Appointments process to make sure that membership not only includes people such doctors and nurses but people from the wider community.

13 Equality Services

The Equality Unit provides a range of services to the Business Services Organisation and external client organisations. These include:

(1) Adhering to the legislation

Helping client organisations to carry out the actions as outlined in equality, disability and human rights legislation.

We support organisations in ensuring equality and human rights are built in as they plan their business, formulate policies, and make decisions. This includes supporting senior managers on screening exercises and equality impact assessments.

(2) Training

Developing, organising, delivering, and evaluating training on Equality, Disability Awareness, Equality Screening, and further targeted sessions eg. Deaf Awareness or Anti-Racism.

(3) Information

We provide information internally on equality and human rights issues and facilitate discussions, which includes (a) providing information to staff as well as to senior managers and board members and (b) facilitating forums within and between partner organisations.

(4) Consultation and engagement

Seeking the views of the public and other organisations on a wide range of equality, diversity and human rights issues. We also advise client organisations on how best to do this.

(5) Good practice initiatives

We develop project proposals and support organisations in delivering projects that aim to promote good equality, diversity & human rights practices eg. by producing an eLearning package on diversity or a staff resource on common myths in screening.

(6) Representation of clients

We participate in regional and advisory groups relating to equality and human rights issues and facilitate client organisations to respond to relevant government consultations.