

EQUALITY COMMISSION FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

Public Authority 2013 – 2014 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 2013 to 31 March 2014 (Part A)*.

This template also includes a number of questions regarding implementation of **Section 49A of the DDO** from the *1 April 2013 to 31 March 2014 (Part B)*.

Please enter information at the relevant part of each section and ensure that it is **submitted** electronically (by completing this template) and in hardcopy, with a signed cover letter from the Chief Executive or, in his / her absence, the Deputy Chief Executive to the Commission **by 31 August 2014**.

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.

Name of public authority (Enter details below)

Labour Relations Agency

Equality Officer (Enter name and contact details below)

S75: Dr. Gerry O'Neill, Director (Corporate Services)

DDO (if different from above):

Part A: Section 75 Annual Progress Report 2013 - 2014

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?

(Enter text below)

The improvement of employment relations and / or the resolution of disputes inherently seeks to promote equality of opportunity.

Policy / Service	Impact
Contributed to the DEL Review of Employment Law consulting with stakeholders through a "Round Table"	Possible introduction of new forms of conciliation and a focus on the SME sector. The impact will be demonstrable in terms of more effective dispute resolution and more issues being resolved pre-tribunal.
Held a Conference examining different countrys' approaches to improving employment relations	HR specialists, trade unionists and employment lawyers improved their perspective of how the employment relations agenda in the province might be further developed.
Provided a helpline service covering 23,000 calls.	Employees and employers dealing with difficult employment relations issues availed of a free service which helped resolve matters pre-tribunal.
Ran 235 Good Practice Seminars with 3,910 attendees	Many of the 3,910 attendees reported improvements / positive changes to the way HR and ER ¹ matters were deployed in their organisations.
Dealt with 6,000 individual rights claims of which 1,500 were directly related to Equality issues.	Reduction in stress and often restoration of employment following resolution of disputes – particularly with a, equal opportunities content.

¹ Employment relations

- 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?
(Enter text below)

- Programme of work similar to that described in the previous section;
- Implementation of a new case management system that handles equality related data in a more robust manner;
- Running of a staff survey that has a strong equality related content;
- More comprehensive screening of organizational guidelines.

New / Revised Equality Schemes

- Please indicate whether this reporting period applies to a new or revised scheme and (if appropriate) when the scheme was approved?
(Enter text below)

This report relates to the Agency's revised Equality Scheme which was approved on 23 May 2012.

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 2013-14.

(Enter text below)

Fair Employment Monitoring Return	Produced on target May 2013
Article 55 Triennial monitoring report	In progress in liaison with ECNI
Equality Scheme Progress Report	Produced on target August 2013
Equality included in report of Audit Committee Chair to Board	Achieved on target June 2013
Review of Audit of Inequalities / Equality Risk Assessment	On target November 2013
Bi-monthly Equality Reporting to the Board	Achieved consistently throughout the year
Annual Meeting of Board and Equality Commission	Met November 2013
Equal Pay (LRA Staff) Review	Completed December 2013
Board Training in Section 75 / Equality	Completed March 2014
Equality related objectives in Corporate / Business Plan	Completed February 2014
Equality embedded in annual Learning and Development Plan	Included September 2013
Training on Disability commitments done for Board and staff March 2014. Awaiting for arbitrators.	Ongoing
Review of recruitment documentation to ensure disabled people are positively portrayed	Done July 2013
Ensure website meet statutory requirements for the disabled	Completed December 2013
Identify duties of a person with learning disabilities	Done September 2013
3 meetings with consultation groups per annum	one achieved in year with one other committed; indirect contact with a third re training
Corporate Social Responsibility Policy	Approved by Board March 2014

Section 2: Examples of Section 75 Outcomes / Impacts

Given the renewed focus of Section 75 aiming to achieve more tangible impacts and outcomes and addressing key inequalities; please report in this section how the authority's work has impacted on individuals across the Section 75 categories. Consider narrative in the following structure:

- *Describe* the action measure /section 75 process undertaken.
- *Who* was affected across the Section 75 categories?
- *What impact* it achieved?

ACTION / MEASURE	WHO AFFECTED	IMPACT
Fair Employment Monitoring Return	Staff, applicants for posts	Minimal because the balance is good
Article 55 Triennial monitoring report	Staff, applicants for posts	Minimal because the balance is good
Equality Scheme Progress Report	LRA, S75 groups	Maintains commitment to improvement across all S75 groups
Equality included in report of Audit Committee Chair to Board	LRA Board, LRA Audit Committee, S 75 groups	Maintains commitment to improvement across all S75 groups
Review of Audit of Inequalities / Equality Risk Assessment	LRA Board, LRA Audit Committee, S 75 groups	Maintains commitment to improvement across all S75 groups
Bi-monthly Equality Reporting to the Board	LRA Board, S 75 groups	Maintains commitment to improvement across all S75 groups
Annual Meeting of Board and Equality Commission	Boards and SMT of both organisations	Allows greater alignment of strategic objectives and an interchange on common interests
Equal Pay (LRA Staff) Review	LRA Staff	Increases confidence that gender pay anomalies are eliminated or minimized
Board Training in Section 75 / Equality	LRA Board	Ensures strategic focus on Equality matters

Equality related objectives in Corporate / Business Plan	LRA Board	Ensures strategic focus on Equality matters
Equality embedded in annual Learning and Development Plan	LRA Staff	Ensures that staff receive ongoing updates on good practice regarding Equality
Training on Disability commitments done for Board and staff March 2014. Awaiting for arbitrators.	Board	Promotes the Disability Action Plan and the way in which it is prioritized.
Review of recruitment documentation to ensure disabled people are positively portrayed	HR, LRA body corporate	Ensures disabled people not discouraged by recruitment advertising and related documentation.
Ensure website meet statutory requirements for the disabled	S75 groups	Current obsolescent website is adequate but a new website would offer improved communication.
Identify duties of a person with learning disabilities	Those with a learning disability and their educational bodies.	May lead to more frequent implementation in the future
3 meetings with consultation groups per annum	Any and all of the S75 groups	LRA has greater awareness of issues when screening policies.
Corporate Social Responsibility Policy	Charities including those supporting S75 groups	Charitable giving. Schemes support.

- Please give examples of changes to policies or practices using **screening or EQIA**, which have resulted in **outcomes or impacts for individuals**. If the change was a result of an EQIA please indicate this and also reference the title of the relevant EQIA.

(Enter text below)

Generally speaking, most policies had additional inclusions promoting diversity. The most fundamental change was the inclusion of a new corporate value: “Respect diversity and opinions”.

- Please give examples of **outcomes or impacts on individuals** as a result of any **action measures** undertaken as part of your Section 75 action plan:

(Enter text below)

The feasibility of taking placement students with learning difficulties has increased.

Developing the expertise to carry out equal pay reviews in-house has led to a commitment to do one annually after each fresh pay settlement. This would provide re-assurance to staff that the pay systems are being applied fairly in relation to gender.

- Please give examples of **outcomes or impacts on individuals** as a result of any **other Section 75 processes** e.g. consultation or monitoring:

(Enter text below)

Consultation made us add in wording to protect one of the groups. However, this may be removed as more recent considerations suggest that we may have introduced greater that fair weight to that group compared with others.

Discussions with Action Mental Health have strongly influenced the Agency’s approach to Investors in People and spawned very valuable training for managers and staff in relation to mental health.

Section 3: Screening

- Please provide an update of new / proposed / revised *policies screened* during the year.

For those authorities that have started issuing of screening reports in year; this section may be completed in part by appending, to this annual report, a copy of all screening reports issued within the reporting period.

Where screening reports have not been issued, for part or all of the reporting period, please complete the table below:

Title of policy subject to screening	What was the screening decision? E.g. screened in, screened out, mitigation, EQIA...	Were any concerns raised about screening by consultees; including the Commission?	Is policy being subject to EQIA? Yes/No If yes indicate timeline for assessment.
Corporate Social Responsibility	Screened out	Minor wording change promoting diversity	No
Corporate Plan	Screened out	Change to LRA Value Statement and two objectives	No
Leadership & Management Framework	Screened out	Wording change promoting diversity	No
Recruitment Selection & Transfer Procedure	Screened out	Precautionary wording in relation to balance of some panels	No
Finance Procedures	Screened out	No changes proposed	No
Staff Code of Conduct	Screened out	No changes proposed	No

Section 4: Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA)

Please provide an update of policies subject to EQIA during 2013-14, stage 7 EQIA monitoring activities and an indicative EQIA timetable for 2014-15.

- EQIA Timetable: April 2013 - March 2014

Title of Policy EQIA	EQIA Stage at end March 2014 (Steps 1-6)	Outline adjustments to policy intended to benefit individuals and the relevant Section 75 categories due to be affected.
None carried out.		

Where the EQIA timetable for 2013-14 (as detailed in the previous annual S75 progress report to the Commission) has not been met, please provide details of the factors responsible for delay and details of the timetable for re-scheduling the EQIA/s in question.

(Enter text below)

- Ongoing EQIA Monitoring Activities: April 2013- March 2014

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
n/a		

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:

(Enter text below)

n/a

2014-15 EQIA Timetable

Title of EQIAs due to be commenced during April 2014 – March 2015	Revised or New policy?	Please indicate expected timescale of Decision Making stage i.e. Stage 6
None proposed		

Section 5: 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.

(Enter text below)

Equality related training was offered in the following areas:

- Recruitment and Selection
- Mental Health resilience, understanding and management
- Bullying and Harassment
- Introduction to the Disability Discrimination Act
- Managing disability in the workplace
- ASIST (suicide) awareness
- Employment relation as applied to migrant workers
- Employment inequalities in Northern Ireland
- Employment law developments affecting Northern Ireland
- Rights of agency workers

Evaluations in these areas of training were generally very encouraging and this is evidenced by sustained staff interest in these areas and an ongoing demand for further training. In particular, Action Mental Health training for staff and managers was very positively evaluated by all attendees.

Section 6: 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.
(Enter text below)

All screening exercises are published on the LRA website and consultees advised of updates.

The LRA continues to offer meetings with consultee groups with the objective of seeing three key groups per annum. This provides a useful basis of communication. However, consultee demand is low for this type of meeting.

The Board receives bi-monthly reports on progress with all Equality related duties.

Equality Risk is one of the 8 strategic risks assessed by the Audit Committee three times per year (and reported to the Board).

Section 7: 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.
(Enter text below)

All of our evaluations of dispute resolution services have a section dealing with section 75 issues – we evaluated PCC, mediation and Statutory Arbitration during the year

The Agency is in the process of replacing its core case management system. It has considerably increased the number of fields in the system design relating to the nine S75 categories. Phase 2 of the system implementation is intended to include Advisory and Corporate Services systems with phase 1 incorporating all aspects of Conciliation.

- Please outline any use of the Commission’s Section 75 Monitoring Guide.
(Enter text below)

Used as a general reference text

Section 8: 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.
(Enter text below)

There have been no new initiatives in this area

Section 9: 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.**(Enter text below)**

None

Section 10: Consultation and Engagement

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

Met one consultee in the period with one other committed; indirect discussions with a third as a consequence of training and IIP initiatives.

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

(Enter text below)

Not applicable in the 2013-14 year.

Section 11: 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.

(Enter text below)

Developed and gained Board approval for a Corporate Social Responsibility policy.

Staff initiatives raised £821 for charity including £450 for Clic Sargent "Belfast Homes from Homes" Appeal.

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

(Enter text below)

None

Section 12: Additional Comments

- Please provide any additional information/comments.

(Enter text below)

None

Part B: 'Disability Duties'²
Annual Report 1 April 2013 / 31 March 2014

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

4



3

0

Fully
Achieved?

Partially
Achieved?

Not
Achieved?

² Since 1 January 2007, section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 has required public authorities, when carrying out their functions, to have due regard to the need to:

- promote positive attitudes towards people with disabilities
- encourage the participation of people with disabilities in public life

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 ³	Outcomes / Impact ⁴
National ⁵			
Regional ⁶			
Local ⁷	Review of recruitment documentation to ensure disabled people are positively portrayed	Review by HR section	New versions of recruitment documentation now in place which ensure only positive statements made re disability within employment.
Local	Review of website technology to ensure compatibility with access tools relating to	Carried out by website manager / IT Manager	Current website sufficient until funding permits a rewrite and new website

³ **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.

⁴ **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.

⁵ **National** : Situations where people can influence policy at a high impact level e.g. Public Appointments

⁶ **Regional**: Situations where people can influence policy decision making at a middle impact level

⁷ **Local** : Situations where people can influence policy decision making at lower impact level e.g. one off consultations, local fora.

	disability		facility.
Local	Identify duties for a person with learning disabilities	Extensive review carried out and documented.	The feasibility of taking on placement students to enable employment opportunities has been increased.

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

	Training Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
1	Understand / empathise with staff (or clients) with mental health issues	Greater willingness to visit / engage / refer to OHS. Avoid capability procedure until no other recourse.	Staff feedback suggests positive support from management.
2	Understand / empathise with staff (or clients) with mental health issues	Carry out Stress Risk Assessment.	Management now committed to action plan arising from stress risk assessment.
3	Consider access matters carefully	Access to training suite undermined by lift dependability.	Lift replaced
4	Consider access matters carefully	More detailed fire evacuation procedure drafted which increases communication and care commitments.	Remains in trial. Scrutinised by Health & safety Committee.

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	Began consultative meetings with S75 groups	Recommendations received	Changes in policy and action plans

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

	Encourage others Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
1	Disability issues are promoted through seminars, workshops and the Helpline in a general sense and in an ongoing basis.	Advice on good practice which includes consideration of diversity and the value / insights delivered by disabled staff.	HR managers change policies and procedures in their organisations to reflect good practice advice received.

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	No others occurred		

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

	Action Measures partly achieved	Milestones ⁸ / Outputs	Outcomes/Impacts	Reasons not fully achieved
1	One off consultations with two S75 groups	Consult with three per annum	Potential change to Dignity at Work Policy. Approach to IIP. Understanding Mental health issues and the management implications	Reluctance of consultees to meet on a generalised agenda. Needed a specific issue involving them.
2	Training on commitments arising from disability legislation	Staff, Board and Arbitrators by Sept 2013	Staff and Board completed in 2013-14	Difficulty designing a suitable training medium for arbitrators.
3	Analysis of Staff Survey on attitudes to disabled people	July 2013	Done in the 2012 staff survey and now to be repeated	Following Staff Survey closes 31 August 2014
4	Set up a Disability Action Group to improve perspective on policies / operations	Nov 2012	At planning stage June 2014	Pressure on staff resources
5	Update care provisions for disabled people in Fire Evacuation Procedures	June 2012	Drafted and piloted in 2013-14	Looking to formalise by December 2014

⁸ **Milestones** – Please outline what part progress has been made towards the particular measures; even if full output or outcomes/ impact have not been achieved.

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

	Action Measures not met	Reasons
1	As described in #3 above	

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

Board and SMT scrutiny

(b) Quantitative

KPI for slippage in Bi-monthly reports to the Board

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

7. Do you intend to make any further **revisions to your plan** in light of your organisation's annual review of the plan? If so, please outline proposed changes? **No**