

Equality

Contents

Foreword by the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland.

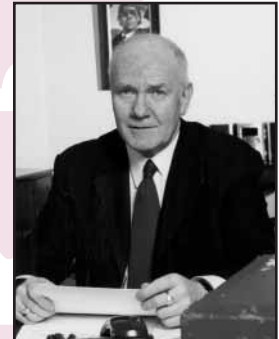
Foreword by the Permanent Under Secretary of State.

PART ONE:	Structure, policies, functions, powers and duties.	Pages: 6-19
PART TWO:	Arrangements for assessing compliance with section 75 duties.	Pages: 20-21
PART THREE:	Assessing the impact of policies on the promotion of equality of opportunity.	Pages: 22-24
PART FOUR:	Consultation.	Pages: 25 -27
PART FIVE:	Monitoring.	Pages: 28-29
PART SIX:	Publication of assessments and monitoring.	Page: 30
PART SEVEN:	Training.	Pages: 31-33
PART EIGHT:	Public access to information and services.	Pages: 34-35
PART NINE:	Publication of the Scheme.	Page: 36
PART TEN:	Complaints.	Page: 37
PART ELEVEN:	Timetable.	Pages: 38-40
ANNEX A1:	Northern Ireland Office – Structure.	Page: 41
ANNEX A2:	NIO – Structure: Equality Scheme Machinery.	Page: 42
ANNEX B:	Main groups relevant to the section 75 categories for NI purposes:	Page: 43
ANNEX C:	Bodies to be consulted.	Pages: 44-46
ANNEX D:	Explanation of NIO grades.	Page: 47
ANNEX E:	Equality Scheme training programme for the NIO.	Page: 48

Equality

Foreword by the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland

This Government is determined to build a society where the active promotion of equality of opportunity and good relations, complemented where necessary by lawful affirmative action, are seen as an integral part of public life. The promotion of equality was at the very heart of the Good Friday Agreement, which laid the foundations for a new dispensation based on respect for rights and the principle of equality.



Rt Hon Dr John Reid MP

I am committed to ensuring the full implementation of the Agreement, and I am delighted to endorse this Scheme which is a tangible step in that important process covering the Northern Ireland Office, for which I am responsible.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "John Reid". The signature is written in a cursive style and is followed by a horizontal line.

**RT HON DR JOHN REID MP
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR NORTHERN IRELAND**

Equality

Foreword by the Permanent Under Secretary of State

Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 requires public authorities to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity and regard to the desirability of promoting good relations. These duties are designed, in particular, to ensure that equality issues are integral to the whole range of public policy decision making. Public authorities, such as the Northern Ireland Office, are required to submit Equality Schemes to the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland and to carry out Impact Assessments of their policies in certain circumstances.

The Northern Ireland Office is fully committed to the fulfilment of the section 75 obligations on the promotion of equality of opportunity and good relations. This Equality Scheme sets out how the Department proposes to fulfil those duties and obligations with regard to all of its policies, functions and duties.

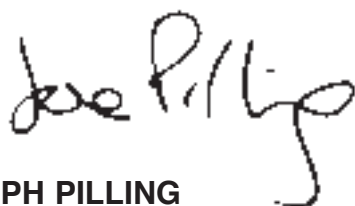
As Permanent Under Secretary of State I shall ensure that all officials of the Department, and its Executive Agencies, will be familiar with this Scheme and how it will be implemented. I shall give leadership within the Department to achieve this, particularly with regard to the development of all new policies, powers and initiatives, and through the proposed review of all existing policies, functions and duties.

I shall ensure that provision is made for the necessary resources in terms of people, time and money to ensure compliance with the statutory duties and that the Equality Scheme can be implemented effectively and on time.

The Department and its Agencies will develop and deliver a planned programme of communication and training on this Scheme.

I shall also ensure that there are effective internal arrangements in place to make sure that the duties are effectively complied with and for monitoring and reviewing progress.

I, together with my fellow officials, welcome the fact that the principles of openness and accountability have been made an integral part of the Department's section 75 obligations. Consultation with representatives of and spokesmen/women for all those affected by our policies, functions and duties are central to the successful operation of the Scheme, and we welcome this contribution to the decision making process.



SIR JOSEPH PILLING
PERMANENT UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE

PART ONE

1. Structure, Policies, Functions, Powers and Duties.

- 1.1. The Northern Ireland Office exists to support the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland in taking forward Government policy in Northern Ireland. In addition to supporting and fostering the political and democratic process in Northern Ireland, the Department has an overall policy responsibility for upholding law, order and security including the provision of criminal justice services such as policing, prison and probation services. The Northern Ireland Court Service remains the responsibility of the Lord Chancellor's Department. The departments of the Director of Public Prosecutions and the Crown Solicitor's Office are subject to separate Designation Orders as public authorities distinct from the Northern Ireland Office although the staff of both departments are staff of the Northern Ireland Office, and therefore, are subject to the internal policies of the NIO such as promotion, pay and equal opportunities.
- 1.2. Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 requires the Department in carrying out all of its functions, powers and duties 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 or sexual orientation;
 - between men and women generally;
 - between persons with a disability and persons without; and
 - between persons with dependants and persons without.
- 1.3. In addition, without prejudice to its obligation above, the Department shall, in carrying out all of its functions, powers and duties relating to Northern Ireland, have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group.
- 1.4. Schedule 9 to the Act requires the Department to set out in an Equality Scheme how it proposes to fulfil the duties imposed by section 75. This document is intended to fulfil that statutory requirement. Furthermore, the Department confirms its commitment to liaise with the Equality Commission so as to ensure that progress on implementing the Equality Scheme is maintained.
- 1.5. The statutory basis for the Department's activities lies in the Northern Ireland Act 1998, within Schedules 2 and 3 to that Act. The Northern Ireland Office consists of a core department made up of five separate but integrated functional Directorates and three Executive Agencies. Diagrams showing the outline organisation of the Northern Ireland Office are attached at **Annexes A1 and A2.**

- 1.6. The **Political Directorate's** aim is to support Ministers in working to secure a lasting peace based on the Good Friday Agreement, with full respect for the rights and identities of the two main traditions in Northern Ireland. In doing so, the Directorate provides advice to Ministers on the operation of the devolution legislation and the new institutions generally, and on certain reserved matters including elections and human rights. The Directorate also provides funding for the Human Rights Commission and the Chief Electoral Officer.
- 1.7. The **Policing and Security Directorate's** aim is to uphold the rule of law, combat crime, and build and maintain confidence in arrangements for policing, by developing and implementing appropriate policing and security policies and arrangements. The Directorate undertakes its work in liaison with the police, armed forces and the security services. It is responsible for maintaining an effective security policy, a sufficient counter-terrorist capability and an appropriate legislative and administrative framework that takes account of both the need to secure justice and the rights of individuals. It is responsible for firearms and explosives and for the protection of key individuals at their homes.
- 1.8. The Directorate works closely with the Northern Ireland Policing Board and with the Police Service of Northern Ireland to ensure an effective and efficient police service for Northern Ireland. It also has responsibility for such matters as the police establishment, the funding of both organisations and taking forward action arising from the report of the Independent Commission on Policing in Northern Ireland.
- 1.9. The **Criminal Justice Directorate's** aim is to secure an efficient, effective and responsive criminal justice system. By working in partnership with other concerned agencies, it seeks to reduce criminality and the fear of crime; to promote confidence in the criminal justice system; and to develop a relevant body of criminal law. The Directorate has oversight responsibility for the Compensation Agency and the Forensic Science Agency. The Directorate is also responsible for the funding of the Independent Commission on Police Complaints, the Police Ombudsman, the Independent Assessor of Military Complaints Procedures, the Independent Commissioner for the Holding Centres, the Terrorism Act Reviewer, and the Parades Commission; and shares with the Irish Government responsibility for funding the Independent International Commission on Decommissioning.
- 1.10. Probation Board of Northern Ireland to which it provides strategic direction and funding. It also liaises with the Department of the Director of Public Prosecutions for Northern

Ireland, the Northern Ireland Court Service, the Police Service for Northern Ireland, the Northern Ireland Prison Service, other Government Departments and with a number of voluntary organisations delivering support services to victims and offenders to which it provides funding.

- 1.11. The **Central Services Directorate** is tasked with supporting the rest of the Department in achieving its goals. It provides the Department with financial management, budgeting and accounting; personnel management; IT support; and facilities management.
- 1.12. **The Northern Ireland Information Service's** aim is to present and explain Government policy and activity in Northern Ireland by communicating the objectives of the Department in a positive, timely, impartial and professional manner.
- 1.13. The Northern Ireland Office also encompasses the following Executive Agencies:
 - The **Northern Ireland Prison Service** which, through its staff, serves the community by keeping in safe and humane custody those committed by the courts and, by working with them and with other parts of the Criminal Justice System, seeks to reduce the risk of re-offending and help them to lead useful lives.
 - The **Compensation Agency** that administers the three statutory compensation schemes on behalf of the Secretary of State: the criminal injuries compensation scheme; the criminal damage compensation scheme; and the emergency provisions compensation scheme.
 - The **Forensic Science Agency** of Northern Ireland which provides scientific advice and expertise to enhance the delivery of justice through scientific support for the police in the investigation of crime; scientific advice for the legal profession and objective expert testimony to the courts; training in the application of forensic science; and analytical support for pathologists.
- 1.14. Within each of these functions the Department has identified the following activities which are **all of those** currently in operation

POLITICAL DIRECTORATE

For ease of comprehension to the lay person, the functions of the Directorate have been divided into three broad categories: policy; technical & administrative; and co-ordinating & information.

Policy Functions

Constitutional oversight & political development – Ensuring that appropriate legislative and administrative structures are in place to support the existence of the devolved institutions in Northern Ireland.

Elections – Maintaining and developing the legal framework necessary to hold elections in Northern Ireland for the European Parliament, Westminster Parliament, NI Assembly and Local Government.

Human Rights – Developing and promoting systems to protect human rights within Northern Ireland.

Security – Providing advice on miscellaneous security issues.

Broadcasting Issues - Providing advice on broadcasting policy issues that affect the British-Irish relationship.

Victims policy – Developing policy initiatives to support victims of the Troubles, including in response to the Bloomfield Report, “We Will Remember Them”.

Technical & Administrative Functions

Extraditions – Advising Ministers on requests for extradition to Northern Ireland.

Mutual legal assistance – Overseeing the handling of requests to and from other countries under the Criminal Justice (International Co-operation) Act 1990.

Statutory Equality Duty – Advising the Secretary of State on his equality responsibilities under s.75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 in relation to future designations and assessing equality schemes that are referred to him by the Equality Commission.

NDPB Sponsorship - Supporting the frameworks governing HMG’s relations with the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission, the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, the Chief Electoral Officer for Northern Ireland, the Boundary Commission and the Electoral Commission.

Public Appointments – Making arrangements for appointments to the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission, the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, the Chief Electoral Officer for Northern Ireland, the Boundary Commission; and contributing to the appointment process for the Northern Ireland members of other UK-wide bodies (eg the Independent Television Commission).

Bloody Sunday Inquiry sponsorship - Managing HMG’s relationship with the Inquiry into the events of 30 January 1972 in Londonderry.

Parliamentary legislation - Promoting appropriate handling and efficient progress of legislation relating to Northern Ireland.

Northern Ireland Memorial Fund - Providing administrative support to the NI Memorial Fund.

British-Irish Intergovernmental Conference – Providing administrative support to the Conference.

Ministerial support – Providing administrative support to Ministers.

Information & Co-Ordination Functions

Whitehall-NI co-ordination – Ensuring NI interests are brought to the attention of, and appropriately reflected in, Whitehall forums (including Cabinet Committees) and vice versa.

Information dissemination – Providing up-to-date briefing and information to posts abroad and London-based diplomats on HMG's policies in Northern Ireland and to promote HMG's views and interests in relation to the British-Irish relationship.

Political/community liaison - Providing a channel of communication between HMG and local political, community and church leaders and other opinion formers.

Victims liaison – Promoting a channel of communication between HMG and victims groups and those with an interest in victims issues; and raising awareness of victims issues.

British-Irish communication - Representing to the Irish Government UK interests in relation to NI and reporting Irish concerns to HMG.

British-Irish co-operation - To enhance mutual understanding and promote bilateral co-operation at all levels on all matters of mutual interest.

POLICING AND SECURITY DIRECTORATE

Policy Division

- Key Persons' Protection Scheme;
- Policy on explosives and firearms;
- Police Service Regulations (including Police Service Pensions Regulations);
- Police powers and procedures;
- Police health and safety;
- Police Service medical appeals;
- Police Service honours/gallantry awards;
- Police Service visits abroad;
- Police planning and resources;
- Policy on Police Service severance arrangements;

Patten Team

- reduce the size of the regular police service through voluntary early retirement to around 7,500 over a three year period beginning in the second half of 2000-01, provided the security situation does not deteriorate significantly;
- phase out the Full Time Reserve, subject to the security situation;
- enlarge the Part Time Reserve;
- put in place measures permitting an equal number of Catholics and those who are not Catholics to be recruited

from a pool of candidates for the regular police service (50:50 recruitment reflects the demographic breakdown of people in NI now in their twenties and is the key to redressing the compositional imbalance on the basis of religious background);

- create opportunities for part time working and job-sharing; and develop child care facilities, child care vouchers or flexible shift arrangements where possible;
- require all officers to register their interests and associations; and
- set up a substantial fund to help injured police officers, injured retired officers and their families as well as widows.

Security Policy and Operations Division

- in conjunction with the police, armed forces and security services, advise Ministers on the formulation of security policy, including decommissioning and normalisation;
- in conjunction with the police, armed forces and security services, implement security policy (including Terrorism legislation; National Security Certificates and private security licences); and
- advise Ministers on the formulation and implementation of Parades policy.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE DIRECTORATE

- develop policy in respect of probation in NI, setting standards, providing the resources necessary to deliver probation services and monitoring the delivery of services;
- make arrangements for the appointment of a new Probation Board within the guidelines of the Office of the Commissioner on Public Appointments;
- support the frameworks governing ministerial relationships and responsibility for agreeing targets and monitoring the performance of the Compensation Agency and FSANI;
- draw up policies to compensate the victims of crime from public funds in response to the Bloomfield Report;
- arrange for the delivery of support services to victims of crime;
- work to improve the responses of the agencies in the Criminal Justice System to victims of crime;
- provide support to voluntary organisations delivering services to offenders, ex-offenders, those at risk of offending and their families;
- develop a strategy to improve community safety in NI and provide advice and guidance at a local level;
- encourage a co-ordinated response to drug misuse across the Criminal Justice System;
- develop a strategy to tackle violence against women;

- monitor the payment of grants to victims and ex-prisoner groups from the EU Peace and Reconciliation Programme;
- provide resources for the Criminal Justice Training Strategy;
- develop policy on the treatment of juveniles in the Criminal Justice System;
- make arrangements for the supervision of children in the community as part of a Juvenile Justice Centre Order;
- work with others to arrange for the delivery of services in the community to young people at risk of offending and their families;
- develop a relevant body of criminal law and keep under review the current framework of criminal law and procedures, which will in turn:
 - contribute to the delivery of a fair and efficient system of justice;
 - maintain a proper appellate system with procedures in place to ensure that an accused person has a fair and independent trial;
 - ensure that proper regard is paid to offenders who suffer from a mental illness.
- consider the compatibility of NI legislation with the ECHR and relevant domestic legislation;
- participate in relevant Home Office and other working groups;
- support and implement legislative change;
- develop and support policy initiatives;
- support and facilitate administrative development within the Criminal Justice system;
- review the Criminal Justice System in NI;
- deliver a fair and efficient system of justice;
- co-ordinate the implementation of policies on vulnerable and intimidated witnesses and sex offenders;
- provide the NIO with statistical and research advice in support of policy and operations through:
 - collation and analysis of statistical information;
 - undertaking statistical and research projects;
 - commissioning and managing research projects;
 - providing advice to the Department and the Criminal Justice System on relevant matters; and
 - disseminating statistical and research information.

CENTRAL SERVICES DIRECTORATE

Personnel Services Divisions

The role of Personnel Services Division is to help meet the business needs of each of the Directorates within the NIO, its Agencies and Legal Offices by providing a comprehensive staffing and support service.

The functions of the Division are:

- **Recruitment** – the management and delivery of internal competitions to recruit (a) NI Civil Servants using the Recruitment Service and (b) Home Civil Servants using Capita RAS, in accordance with Northern Ireland and Home Civil Service Commissioners’ guidelines;
- **Promotion and Selection** – the management and delivery of competitions to promote staff through merit selection in accordance with procedures agreed centrally by the Department of Finance and Personnel and representative Trade Unions in respect of civil servants employed in the Northern Ireland Civil Service, and by the NIO and representative Trade Unions in respect of civil servants employed in the Home Civil Service;
- **Postings, Placements and Transfers** – the allocation of staff to appropriate posts taking account of their skills, experience and development needs. This includes the placement of staff returning from career breaks or maternity leave, those who wish to work reduced hours, and staff who need to transfer to another post for welfare reasons or wish to move to a more convenient geographical location;
- **Management of Performance** - the monitoring and management of staff performance through the NIO appraisal system and taking appropriate action on cases of poor performance in accordance with terms and conditions of service agreed centrally by the Department of Finance and Personnel and representative Trade Unions in respect of civil servants employed in the Northern Ireland Civil Service, and by the Cabinet Office/NIO and representative Trade Unions in respect of civil servants employed in the Home Civil Service;
- **Management of Conduct** - the management of disciplinary procedures in accordance with terms and conditions of service agreed centrally by the Department of Finance and Personnel and representative Trade Unions in respect of civil servants employed in the Northern Ireland Civil Service, and by the Cabinet Office/NIO and representative Trade Unions in respect of civil servants employed in the Home Civil Service;
- **Management of Absenteeism** – the collection and monitoring of data on staff attendance levels and taking appropriate action to improve attendance and efficiency in the Department. This includes the application of inefficiency procedures agreed centrally by the Department of Finance and Personnel and representative Trade Unions in respect of civil servants employed in the Northern Ireland Civil Service, and by the Cabinet Office/NIO and representative Trade Unions in respect of civil servants employed in the Home Civil Service, and support from the Staff Welfare Service and the Occupational Health Service;
- **Grievance Procedures** - the resolution of staff complaints regarding personal treatment, discrimination and harassment in accordance with legislative requirements and internal procedures agreed with

Departmental Trade Union representatives;

- **Staff Health and Welfare** – the provision of a confidential information, advice and counselling service to staff throughout the Department, and the management of a health awareness programme aimed at improving health and fitness;
- **Equal Opportunities Policy and Procedures** -
 - the monitoring of policies and procedures to ensure that they comply with Northern Ireland equality legislation in respect of civil servants working in Northern Ireland and GB equality legislation in respect of civil servants working in London;
 - the development and implementation of positive action measures in accordance with NI and GB Equality Legislation to address imbalances in staffing better to reflect the society the NIO serves;
 - the provision of support for staff with disabilities in accordance with disability legislation requirements;
- **Pay and Allowances** - the payment of salaries and defined pay-related allowances and the in-house administration of pension schemes;
- **Non-Pay Employee Conditions** - the application of procedures agreed centrally by the Department of Finance and Personnel and representative Trade Unions in respect of civil servants employed in the Northern Ireland Civil Service, and by the Cabinet Office/NIO and representative Trade Unions in respect of civil servants employed in the Home Civil Service. Such procedures include career breaks, flexible working patterns, maternity leave, parental leave, special leave etc and arrangements for interchange;
- **Industrial Relations** - the management of industrial relations through formal meetings and consultation with departmental trade union representatives on a range of personnel issues, including pay negotiations;
- **Development, Training and Further Education** -
 - provision for the training and development of all staff to their full potential in line with the Department's business needs. This will include training and development for both specific job-related skills and competences, as well as for career and personal development;
 - the review and evaluation of training and development policies in accordance with business needs;
 - overseeing the Department's Further Education scheme in line with the Department's' business needs;
- **Security vetting** – in accordance with Government policy set out in the Prime Minister's statement of 15 December 1994, the security vetting of staff and contractors on a level necessary to safeguard national security and parliamentary democracy;
- **Civil Service Reform** - mobilising and co-ordinating action in support of the Civil Service reform programme launched by Sir Richard Wilson, Head of the Home Civil Service in 1999 as part of the modernising government initiative launched by the Prime Minister

in a White Paper in March 1999; and

- **Policy** - the development of people management policies in partnership with line and Directorate managers, in partnership with the Senior Management Group and the Departmental Board.

State Pathologist's Department

- conduct of autopsies on the direction of coroners;
- attendance at the scenes of suspicious death on request by the police, and the provision of advice;
- provision to the coroners and the courts of expert objective evidence on cause of death;
- the teaching of forensic pathology; and
- conduct of research on forensic pathology.

Financial Services Division

- acquire the necessary financial resources to permit the Department to carry out its statutory functions;
- allocate the available financial resources in a way which best reflects the Department's agreed priorities;
- monitor the spending of the Department's finances to ensure compliance with the requirements of Government Accounting, including the granting of appropriate approvals arising from the application of delegated authorities; and
- process all duly authorised payments and account for the Department's spending to Parliament.

Central Services Division

IT Services

- provides development, support, training, advice and guidance on the computing needs of the department taking into account business need and value for money;
- develops and supports a departmental communications network to allow data to be electronically transferred from one area to another;
- develops and supports a computer infrastructure (OASIS) providing word processing, spreadsheet, electronic mail and document storage facilities to the majority of staff in the department;
- develops and supports functional systems using OASIS, other local computer networks or stand-alone computers;
- procures computers and associated equipment primarily through established government contracts;
- provides advice and, if necessary, practical assistance to external computer suppliers (who must be equal opportunity companies) who have won contracts to supply computer systems to the department; and

- investigates new technologies and where appropriate applies them in the department, e.g. Internet and Intranet.

Office Services

- provision of office accommodation for the NIO in Northern Ireland and England;
- provision of a travel booking service for NIO staff travelling on official business;
- provision of services and facilities within Northern Ireland for guests of the Secretary of State and other official visitors to the NIO;
- provision of hospitality for guests of the Secretary of State and other official visitors; and
- provision of internal office services, such as stationery and office furniture.

Central Management

- reviews of agencies and NDPBs;
- oversight of the application of public appointments procedures;
- servicing the administration of the Departmental Equality Scheme;
- preparation of the annual Departmental Report to Parliament, and
- honours and awards

Official and Public Records

- decide which official records in the NIO's custody which are 30 years old or older should be made available to the public via the Public Record Offices; and
- decide whether specific records which are not yet 30 years old can be made available to those who make an "Open Government" request to see the records.

INFORMATION SERVICES DIRECTORATE

- provide the Secretary of State, Ministers, advisers and officials with a comprehensive publicity service covering all aspects of activity and achievement; and
- present the Government's view on proposals and developments affecting the Province, and take every opportunity to promote the image of NI through the media at home and abroad.

NORTHERN IRELAND PRISON SERVICE

- provide constructive activity for prisoners;
- provide opportunities for recreation and/or association for prisoners;
- provide sentence planning and similar support to help reduce/prevent re-offending;

- provide Temporary Release Schemes for prisoners;
- arrange prison visits;
- allocate sentenced prisoners;
- healthcare of prisoners;
- legislation and rules;
- promote family links;
- prepare prisoners for release;
- arrange release of prisoners;
- provide for spiritual wellbeing of prisoners;
- procure supplies and services;
- manage the Prison Service estate;
- financial management;
- information systems and information technology;
- recruitment of governor grades and prison officers;
- promotion and selection of governor grades and prison officers;
- postings, placements and transfers;
- management of performance and conduct;
- leave schemes;
- staff health and welfare;
- equal opportunities policy and procedures;
- pay and allowances (including superannuation);
- non-pay employee conditions;
- industrial relations;
- honours and award schemes; and
- development and training.

COMPENSATION AGENCY

- under each of the three statutory compensation schemes administered by the Agency treat all claims received on their individual merits and in accordance with statute and case law advise each claimant of their right of appeal to the County Court against the Agency's decision;
- process each claim efficiently;
- locate the Compensation Agency's office in central Belfast adjacent to, or in easy reach of, all major public transport services and with numerous public car parking facilities to allow convenient access to all people irrespective of background or community;
- adapt office for easy access for the disabled;
- distribute information guide leaflets covering the main compensation schemes widely throughout NI;
- provide a Customer Information Officer, with a dedicated telephone line, available at any time throughout the working day;
- provide a Major Incident Team on site in the event of immediate need, such as in the aftermath of town car bombs; and

- employ a number of loss adjusting companies on three-year contracts by appointment through open tender, publicly advertised.

FORENSIC SCIENCE AGENCY

- provide scientific support for police in the investigation of crime;
- provide scientific advice for the legal profession and objective expert testimony to the Courts;
- provide training in the effective and efficient application of forensic science;
- provide analytical support for pathologists;
- recover the full economic costs of the Agency from its customers;
- use the Agency's resources with the maximum efficiency;
- industrial relations;
- staff development and training;
- staff health and safety; and
- equal opportunities policies and procedures.

Implimentation of Section 75 Obligations

- 1.15 The Department is committed to the fulfilment of its section 75 obligations in all parts of its structure. However, responsibility for driving forward implementation within the Department will be located in the Central Services Division under the personal responsibility of Ms Christine Collins, a member of the Senior Civil Service (SCS), working through the Central Management Unit (see organisation diagram at Annex A2). This Unit will be a central point of contact for the Equality Commission and for complainants. Ms Collins or a member of her staff will also represent the Department in meetings with the devolved Northern Ireland departments to co-ordinate the implementation of section 75 obligations. Ms Collins' contact details are as follows:

Ms Christine Collins
Central Services Division, Northern Ireland Office,
Stormont House Annexe, Stormont,
Belfast BT4 3SH, Tel: 028 905 23533
e-mail: xxxxxxxx.xxxxxxx@xxx.x.xxx.ukx

- 1.16 Ms Collins will also service a section 75 Steering Committee within the Department chaired by the Director of Resources, Mrs Doreen Brown, a member of the Departmental Management Board, which is chaired by the Permanent Under Secretary of State. Mrs Brown is responsible for the effective discharge of the NIO's section 75 obligations to the Secretary of State through the Permanent Under Secretary of State. The membership of the section 75 Steering Committee will comprise representatives of all the Divisions in the core Department and its Agencies known as Equality "Drivers" (Annex A2) and will meet at least quarterly with an external assessor to monitor and

review the implementation of the section 75 obligations. Access to Divisional and Agency Equality "Drivers" is available either through writing to the Central Management Unit or through telephoning the Central Management Unit helpline on 028 90 527060.

- 1.17 Objectives and targets relating to the statutory obligations will be integrated into the Department's strategic and operational plans. All officials involved in working on policies, duties or functions or in related activities bearing on equality of opportunity and the promotion of good relations will include implementation of the statutory obligations in their personal performance plans. The extent to which managers have monitored and ensured the delivery of their staff's equality obligations will be an element for inclusion in the annual review of the Scheme.
- 1.18 The Department will ensure that implementation of the section 75 obligations is supported efficiently with the necessary resources of people, time and money. It has provided resources for communicating to and training its staff on the requirements of the statutory obligations and how they can efficiently be implemented (see Section 7 of this Scheme).

PART TWO

2. Arrangements for assessing compliance with section 75 duties

2.1. The Department will assess over a five year period the extent to which each of its current and future policies has an impact on the promotion of equality of opportunity and the promotion of good relations within the terms of section 75 of the Act. This will be done first, through an inclusive and interactive process of screening policies, in consultation with representatives of affected groups, and second, through equality impact assessments (see below Part Three) and the timetable at Part Eleven will be followed. Where appropriate, an equality impact assessment will include an annex on the promotion of good relations. The organisations indicated at **Annex C** in relation to each policy area will be consulted on these equality impact assessments. The following organisations will also be consulted specifically in relation to the annex of an assessment that deals with the promotion of good relations:

- Community Relations Council
- Equality Commission
- Equality Forum NI
- NI political parties

2.2. The Department has also arranged for a review which will be undertaken in liaison with the Equality Commission and an annual report to be presented by an external assessor on the progress made and limitations experienced by it during the year concerning compliance with the duty to promote equality of opportunity and the promotion of good relations. After consideration by the Departmental Management Board and approval by the Secretary of State, this report will be included in the Department's Annual Report and sent to the Equality Commission to ensure that progress is maintained; the Department will copy the review and report to those bodies listed at **Annex C** and will publish it on the Department's website. The Department will address complaints that it has not fulfilled its statutory obligations and will seek to resolve such complaints bilaterally. It will aim to give a substantive response to complaints within one month.

2.3. The Department will liaise with the following non-departmental public bodies (NDPBs) which are required to submit their own equality schemes:

- Probation Board for NI;
- The Policing Board for NI; and
- The Police Ombudsman.

2.4. The Department will conduct a comprehensive review of this scheme within five years of this submission to the Equality Commission on **16 January 2001**. This review will include an

assessment of how the Department has complied with its section 75 obligations and how equality of opportunity and good relations have been advanced in relation to the main functional areas. This assessment is likely to include an input from external consultants. The Department will consult with those bodies listed at **Annex C** before submission of the review to the Equality Commission.

PART THREE

3. Assessing the Impact of Policies on the Promotion of Equality of Opportunity

3.1 In identifying the policies to be subject to equality impact assessments, the Department will consider **all** of its current policies listed at paragraphs 1.6 to 1.14 and look forward to all new policies which may be proposed for adoption during the first term of the Scheme.

3.2 The main groups within each of the nine section 75 categories are identified at **Annex B**. The Department will consider the impact of each current or new policy on equality of opportunity in terms of the nine categories listed at section 75 of the Act. For each policy the following criteria will be applied:

a. is there any evidence of higher or lower participation or uptake by different groups?

b. Is there any evidence that different groups have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to the particular policy?

c. Is there an opportunity to promote equality of opportunity or good relations better by altering the policy or working with others in government or the community at large?

d. Have consultations with relevant groups, organisations or individuals indicated that particular policies, functions or duties create problems that are specific to them?

If the answer to any of these questions is positive or "Don't Know", consideration will be given as to whether to subject the policy to the equality impact assessment procedure. Equality Impact Assessments will be conducted in accordance with the procedure set out in Annex 1 to the Equality Commission's guidelines on the form and content of Equality Schemes. The Department has recognised that in many policy areas there is a dearth of statistical data on which to base either its screening judgements or its impact assessments. A data availability audit for each policy area has been completed. Other means of forming objective judgements about equality impacts will also be employed such as consultation with representative groups, surveys, etc.. In some cases, at least in the interim, these may be the only objective means of forming judgements.

The National Security Certificate System and Policies on Security Vetting and Procurement

3.3 The Department has noted that the Parliamentary Northern

Ireland Affairs Committee has recommended that the use of the national security certificate system (NSCS) be reviewed by the Northern Ireland Office in the context of the preparation of its Equality Scheme under the Northern Ireland Act. This would consider whether the operation of the NSCS has any implications for equality of opportunity between the two main designated religious communities. Similar considerations apply to the policies on Security Vetting and Procurement. The Northern Ireland Office has included these reviews within its Equality Scheme programme of work for Year 1.

- 3.4 Before submission of this Scheme to the Equality Commission, the Department undertook an initial, internal, interim screening of the full range of its current policies using the criteria set out in paragraph 3.2. The analysis and collation of the results of this initial screening established which of the Department's policies has a significant impact on the promotion of equality of opportunity and should be subject to a full equality impact assessment. This exercise also identified the section 75 categories where any particular policy is likely to have a significant impact. Full impact assessments of current policies will concentrate in particular on the categories identified in this exercise.
- 3.5 The consultation process led to the establishment of a timetable for conducting equality impact assessments on the Department's current policies. These have been prioritised on the basis of:
- relevance to social need
 - effect on people's daily lives
 - effect on economic, social and human rights
 - cultural or political impact on people.

There have been no policies proposed by those consulted as appropriate for impact assessment that have not been included in this Scheme.

- 3.6 An equality impact assessment will aim to identify whether, within each section 75 category, the policy under consideration creates differential impacts between groups or has the potential to enhance equality of opportunity between groups, particularly in terms of:
- rights
 - resources
 - participation; and
 - values and norms (ie traditional roles, stereotypes, division of labour, attitudes and behaviour).
- 3.7 Since the draft Scheme was first submitted to the Equality Commission for approval on 16 January 2001, the range of new policies listed in paragraph 3.8 of that draft Scheme has been screened and the results of that screening made available for

public consultation. Three of those new policies, namely: the Juvenile Justice Estate Review; the Community Safety Strategy; and the Strategy to address violence against women were identified as requiring equality impact assessments of which one, the Juvenile Justice Estate Review has been completed in Year 1 and the other two have been included in the timetable at Part 11 for assessment in Year 2.

3.8 When the Department puts forward a proposal for legislation in Parliament, a summary assessment of implications for the statutory obligations will be included with the proposal in any White Paper or other consultation document.

3.9 In making any decision with respect to a policy adopted or proposed to be adopted by it, the Department will take into account any relevant equality impact assessment and consultation carried out in relation to the policy.

PART FOUR

4 Consultation

- 4.1 Consultation on equality issues with groups and individuals will begin as early as possible. The Department will consult with the Equality Commission, the Community Relations Council, other public authorities and voluntary, community and trade union groups and organisations representing the various categories included in section 75 listed at **Annex C** on all issues relevant to the fulfilment of the section 75 obligations i.e. with regard to matters relating to the duties, the Equality Scheme, screening and impact assessments. It will take account of proposals from those bodies relating to its compliance with the section 75 obligations.
- 4.2 In order to assist the consultation process, the Department will release for public consultation, subject to the government security rules on the release of classified information, any quantitative and qualitative data relating to equality issues as they affect the section 75 categories, including related consultants' reports used to make or inform a decision made by the NIO.
- 4.3 The Department will consult on the screening processes and subsequently on equality impact assessments with relevant public sector organisations and with those representative groups and individuals of the section 75 categories listed at **Annex B**. In addition, the Department will consult all those affected by the policy to be assessed whether or not they have a direct economic or personal interest.
- 4.4 For policies within each functional area of the Department, the public sector bodies and representative groups of the section 75 categories to be consulted are listed at **Annex C**.
- 4.5 In addition to consultation on equality impact assessments, the Department will also, from time to time, have a need to consult on legislation, strategies, reviews and other plans. Within each functional area, the bodies listed at **Annex C** will be included in relevant consultations of these kinds.
- 4.6 In consulting representative groups of the section 75 categories the Department will aim to provide a period for response of at least eight weeks and to begin consultation as early as possible. However, exceptionally, there may be circumstances when this timescale is not feasible; and the Department has identified the following circumstances when consultation of this duration will not be possible:
- the urgent protection of life or property;
 - policies responding urgently to changes in the political situation; and
 - policies which must be implemented urgently to comply with a court judgement or with international obligations;

When this occurs it will be justified very clearly, carefully monitored, kept under review, and explained in the next Annual Report.

- 4.7 In consulting on any matter to which this scheme relates, the Department will normally initially write to the relevant bodies referred to in this section of the Scheme and, if necessary, follow this up with a telephoned approach. The Department will then work with representative groups and individuals of the section 75 categories in order to identify how best to obtain their views. This may involve face-to-face meetings, advisory groups, surveys, consultative panels, internet discussions and other innovative ways of consulting as there will be different means of consultation for different groups and it will be important to establish the basis for dialogue and engagement during the life of the Scheme. It is intended that all barriers to proper consultation will be removed by ensuring accessibility of language and appropriate format. Issues concerning access to information highlighted in section 8 of the Scheme will be given particular consideration. To meet the needs of specific groups, the Department has put systems in place to ensure that information will be made available in a timely manner on request in accessible formats, including Braille, large print, audio cassette, computer disk, signed video cassette and in minority ethnic languages for those not fluent in the English language. Arrangements for these contingencies are in hand with the service providers concerned. Based on experience gained during the consultation period of the Criminal Justice Review, consideration is being given to how best to communicate information to young people and those with learning disabilities, and the Department will continue working on these issues with representative groups such as the Sensory Disability Consortium and Putting Children First.
- 4.8 The Department considers it particularly important that sufficient, timely and appropriate information is provided to enable all affected groups and individuals to consider the full implications of proposals, and it will take steps to ensure this.
- 4.9 The Department will release relevant quantitative and qualitative data relating to equality issues as they affect the section 75 categories and other related documentation such as consultants' reports. Information will be made available in consultation with the affected groups, to ensure the highest level of inclusivity in any policy decision-making.
- 4.10 Specific training will be provided for those engaged in consultation exercises to ensure that those facilitating consultations have the necessary skills to communicate effectively.
- 4.11 In organising consultation meetings, the Department will aim to ensure a full participation in setting the time, venue, accessibility, how the meeting will be run, the possibility of the

provision of childcare and alternative formats including the presence of signers.

- 4.12 The Department will publish its response to the comments received from those consulted.

Equality

PART FIVE

5 Monitoring

- 5.1 The Department will establish a system to monitor the impact of policies in order to identify their effects on the relevant groups. This will be reviewed annually and the results published in a Press Notice, on the Department's website and in the Department's Annual Review of the operation of the Scheme.
- 5.2 Knowledge of the uptake of services provided by the Department and the impact of its policies on the different groups within the section 75 categories will be of assistance in assessing progress towards equality of opportunity. By the end of Year 1. of the operation of this Scheme, through the appointment in November 2000 to the Equality Scheme Steering Group of the Department's Head of Statistics and Research Branch and through an Information and Data Availability Audit, the Department will assess the extent of existing monitoring within each of the eight main functional areas (ie, the five functional Directorates and the three Executive Agencies) and the scope for extending it. It is proposed to create a Departmental Data Index by assessing the extent to which data relevant to the NIO's policies and those groups affected by them are held, in the first instance internally and then by the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency *(NISRA), and finally exploring other sources of data including sources available to the affected groups themselves. In addition to the value of any additional information required for assessing progress towards equality of opportunity, this assessment will also take into account the following factors:
- readiness of the public to supply information;
 - availability of proxy measures (e.g. postcode analysis);
 - methodologies for qualitative analyses; and
 - resource implications.
- 5.3 In some cases an equality impact assessment may identify an anticipated differential impact on particular groups within the section 75 categories. In some of those cases that differential impact may be a deliberate policy objective to redress a previous inequality (e.g. the proposed 50:50 recruitment policy for the Police Service of Northern Ireland). In other cases, where a differential impact is confirmed, the Department will consider whether it is justifiable in terms of the NIO's human rights and other statutory obligations, and the wider objectives which the policy is designed to achieve. If this is not the case, the Department will take steps either to put in place an alternative policy; or, if this is not possible, will consider how the impact may be mitigated. The Department may, in these circumstances, commission special monitoring analysis to confirm the extent of the differential impact and/or the success

of any mitigating measures. Information collated in this special monitoring would be taken into account in any future review of the policy. This will be reviewed annually and the results will be published and made available to the Equality Commission. If monitoring and evaluation show that a policy results in a greater adverse impact than predicted, or if opportunities arise that would allow for greater equality of opportunity to be promoted, the Department will ensure that the policy is revised.

- 5.4 The Department is co-operating closely with NISRA in its review of existing monitoring arrangements and its consideration of special monitoring of anticipated adverse impacts.

PART SIX

6. Publication of Assessments and Monitoring

- 6.1 The Department will make publicly available the outcome of any equality impact assessment and of any monitoring undertaken in relation to paragraphs 5.1 and 5.2 above. This material will be accessible on the Department's Internet website at **www.nio.gov.uk**. It will also be available in printed form and on request in accessible formats such as Braille, large print, audio cassette, signed video cassette, computer disk, and minority ethnic languages from the **Central Management Unit, Northern Ireland Office, Stormont House, Stormont, Belfast BT4 3SH through the Equality Scheme Co-ordinator, Ms Christine Collins**. The Department will inform the general public about the availability of this material through a variety of mechanisms, including press releases and any other such mechanisms as may be required to ensure compliance with section 75. It will also directly inform all those bodies listed in **Annex C** that participate in the consultation process on an equality impact assessment when this material is available. In publishing the outcome of any impact assessments and monitoring, the Department will take into account how best to communicate with young people and those with learning disabilities.
- 6.2 Published documentation on an equality impact assessment will include:
- the aims of the policy;
 - details of the outcome of the assessment, highlighting if an adverse impact has been identified;
 - associated available monitoring data;
 - details of any consideration given to mitigate any adverse impact of the policy on the promotion of equality of opportunity; and
 - details of any consideration given to alternative policies which might better achieve the promotion of equality of opportunity.

PART SEVEN

7 Training

- 7.1 In line with the commitment of the Secretary of State and the Permanent Under Secretary of State to the statutory duty, the Department is ensuring that, as a top training priority, all of its staff will receive a programme of relevant communication and training on the section 75 obligations, the requirements of the Equality Scheme and the arrangements for equality impact assessment, appropriate to their grade and responsibilities. The training is designed to achieve over the five year period the following objectives;
- to raise awareness of current anti-discrimination legislation in Northern Ireland, including the provisions of section 75, Schedule 9 and section 76 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. This includes an explanation of the duties and their implications for all staff;
 - to provide all staff involved in the screening of policies, functions and duties with the necessary skills and knowledge to do this work effectively;
 - to provide those staff involved in the equality impact assessment of policies, functions and duties with the necessary skills and knowledge to do this work effectively;
 - to provide those staff who will deal with complaints in relation to the Department's Scheme, with the necessary skills and knowledge to investigate and monitor complaints effectively;
 - to provide those staff involved in the 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 department's Equality Scheme with the necessary skills and knowledge to do this work effectively; and
 - to 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 staff of the Department's three agencies will be included in this training programme.

- 7.2 To date, Equality Scheme awareness seminars have been provided by the author of this Scheme, Mr Brian Blackwell, assisted by Messrs Richard Steele and John Kramer of Queen's University, for the Departmental Management Board including the Permanent Under Secretary of State, and for the Departmental Senior Management Group consisting of the Heads/Chief Executives of all the NIO's operational divisions and agencies. Training seminars by the same team (which include a focus on outcomes) have been provided for the

Equality Scheme Co-ordinator and all the divisional/agency Equality "Drivers"; and in the year 2001, 99 staff at grade A and above have been trained. A summary of the training programme is attached at **Annex E**. Before the end of Year 1, 600 staff in grades B1 – D2 and 1726 Prison Service staff in grades equivalent to B1 – D2 will receive training; and 650 further staff in those grades will receive training in the following year. Definitions of the different grades employed in the NIO are set out in **Annex D**. All new staff will be trained in the requirements of section 75 and this Equality Scheme in their induction training. Specialist training, where necessary, in association with relevant groups drawn from and representing the section 75 categories, will be provided in 2001/2 on subjects such as the conduct of equality impact assessments and communication skills for those consulting with representatives of some of the nine section 75 groups. This is all in addition to parallel training on New TSN and on the implications of the coming into effect of the Human Rights Act.

- 7.3 Specialist staff, such as solicitors, researchers and policy analysts, will receive more focused training in collaboration, as necessary, with Training and Development Services and NISRA.
- 7.4 **All staff** have access to copies of this Scheme which include the Secretary of State's and the Permanent Under Secretary of State's covering messages concerning their personal commitment to the Scheme. Furthermore, **every member** of staff from the most senior to the most junior grades has been issued with an NIO Equality Scheme Aide Memoire printed on high quality cardboard, mounted on a flip-over spine, which they are encouraged to display on their desks as a constant reminder to them of their individual and departmental responsibilities under Section 75.
- 7.5 The Permanent Under Secretary of State is ensuring the promotion of the statutory duty by arranging for progress with the Equality Scheme to be a subject for regular consideration by himself and the other members of the Departmental Management Board and by the Senior Management Group as well as by the section 75 Steering Committee. External evidence of commitment to the statutory duty is provided by the transparency and openness by which progress with the NIO's Equality Scheme is documented and made widely available to the public in Northern Ireland.

- 7.6 The Annual Review of this Scheme carried out by the External Assessor and submitted to the Equality Commission will evaluate the training provided to assess the extent to which staff fully understand their role in implementing their duties.

PART EIGHT

8 Public Access to Information and Services

- 8.1 The Department is committed to effective communication with the public. It recognises, however, that there is a risk that some sections of the public will not enjoy equality of opportunity in accessing information provided by the Department. There are four particular risk areas:
- people with sensory and learning disabilities may have particular difficulties with information in print;
 - members of minority ethnic groups, whose first language is not English, may have difficulties with information provided only in English;
 - for historical reasons, some sections of the community may be reluctant to engage in exchanges with the NIO;
 - some local newspapers are read predominantly by members of only one of the major politico-religious groups (i.e. Protestants/Unionists or Catholics/Nationalists).
- 8.2 Therefore, in disseminating information through the local press, the Department will ensure that press statements and public advertisements are carried by all three Belfast daily newspapers including the North West edition of the Belfast Telegraph. Where press statements or public advertisements are aimed at a particular area within Northern Ireland, the Department will ensure that the information is disseminated through at least two local newspapers circulating in that area, ensuring the information is accessible to both main politico-religious sections of the community; and where appropriate, the Department will consider what other measures are necessary to ensure the effective dissemination of relevant information to all members of the community. Specific consideration will be given to how best to communicate information to young people and those with learning difficulties.
- 8.3 The Department has assessed its arrangements and has put in place a system for providing information in Braille, large print, audiocassette, signed videocassette, computer disk and in minority ethnic language formats. The assessment has taken account of the statutory requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995; and the Department continues working with the relevant section 75 groups to assess the likely demand for information in such formats across its main policy areas, taking into account in particular, the recommendations of the cross-departmental Promoting Social Inclusion (PSI) working groups on minority ethnic people and on access to information. The assessment will make recommendations on how public access to information can be better ensured by improving arrangements for providing information in different, accessible formats and languages. The Department will consult on these recommendations and will implement them appropriately.

- 8.4 The Department intends that all of its services are fully accessible to all parts of the community in a way that ensures equality of opportunity. Equality impact assessments will highlight any factors that create differential impact by making a service linked to a particular function, policy or duty less accessible to particular groups. The Department will regularly monitor access by groups within each of the nine section 75 categories to information about its policies and access to its services.
- 8.5 In those of its offices, which are open to the public, the Department will ensure that no section of the community is deterred from visiting, for whatever reason. All public offices will maintain a welcoming and harmonious environment. The Department will adhere to the relevant provisions of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.
- 8.6 The Department's commitments in this Scheme on equality of opportunity in accessing information are without prejudice to any rights to information in the current Code of Practice on Open Government or in the new Freedom of Information legislation.

PART NINE

9. Publication of the Scheme

- 9.1 Having been approved by the Equality Commission, this updated edition of the Department's Equality Scheme will be made accessible to all members of staff in the Department and its agencies through its Office Information System and will be sent to all the groups listed at **Annex E** and is available in print form and accessible formats free on request from the **Central Management Unit, Northern Ireland Office, Stormont House, Stormont, Belfast BT4 3SH**. It can also be accessed on the Department's Internet website at **www.nio.gov.uk**
- 9.2 Work will shortly begin on communicating the Scheme to young people and those with learning difficulties. The outcome of this work will be notified to the Equality Commission and to the wider public in the Department's Annual Report on the operation of this Scheme.

PART TEN

10. Complaints

- 10.1 The Department will ensure that the NIO's section 75 procedure for handling complaints will be accessible to all. Thus, when a person believes that he/she has been directly affected by a failure of the Department to comply with this Scheme, he/she should, in the first instance, bring their complaint to the attention of **Ms Christine Collins, c/o The Central Management Unit, Northern Ireland Office, Stormont House, Stormont, Belfast BT4 3SH, Telephone: 028 905 23533;**

e-mail:xxxxxxxxx.xxxxxxx@xxx.x.xxx.ukx

The Department will carry out an internal, initial investigation of the complaint and will respond to the complainant within one month. In responding to the complainant, the Department will inform him/her of the procedure for pursuing the complaint further with the Equality Commission, as set out in paragraph 10 of Schedule 9 to the Northern Ireland Act 1998. In any subsequent investigation by the Equality Commission, the Department will co-operate fully, providing access to any relevant documentation that the Commission may require. Similarly, the Department will co-operate fully with any investigation by the Equality Commission under sub-paragraph 11(1)(b) of Schedule 9 to the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

PART ELEVEN

11. Timetable

11.1 The following timetable summarises the measures that the Department proposes to take during the five years following the launch of this scheme.

Year 1: 1 April 2001 – 31 March 2002.

- Review the implications for equality of opportunity between the two designated religious communities of the National Security Certificate System.
- Review the implications for equality of opportunity between people of different religious beliefs and political opinions of security vetting policy and practice.
- Review the implications for equality of opportunity of the NIO's procurement policy and practice.
- Carry out pre-appointment evaluation of policy on appointments to the NI Human Rights Commission and the Equality Commission for NI.
- Carry out pilot Impact Assessment on policy on Juvenile Justice Centre Estate (completed).
- Carry out pilot Impact Assessment on Criminal Injuries Compensation policy.
- Provide training for 130 staff at Grade A level and above; for 600 staff at grades B1 – D2; and for 1726 NI Prison Service staff in grades equivalent to B1 – D2.
- Carry out over **two years** in conjunction with DFP, Impact Assessment of policy on the promotion and selection of NICS staff.
- Screen, and where necessary, carry out Impact Assessments on all new policies, functions and duties, including: the Code of Practice made under section 99(1) of the Terrorism Act 2000 (completed); and the Code of Practice on video recording with sound made under paragraph 3(4) of Schedule 8 to the Terrorism Act 2000 (completed).
- Prepare 1st Annual Review.

Year 2: 1 April 2002 – 31 March 2003.

- Complete 1st Annual Review and submit Report on operation of NIO's Equality Scheme for Year 1 to the Equality Commission.
- Carry out Impact Assessment of the Department's functions in respect of broadcasting issues (i.e. providing advice on issues that affect the British-Irish relationship.)
- Carry out Impact Assessment on new measures to prevent electoral fraud (when enacted).
- Carry out Impact Assessment of Strategy to tackle Violence Against Women.
- Carry out Impact Assessment on the co-ordinated response to drug misuse across the criminal justice system.

- Carry out Impact Assessment on co-ordination of policies on vulnerable and/or intimidated witnesses.
- Carry out Impact Assessment on the Community Safety Strategy.
- Develop and support policy initiatives in restorative justice.
- Carry out Impact Assessment of the Department's Victim's liaison role.
- Complete, in conjunction with DFP, Impact Assessment on the promotion and selection of NICS staff.
- Carry out Impact Assessment on Childcare Voucher Scheme policy.
- Provide training for 650 staff at grades B1 – D2.
- Prepare 2nd Annual Review.
- Screen, and where necessary, carry out Impact Assessments on all new policies, duties and functions.

Year 3: 1 April 2003 – 31 March 2004.

- Complete 2nd Annual Review and submit Report to the Equality Commission.
- Carry out Impact Assessment on measures to address gender and other inequalities in political representation.
- Carry out Impact Assessment on policy on the promotion and selection of HCS staff.
- Carry out Impact Assessment on Special Bonus Pay Scheme.
- Carry out Impact Assessment on policy on Training and Development for staff.
- Carry out Impact Assessment on arrangements for the appointment of new Probation Board.
- Carry out Impact Assessment on the arrangements to provide support for voluntary organisations delivering services to offenders, those at risk of offending and their families.
- Carry out Impact Assessment on the policy on the supervision of juveniles in the community.
- Carry out Impact Assessment on the policy on the treatment of juveniles in custody.
- Support, screen and implement legislative change concerning sex offenders in the community.
- Review the current framework of the criminal law on sex offences.
- Carry out Impact Assessment on equal opportunities policies and procedures in the NI Prison Service.
- Provide training for staff not covered in Years 1 and 2; and for all new staff.
- Prepare 3rd Annual Review.
- Screen, and where necessary, carry out Impact Assessments on all new policies, functions and duties.

Year 4: 1 April 2004 – 31 March 2005.

- Carry out Impact Assessment on policy on pay of part-time staff.
- Carry out Impact Assessment on policy on postings, placements and transfers.

- Carry out Impact Assessment on policy of recruitment of prison grades in the NI Prison Service.
- Carry out Impact Assessment on policy on postings, placements and transfers in the NI Prison Service.
- Carry out Impact Assessment on the arrangements for the delivery of support services to victims of crime.
- Carry out Impact Assessment on the policy on improving the response of criminal justice agencies to victims of crime.
- Carry out Impact Assessment on policy on working with young people in the community to divert them from the criminal justice system.
- Review the current framework of criminal law and procedures on sentencing.
- Develop a relevant body of criminal law on bail.
- Develop a relevant body of criminal law on the pursuit and seizure of criminal assets.
- Training for new staff.
- Prepare 4th Annual Review.
- Screen, and where necessary, carry out Impact Assessments on all new policies, functions and duties.

Year 5: 1 April – 31 March 2006.

- Carry out Impact Assessment on policy for maintaining the legal framework necessary to hold elections in NI for the European Parliament, Westminster Parliament, NI Assembly and local government.
- Carry out an Impact Assessment on the policy on promotion and selection of prison grades in the NI Prison Service
- Carry out Impact Assessment on policy on the management of the Prison Service Estate.
- Carry out Impact Assessment on the development of policy in respect of probation in NI.
- Screen, and where necessary, carry out Impact Assessments on all new policies, functions and duties.
- Train all new staff.
- **Conduct a comprehensive review of the working of the Department's Equality Scheme over the five years since its inception.**

NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE
29 March 2002

MAIN GROUPS RELEVANT TO THE SECTION 75 CATEGORIES FOR NORTHERN IRELAND PURPOSES

Category	Main Groups
Religious belief	Protestants; Catholics; people of non-Christian faiths; people of no religious belief.
Political opinion	Unionists generally; Nationalists generally; members/supporters of any political party.
Racial or ethnic group	Bangladeshi; Black African; Black Caribbean; Chinese; Indian; Irish Traveller; Pakistani; White; Mixed Ethnic Group; and others.
'Men and women generally'	Men (including boys); women (including girls); transgender people.
Marital status	Married people; unmarried people; divorced or separated people; widowed people.
Age	Children under 18; people up to 25; people of working age (16/65); People over 65
'Persons with a disability'	Persons with a physical, sensory or learning disability as defined in Sections 1 and 2 and Schedules 1 and 2 of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995
'Persons with dependants'	Persons with personal responsibility for the care of a child; persons with personal responsibility for the care of a person with an incapacitating disability; persons with personal responsibility for the care of a dependant elderly person
Sexual orientation	Heterosexual people; homosexual people; bisexual people.

BODIES TO BE CONSULTED

NB, this list is not exhaustive and may be amended in the light of circumstances.

(On the Department's Scheme Generally)

NIO Non-Departmental Public Bodies

Probation Board for NI
The NI Policing Board
The Police Ombudsman for NI
Juvenile Justice Board
Civil Service Commissioners for NI
The Chief Electoral Officer for NI
The Parades Commission

Political Parties

Labour
Conservative
Liberal Democrat
UUP
SDLP
DUP
Sinn Fein
APNI
Green
NIUP
UKUP
Women's Coalition
PUP
UDP
Workers' Party
UUAP
IRSP

Religious Organisations

Church of Ireland
Roman Catholic Church
Presbyterian Church
Baptist Church
Methodist Church
Free Presbyterian Church
Christian Scientists
NI Inter-Faith Forum
Belfast Hebrew Congregation
Belfast Islamic Centre

Representative Organisations

Committee on the Administration of Justice
Equality Commission

Community Relations Council
NI Human Rights Commission
British-Irish Rights Watch
Justice
Liberty
Amnesty International
Age Sector Reference Group
Putting Children First
Youth Council for NI
Chinese Welfare Association
Indian Community Centre
Multi-Cultural Resource Centre
NI Council for Ethnic Minorities
Traveller Movement NI
NI African Cultural Centre
Coalition on Sexual Orientation
NI Gay Rights Association
Gay and Lesbian Youth NI
Disability Action
MENCAP
NI Association for Mental Health
British Deaf Association
RNID NI
RNIB NI
Women's Forum NI
NI Women's Aid Federation
Gingerbread NI
Carers National Association NI
NIPSA
NIC-ICTU
FDA
UNISON
Home Civil Service Staff Side
Recruitment Service (DFP)
Institute of Personnel and Development (NI Branch)

(In addition on Policing Issues)

Police Service for Northern Ireland
Police Federation
Superintendents' Association
ACPO
Northern Ireland Policing Board

(In addition on NI Prison Service)

Prison Officers Association
Prison Governors Association
Boards of Visitors and the Visiting Committee

Director of Public Prosecutions
Attorney General
Lord Chief Justice
Council of HM County Court Judges
Resident Magistrates Association
NI Juvenile Courts Association
NI Courts Service
Law Society
Bar Council
Sentence Review Commissioners
UK Immigration Service
Institute of Criminology (QUB)
HMCI
Amnesty International
Howard League
Prison Reform Trust
Red Cross
European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhumane or Degrading Treatment
NIACRO
Extern
Prison Fellowship
Ulster Quaker Service
Victim Support
EPIC
Tar Anall
Coiste na n-Iarchimi
PANG

EXPLANATION OF NIO GRADES

NIO Grades	Description	N I Civil Service Grades
Senior Civil Service		
Permanent Under Secretary of State	Civil Service Head of the Department.	
Senior Director	Member of the Departmental Management Board each with oversight of a number of the main policy areas.	Permanent Secretary
Director and Associate Director	Members of the Departmental Management Board each responsible for one of the five main policy areas.	Deputy Secretary
Head of Division	Head of an operational unit responsible for a coherent sub-set of policies.	Assistant Secretary
Chief Executive or Director General	Head of an Executive Agency	Deputy Secretary or Assistant Secretary
Mainstream Grades		
A	Senior management level interpreting policy.	Principal
B	Larger branch managers.	Deputy Principal
B2	Branch managers.	Staff Officer
C	First line managers.	Executive Officer
D1	Clerical staff and typing staff.	Administrative Officer
D2	Basic clerical level.	Administrative Assistant

EQUALITY SCHEME TRAINING PROGRAMME FOR THE NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE.

The equality awareness training for the Departmental Management Board and the Senior Management Group was conducted by the Scheme's author, Brian Blackwell, assisted by Richard Steele and John Kramer of Queen's University on 17 April 2000 and 16 May 2000 respectively.

Full training (including a focus on outcomes) was conducted by the same team for Divisional Equality "Drivers" on 2 June 2000, and for Grade As and above on 11,12, 17, 18, 24 and 26 October 2000; and on 1, 2, 8, 9 and 16 November 2000. In addition, a full training seminar for all the staff of Police Division and the Patten Action Team was held on 5 December 2000. One more training session is required to sweep up those at Grade A and above who missed those sessions already provided.

Equality awareness training seminars conducted by the Divisional Equality "Drivers" supported by Brian Blackwell are now in train and will continue until all staff have been through the process.

Content of the Training Programme.

The main components of the Training Programme are:

- Origins of the section 75 statutory duties.
- Content of section 75 and schedule 9 and their implications for public authorities.
- Content of Equality Schemes.
- Policy Audit.
- Screening.
- Timetable.
- Data Management systems.
- Impact Assessments.
- Complaints.
- Worked Examples of Screening.