

**Northern Ireland Assembly
Parliament Buildings
Ballymiscaw
Stormont
BELFAST BT4 3XX**

**Ms Lisa King
Director of Policy
Equality Commission for Northern Ireland
Equality House
7-9 Shaftesbury Square
BELFAST BT2 7DP**

10 November 2010

Dear Lisa

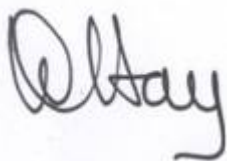
**Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and Section 49A of the Disability
Discrimination Order (DDO) 2006 – Annual Progress Report 2009– 2010**

On behalf of the Northern Ireland Assembly Commission, I am pleased to submit our Annual Progress Report for the 2009-10 period.

The Northern Ireland Assembly Commission recognise that significant work lies ahead to meet these obligations and I look forward to working with the Equality Commission to further progress the effective implementation of Section 75 and the DDO in the coming year.

If you wish to discuss any issues regarding the Annual Report please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely



**Mr William Hay MLA
Speaker**



**Mr Trevor Reaney
Clerk to the Assembly /Director General**

EQUALITY COMMISSION FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

Public Authority 2009 – 2010 Annual Progress Report on Section 75 of the NI Act 1998 and Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Order (DDO) 2006

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

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

Name of public authority (Enter details below)

Northern Ireland Assembly Commission

Equality Officer (Enter name and contact details below)

S75:

Tony Logue
Room 151
Parliament Buildings
Ballymiscaw
Stormont
Belfast
BT4 3XX

Tel: 028 90 521 930
Text Phone: 028 90 521 209
Email: tony.logue@niassembly.gov.uk

DDO (if different from above):

This document can be downloaded from our website and can be made available in a range of formats. To request an alternative format or hard copies, please contact:

Northern Ireland Assembly Commission Support and
Compliance Unit
Parliament Buildings
Ballymiscaw, Stormont
Belfast
BT4 3XX

Telephone: 028 9041 8377

Text phone: 028 9052 1209

Fax: 028 9052 1142

Email: equality@niassembly.gov.uk

Web: www.niassembly.gov.uk

S75 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?

The Assembly Commission continues to progress the Equality agenda through all areas of its business. This annual report records the activities and actions undertaken by the Commission in furtherance of its statutory obligations. It covers the period 1 April 2009 to 31 March 2010.

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

- **GOOD RELATIONS**

Consultation

The Commission's Good Relations Action Plan was approved on 21 January 2010 for consultation. This plan also contributes to the corporate objective 'to promote good relations' as stated in the Commission's 2008-2011 (Revised 2009) Secretariat Corporate Plan. A Good Relations consultation document was prepared and made available for distribution to the public on Monday 29 March 2010. The consultation period lasted for an 11 weeks until 4th June 2010 and was later extended by 4 weeks to allow organisations making a written submission to have their comments approved by their respective Boards of Directors.

Good Relations Progression

Good Relations progression covering the January to April 2010 period is recorded at 10.4.

Good Relations Internal Research Audit

A procurement process was initiated to appoint a provider to conduct an Internal Good Relations Audit (6.5).

- **TRAINING**

During the reporting period 626 staff undertook training in equality, disability, good relations and diversity training.

- **CONSULTATIONS**

Screening of Policies Consultation

A Screening of Policies consultation document was prepared and made available for distribution to the public on Monday 25 January 2010. The consultation period lasted for a 13 week period until 26 April 2010, and was later extended by 5 weeks to 24 May 2010 to allow a meeting to take place with a representative group. A report will be written and tabled at the September 2010 Assembly Commission Meeting for approval.

Independent Statutory Body Consultation

Work commenced on a screening document and public consultation paper on the establishment of an Independent Statutory Body to determine pay, pensions and financial support for Members of the Northern Ireland Assembly. It is expected that consultation will commence in June 2010.

- **SCREENING and EQIA**

Engagement EQIA

Engagement Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA): Consideration of available data for an Engagement EQIA was considered during this reporting period and consideration was given to the generation of data to supplement research.

Screening

The Commission's 'Guide for Witnesses appearing before Committees' policy was revised based on targeted consultation with disability groups and as a result was screened out.

The Assembly's Discipline Policy, Conduct Policy, Dignity at Work Policy and Grievance Policy has been subject to comprehensive review and consultation with Trade Union Side is ongoing. The revised policies have been through an initial equality screening exercise and this will be revisited once final versions have been agreed.

- **COMMUNICATIONS**

Assembly Website Redevelopment

Redevelopment of the Assembly's website was initiated during this reporting period in order to improve content, layout, accessibility and to improve communications with users. (For further detail see Information Provision at Section 7).

The Education Service is redeveloping its website in partnership with the Council for Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA). A number of joint meetings have been held between September 2009 and March 2010 in order to plan the content and layout of the new website.

Commission Equality Leaflets

The Commission produced and communicated two information leaflets for staff on equality, these were:

- Section 75 information leaflet for secretariat staff, and
- Equality Working Group information leaflet.

Commission Equality Working Group

The Commission's Equality Working Group (EWG) met during the reporting period where the implementation of the statutory duties was discussed.

Equality Manager Appointment

An Equality Manager was appointed in order to take forward work on the statutory duties and to work with staff across the Commission Directorates.

Assembly Commission and Senior Management Group Papers

All papers submitted to the Senior Management Group (SMG) and the Assembly Commission have been updated to include questions requiring comment to be made on equality and consultation implications.

Communications Strategy

A Draft Communications Strategy is being developed to identify audiences, messages and channels for Assembly information and news. This strategy is currently undergoing equality screening.

Events Office

The Commission's continued commitment towards Equality and Good Relations has also been demonstrated by its facilitation of events, seminars, conferences and tours on behalf of Members. During the reporting period a total of 48,796 people attended events which were facilitated by the Commission's Events Office.

NI Youth Assembly Panel

Towards a Northern Ireland Youth Assembly. During autumn 2009, informal meetings and workshops were held with a range of stakeholders including representatives of Section 75 groups to outline initial plans for the development of a youth assembly. Following feedback, plans were restructured to include a youth led approach and a longer development timescale. In early 2010, a youth panel of 30 young people aged 16-18 was created to work with the Assembly in developing a policy proposal for a youth assembly by March 2011.

Disability Advisory Group Meetings

The Equality Manager Chaired meetings with the Commission's Disability Advisory Group. This group has representatives from Disability Action, MENCAP, RNIB, RNID, Chest, Heart and Stroke Association, Cedar Foundation and Leonard Cheshire Disability. During the reporting period the group met on the 25 November 2009 and 23 March 2010. A further meeting is planned to take place on 23 June 2010.

Sustainable Development Strategy

The Commission developed its Sustainable Development Strategy during the reporting period (December 2009 –March 2010). The development and general content of the Strategy was communicated to staff, MLAs and external interested parties. In terms of social impact, the Strategy contains a Sustainable Workplace section, within which was a subsection on Equality and Good Relations.

Assembly Questions

The Assembly Commission referred to its statutory duties through a number of written and oral questions it has answered during this reporting period (5.19).

- **DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS**

Annual Disability Audit of Staff

An Annual Disability Survey of staff was conducted in October 2009. This indicated that 20 members of staff declared a disability which equates to 5.8% of all staff.

Article 55 Review for 2006-2008 and Annual Fair Employment Return

During the period, the Article 55 Review for 2006-2008, and the Annual Fair Employment Return (as at 1 January 2010) were completed. Advice was sought from the Equality Commission and affirmative action taken in relation to a recruitment scheme for posts within the Elementary job level. Similar consideration will be given when advertising future vacancies within the Management and Professional job group.

Commonwealth Conference

During the reporting period the Commission hosted a Commonwealth Conference. This involved hosting delegates from 32 countries. To assist in delivering the conference there was significant data collection and preparation to ensure that the diverse range of all delegates needs were met.

NI Assembly and Business Trust (NIABT)

Requests were made to the Commission's research services to give a preliminary profile on current Business Trust members. The intention was to give an overview of the Trust companies to identify gaps in the geographical spread; company size and gender representation at the Trust.

Assembly Road shows

Specific Section 75 issues were identified at each event via questionnaires. Staff proactively targeted attendees to initiate dialogue on access to Parliament Buildings and participation in events. Road shows were held in all 18 constituencies across Northern Ireland.

Polish Memorial

Following the death of the Polish President and members of the Government, the Commission accessed specialist information and guidance from representatives of the Polish Community to deliver a Memorial Service at Parliament Buildings.

Public Attitudes Survey

The Engagement Directorate commissioned a public attitudes survey to cover the spectrum of NI society, as fully as possible within resource constraints, in order to establish the views of NI citizens on the work of the Assembly and their levels of interest in it, and to gain a better understanding of the main sources of public information on the work of the Assembly which are used by NI citizens. The survey considered demographic and equality characteristics such as age, gender, marital status, religion, racial group, disability, dependents, political opinion, sexual orientation, and socio-economic group/class.

Public Feedback Sheet

A public feedback sheet was produced and made available to all visitors in order to elicit data on the provision of services, access and their overall visitor experience.

- **INFORMATION PROVISION, ACCESS TO INFORMATION AND SERVICES**

Software/hardware access

The IS Office continues to supply specialist hardware and software to staff that require it.

Access to Facilities/Services

A programme of work has been undertaken by the Facilities Directorate/Office of the Keeper over the reporting period to improve access to services (7.3)

A video link was introduced by the Education Service Outreach Programme in order to improve access to services (7.10)

Installation of Access Ramps

The Commission's Facilities Directorate has presented a draft report to the Assembly Commission in relation to the installation of access ramps at the front entrance to Parliament Buildings (7.5).

Provision of Disabled Toilet/Changing Facility

The Commission's Facilities Directorate will be presenting a paper to the Assembly Commission in relation to the provision of a dedicated disabled toilet/changing facility on the Ground floor of Parliament Buildings (7.6).

Mystery Shopper

A visitor, who is a wheelchair user, visited Carmel Hannah, MLA during the reporting period with the BBC and was filmed giving her thoughts on access in Parliament Buildings.

Inter-parliamentary Equality Group

The Equality Manager represents the Assembly Commission on the Inter-parliamentary Equality Group. This group has representatives from the Scottish Parliament, Welsh Assembly and Westminster and met during the reporting period to discuss equality issues and share information.

Provision of Information in Accessible Formats

The Commission Communications Department undertook a range of work to improve access to services including provision of information in accessible formats (7.9).

Introduction of Education Service Outreach programme to areas of low uptake of service.

In January 2010, the Education Service analysed the geographic location of current participants in the education programme (from April 2009 – March 2010, 33 groups from Western Education Library Board compared with 103 from Southern Education Library Board). In addition, over 50 adults working in the education sector completed a questionnaire listing their impediments to participation in the education programme.

Information Day for Teachers

The Education Service organised an information day for A Level teachers in October 2009. For the first time, this event was a joint initiative between the BBC, Westminster Education Service and the Northern Ireland Assembly Education Service. All A Level Politics teachers were invited to hear how they could avail of education programmes and how they could prepare students for the BBC School Question Time programme.

Resources

DVDs.

A new DVD resource was produced in March 2010. The DVD titled 'A Snapshot of Democracy' is a free resource aimed at 14-18 years. In order to promote accessibility the DVD has a subtitle option and audio description.

DVD (virtual tour) developed to deliver a tour where visitors cannot physically come to the building. It is available a number of versions including sign language, closed captions and audio descriptions. There are plans to extend this to cover a number of languages.

Hardcopy. A new educational comic titled the 'NI School Assembly' was launched in February 2010. This product is aimed at 11-16 yrs and explains how the Assembly works and the voting system.

Tours and Functions

Tours: A pre tour form has been developed to capture the requirements of groups prior to their arrival.

Functions: Pre-planning meetings are held to capture the requirements of the groups prior to their arrival.

- **CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT**

Office of the Speaker Events

This year's Christmas Reception at Parliament Buildings was dedicated to acknowledging the excellent work carried out by so many organisations and volunteers in the field of cancer care across Northern Ireland. Approximately 300 people attended.

The contribution of women to the life of Northern Ireland was the theme for this year's St Patrick's Day reception at Parliament Buildings. The annual event, which was hosted by the Speaker of the Assembly, Mr William Hay, MLA, took place on Saturday 13 March 2010. Approximately 300 people attended.

Education Service Visitors

Education visitors for the 1st January 2009 – January 2010 period was 14,521. During this reporting period the Education Service has expanded from 2 Education Officers to 5 in the last 10 months. There are currently two dedicated Education rooms which can hold 50 and 25 people respectively. The provision of another room in September 2010 will increase capacity by a further 25 visitors.

The Education Service developed links with Hydebank Wood, young offenders' centre and prison. In February 2010 the Education Service met with the Governor of Hydebank Prison. The outcome of this meeting led to two visits to the Prison to deliver the Education Programme to groups of young men and women.

Education Service participants were consulted on participation in sport for Culture, Arts and Leisure (CAL) Committee report. The findings of this research were presented to the Culture, Arts & Leisure Committee in March 2010.

Youth Assembly

During the reporting period two short films were posted on you-tube and facebook relating to the Assembly Youth Panel. The first film involved the two Co-Chairs of the Youth Panel detailing their experience to date and why young people should become involved. The second film followed Darren O'Reilly, member of NI Assembly Youth Panel as he spent the day shadowing the Minister for Regional Development, Conor Murphy MP, MLA.

- **DISABILITY DUTIES**

During the reporting period 15 disability measures were fully achieved and 6 were partly achieved.

- 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?

Equality of Opportunity Planned initiatives April 2010 – March 2011	
1	Review of current Equality and Good Relations Training in line with updated Section 75 guidance and the production of a new Equality Scheme
2	Provision of a paper to the Senior Management Group to continue mainstreaming Equality and Good Relations issues within and throughout the Commission
3	To continue to provide assistance and support to Directorates in relation to screening, equality impact assessments, policy development and implementation
4	To continue to hold Disability Advisory Group Meetings
5	To prepare an annual disability staff audit for the 2010 period
6	To prepare a new Equality Scheme, monitoring strategy and action plan
7	To prepare a new three-year Disability Action Plan for the 2011-2014 period
8	To continue to deliver good relations across the Commission Directorates
9	To continue a programme of Equality Impact Assessments
10	To produce an Equality Employment Plan for Assembly Commission approval
11	To produce a Wellbeing Strategy for Assembly Commission approval
12	To hold a Speakers Event to coincide with the 2010 International Day of People with Disabilities which aims to promote an understanding of disability issues and the rights of persons with disabilities; recognises the gains to be derived from the integration of persons with disabilities in every aspect of the political, social, economic and cultural life of their communities
13	To procure Disability Action, RNIB and RNID to conduct disability audits of Parliament Buildings
14	To produce tactile maps and signage within Parliament Buildings to enhance the visitor experience for those who are blind and visually impaired
15	To review Assembly tours to ensure accessibility for all groups and that all visitors have a positive and inclusive experience
16	To redesign the Assembly website
17	To develop an Events policy
18	To develop a Crafter's policy
19	To develop a staff Uniform Policy
20	To develop an Accessible Information Strategy
21	To develop a Voluntary and Community Sector Engagement Policy
22	To hold a teacher's 2 day awareness conference in line with the citizenship educational programme
23	To develop a permanent Assembly Exhibition in Parliament Buildings. The exhibition will draw together the developments of the past decade to demonstrate how the Northern Ireland Assembly has reached its current shape. It will focus on the milestones during that political journey and illustrate its current functions and

	successes. It will show how the Northern Ireland Assembly makes laws, how it examines the work of departments through Committees and how it affects the people of Northern Ireland
24	To table a paper to the Assembly Commission in relation to the installation of access ramps at the front entrance to Parliament Buildings. Detailed plans and costs will be presented to the Commission in autumn 2010 to assist them in the decision making process. This scheme, if approved, will provide ramps from the east and west sides at the front of the building and will allow all visitors access via the front entrance
25	To table a paper to the Assembly Commission in relation to the provision of a dedicated disabled toilet/changing facility on the Ground floor of Parliament Buildings
26	To produce a range of educational material which is aimed at explaining the work of the Assembly and highlights ways that everyone can actively engage with democracy
27	Constituency days: To deliver a programme of education days for constituency staff. This programme will provide information to constituency staff that supports the work of their MLA
28	Vital Links: Delivery by March 2011. A programme of training for the third sector, which will be managed and delivered by NICVA with the assistance of the Northern Ireland Assembly. The programme will give information on how the Assembly works, how groups and individuals can have their voices heard and how the Third sector can engage meaningfully with the Assembly. The Assembly's role is to deliver 2 central components to support the programme
29	Balmoral Show: To deliver a programme of 11 events over the 3 day period of the Balmoral Show. The events will include open house roadshows where members of the public put questions to the Agriculture Committee panel; one to one sessions with MLAs in the Public Accounts Committee; a session with the Culture, Arts and Leisure Committee on townlands names and local identity; a joint session with the Regional Development Committee and the Committee for the Environment which will examine road safety; a question and answer session with MEPS on the impact of Europe on Northern Ireland life and business; a session on the opportunities for young people which will be hosted by the Committee for Employment and Learning; a business breakfast hosted by the Committee for Enterprise, Trade and Investment Committee, in conjunction with the Assembly and Business Trust, will discuss the state of the business sector with show traders and a Youth Assembly
30	To continue Hub Events: The Outreach programme targets specific groups and locations that have not visited Parliament Buildings or taken part in Assembly activities. The Education Unit focuses on school groups in particular towns while the community outreach strand of External Liaison Unit meets with community organisations, youth groups, church groups etc. The aim is to increase knowledge of the work of the Assembly and encourage participation in issues which affects individuals. This may include input from local MLAs, depending on availability, and should increase understanding of the work of Northern Ireland Assembly
31	Northern Ireland Assembly and Business Trust: The Assembly and Business Trust will deliver a series of information sessions to groups. Targeted groups include

	women and young people with the intention of recruiting members to the Trust. A number of events throughout the year will be held in Northern Ireland. The first planned event will be in Derry/Londonderry in the autumn
32	To use 'new social media' to engage with the people of NI and hear their views on the Assembly and political issues

Good Relations Planned Initiatives May 2010 – March 2011	
1	Establish a forum to address issues arising from internal Good Relations Research Audit
2	Develop a Good Relations Policy
3	Develop opportunities for shared learning and space e.g. exhibitions/displays/education/youth assembly
4	Explore the scope to review and develop the approach to data collection, assessment and monitoring of the good relations duty across the NIAC
5	Identify through an external good relations audit, and consultation with relevant groups, if barriers exist or have been encountered in accessing services
6	To continue implementation of the NIAC equality scheme to ensure employees understand their obligations concerning equality and good relations
7	Display of Speaker's gifts within public areas in Parliament Buildings
8	Consult stakeholders on their requirements by having feedback processes in place for all Engagement activities; conducting a Members Survey; and a programme of constituency visits
9	Use 'new social media' to engage with the people of NI and hear their views on the Assembly and political issues
10	Consider opportunities for the Assembly Bursary Programme to assist in the development of Assembly policies
11	Consider a subsidised inward travel scheme
12	A teacher's 2 day awareness conference in line with the citizenship educational programme
13	Implement a Youth Assembly
14	Develop an Assembly Exhibition
15	Hold Assembly Road Shows
16	Develop a gift shop policy for the sale of goods under the auspice of 'crafters'
17	Provision of simultaneous interpreting service from Irish and Ulster Scots to English to the Speaker and Clerks at Table
18	Provision of a parliamentary reporting service in Irish and Ulster Scots
19	Miscellaneous translation and editorial services in respect of Irish
20	Develop an Admissions Policy for Parliament Buildings
21	Establishment of an Arts Advisory Group on the Display of Art in Parliament Buildings
22	Identify external groups to participate in Speaker's events within Parliament Buildings
23	Actively encourage internal and external dialogue to promote equality of opportunity

	and good relations
24	Organise a good relations conference with external stakeholders to establish opportunities for learning and actions for the removal or minimising of barriers
25	Establish a cross party good relations panel
26	Identify best practice from other sources and adopt practice following consultation with Section 75 groups and internal stakeholders
27	To consider and action the recommendations arising from an internal Good Relations Audit
28	To develop and table a Language Policy at the September 2010 Commission meeting

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

	Outline change in policy or practice which have resulted in outcomes	Tick if result of EQIA
Persons of different religious belief	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good Relations Action Plan implemented • Article 55 and Fair Employment Returns completed – affirmative action taken 	
Persons of different political opinion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Attitudes Survey completed 	
Persons of different racial groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes implemented arising from Guide for Witnesses Appearing before Committees Policy • Provision of translation in the Assembly Chamber from Irish and Ulster Scots to English to the Speaker and Clerks at the Table • Polish Memorial Event held • Draft Language Policy developed and consultation held with Parties 	
Persons of different age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth Panel established • Production of DVD's and Comics targeting set age groups • Educational website re-development initiated • Consultations on participation in sport held with education groups as part of Culture, Arts and Leisure Committee Report • Evidence taken by Youth Panel as part of Community Relations Week • Educational Website re-development 	

Persons with different marital status	•	
Persons of different sexual orientation	•	
Men and women generally	• NIABT targeting under-representation in gender	
Persons with and without a disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual staff disability audit completed • Changes implemented arising from Guide for Witnesses Appearing before Committees Policy • Disability Advisory Group meetings held and outcomes put in place • Changes to physical access made to Parliament Buildings • Provision of information in accessible formats made • Adjustments made to Tours • Assembly Website redevelopment initiated 	
Persons with and without dependants	•	

- Title/s of EQIAs referenced:

N/A

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 2008-09

Please refer to Appendix 1 for details of the Northern Ireland Assembly Secretariat Business Plan 2009/2011 performance against objectives in relation to Equality and Good Relations as at 31 March 2010.

Section 2: Screening

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

Title of policy subject to screening	Was the <u>F</u>ull Screening Report or the <u>R</u>esult of initial screening issued for consultation? <i>Please enter <u>F</u> or <u>R</u></i>	Was initial screening decision changed following consultation? <u>Y</u>es/<u>N</u>o	Is policy being subject to EQIA? <u>Y</u>es/<u>N</u>o? If yes indicate year for assessment.
Good Relations Action Plan	R	No	Yes. Commence June 2010.
Screening Exercise	R	No	No
Guide for Witnesses Appearing before Committees	R	No	No

Section 3: Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA)

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

EQIA Timetable – April 2009 - March 2010

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

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

N/A

Ongoing EQIA Monitoring Activities April 2009- March 2010

Title of EQIA subject to Stage 7 monitoring	Indicate if differential impacts previously identified have reduced or increased	Indicate if adverse impacts previously identified have reduced or increased
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:
N/A

2010-11 EQIA Time-table

Title of EQIAs due to be commenced during April 2010 – March 2011	Existing or New policy?	Please indicate expected timescale of Decision Making stage i.e. Stage 6
Engagement Strategy	Existing	February 2011
Good Relations	New	May 2011
Reward/Terms and Conditions	Existing	July 2011
Recruitment	Existing	December 2011
Procurement	Existing	March 2012

Section 4: Training

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

4.1 The number of employees trained from 1 April 2009 to 31 March 2010 is detailed below:

Course Title	Number trained
Equality and Disability Awareness Training (EDA)	228
Frontline Equality and Disability Awareness Training (EDA)	28
Diversity Awareness Training	335
Screening Training	19
Equality Impact Assessment Training	14
Equality and Good Relations Trainers Programme	2

4.2 Example of conclusions from training evaluations

Course Title	Specification	Evaluation Conclusions
<p>Equality and Disability Awareness Training (EDA)</p>	<p>Duration: Half Day Suitability: All Staff Course Type: Mandatory</p> <p>Purpose: To enhance understanding of the benefits of Section 75 and of the Disability Legislation and of how it is applied in practice;</p> <p>To provide a greater understanding of what promoting equality of opportunity, good relations and complying with the disability legislation means for the NIAC and for staff.</p>	<p>The majority of participants stated that the training had given them an enhanced understanding of how Section 75 and the new regulations in terms of Disability will be applied in practice and of the implications of the legislation for the NIAC staff.</p> <p>A number of other participants indicated that they would have liked more discussion around some of the NIAC policies and the complexities of implementing Section 75. In addition staff indicated that they would have liked to have looked specifically at issues relating to NIAC policies. These issues will however be addressed in the sessions on screening and conducting Equality Impact Assessments.</p>
<p>Frontline Equality and Disability Awareness Training (EDA)</p>	<p>Duration: One Day Suitability: Security/Doorkeeping/Events and Committee staff Course Type: General</p> <p>Purpose: To increase awareness and improve practical techniques of staff dealing closely with the public.</p>	<p>Frontline employees rated the relevance of the concepts covered on the course as either excellent or good. The participants were positive about the time allocation given to the course. As this course was over one day there was much more opportunity for group discussion and to encourage participants to more openly discuss some of the complex issues in relation to Section 75 and how they related to their role in the NIAC.</p> <p><i>Learning Points</i></p> <p>The participants felt that the sessions on the use of appropriate language and etiquette were particularly helpful.</p> <p>Staff also indicated that they now</p>

		<p>realised that small practical steps can make a big difference for people with disabilities. In general the participants indicated that following the sessions they would have more confidence in their dealings with people with disabilities.</p> <p>Some staff indicated that the debates around sensitive issues such as sectarianism helped them to appreciate the importance of being more sensitive to the beliefs of other staff and visitors and of the importance of respecting the diversity of others.</p> <p>Others indicated that the session on values was useful in reinforcing the importance of acting with integrity, professionalism and taking accountability for your actions.</p>
<p>Diversity Awareness Training</p>	<p>Duration: Half Day Suitability: All Staff Course Type: Mandatory</p> <p>Purpose: To increase staff awareness of the cultural, social and religious issues surrounding Diversity in the workplace. This course is designed to support the NIAC's Dignity at Work policy.</p>	<p>"I thought this course was excellent. I also thought it was a really good idea to focus on the Dignity at Work Policy. Excellent focus on corporate values also."</p> <p>"This course reminded me of my responsibilities as a line manager and an employee of the Assembly. I would not change the way the course was delivered as I found it very effective."</p>
<p>Screening Training</p>	<p>Duration: Half Day Suitability: Equality Working Group Course Type: Mandatory</p> <p>Purpose: This practical workshop has been designed for Assembly staff on what will be involved in screening policy. The workshop will provide an overview of Section 75 and the Disability Legislation and highlight the business case for integrating equality into decision making. The workshop will provide an opportunity</p>	<p>"A very practical session".</p> <p>"I have a better understanding of this topic and reference material I can refer to".</p> <p>"A very useful and practical explanation of the process".</p>

	<p>for participants to familiarise themselves with the screening process and how it will be applied by the N.I. Assembly. Practical examples will be given on how screening is applied to the policy making process and to some of the problems and pitfalls.</p> <p>To provide an overview of the legislation and business case for integrating equality into decision making;</p> <p>To familiarise participants with the screening process and how it is applied in practice;</p> <p>To ensure participants are aware of the actions they will need to implement when screening policy.</p>	
<p>Equality Impact Assessment Training</p>	<p>Duration: Half Day Suitability: Equality Working Group Course Type: Mandatory</p> <p>Purpose: To familiarise participants with the stages in the Equality Impact Assessment process and how it is applied in practice;</p> <p>To ensure participants are aware of the actions they will need to implement when conducting an Equality Impact Assessment;</p> <p>To ensure participants have a better understanding of how to draft an Equality Impact Assessment and consultation report.</p>	<p>“I honestly feel as if the light has been turned on. More content that I know the process”.</p> <p>“Discussion was very good; wish it could have been longer”.</p>

4.3 The Commission is currently recruiting for Usher and Security staff. When appointed these staffs will receive tailored training which will include equality, good relations and disability training. Training in relation to disability will be delivered by disability groups. This training will commence July 2010.

Section 5: Communication

- Please outline how the authority communicated progress on delivery of the Section 75 Duties during the year and evidence of the impact/success of such activities.
- 5.1 Communication of progress on the delivery of the duties takes the form of management reports (internal) and the publication of the annual progress report. In addition the following actions have taken place during this reporting period:
- 5.2 During this reporting period the Commission produced two information leaflets for staff on equality, these were:
- Section 75 information leaflet for secretariat staff and
 - Equality Working Group information leaflet.

Both publications were issued to all staff and placed on the Commission intranet and now also form part of the induction programme for new staff.

- 5.3 The Commission Equality Working Group (EWG) meets on a quarterly basis where the implementation of the statutory duties are discussed.

This group was established in order to take forward equality across the Secretariat. The Equality Working Group (EWG) has brought together nominees from all Directorates within the Assembly to help mainstream equality within the organisation and to ensure a coordinated approach to the equality agenda. The EWG has been established to coordinate the Assembly's response to the obligations set out in Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and Section 49 of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 as amended by Article 5 of the Disability Discrimination (NI) Order 2006. In so doing the group:

- Assists in the development of common indicators to enable the Assembly Secretariat to monitor its compliance with legal obligations under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998;
- Contributes to guidance for Directorates and Business Areas in relation to the implementation of the Equality Scheme as approved by the Assembly Commission;
- Acts as a forum for discussion of issues relating to compliance with Section 75 responsibilities and the Disability Action Plan;
- Contributes to the coordinated implementation and mainstreaming of Section 75 responsibilities and the Disability Action Plan;

In addition members of the Group:

- are responsible for coordinating a Policy Audit in respect of all policies (written, unwritten and any new impending policies) in their Directorate/Business Area;
- are responsible for undertaking appropriate screening of all NI Assembly policies and procedures in their Directorate/Business Area;

- co-ordinate the implementation of the Disability Action Plan in their Directorate/Business Area;
- provide a gateway for disseminating information throughout their Directorate/Business Area; and
- assist the Equality Manager in the Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) process on policies which have been proposed as appropriate for an EQIA in the screening process as relevant in their Directorate/Business Area.

5.4 The Commission's internet and intranet includes a section devoted to equality which communicates information on:

- the statutory duties including our equality scheme
- the Commission's Disability Action Plan 2008-2011 including the original consultation reports
- the Commission Equality Working Group including their Terms of Reference, membership and information leaflets
- information and minutes on the Commission's External Disability Advisory Group which is made up of a range of organisations representing those with disabilities.
- annual progress reports
- consultations including screening, EQIA and good relations

5.5 The Commission continues to promote equality of opportunity and good relations in its Corporate Business Plan, through which performance against objectives is monitored on a quarterly basis and communicated to all Directorates.

5.6 An Equality Manager has been appointed in order to take forward work on the statutory duties. This post is based within the Clerk/Director General's Office to ensure that equality is mainstreamed into all Directorates and that oversight of policies and activities is enabled.

5.7 At the Assembly Commission and the Senior Management Group (SMG) meetings, 'cover papers' relating to any tabled issues now include questions requiring comment to be made on any equality and consultation implications. This is to ensure that equality is mainstreamed and has been considered in any matters tabled at meetings.

5.8 The Equality Manager and Head of Commission Support and Compliance report and communicate on progress on equality and good relations and present papers at both Senior Management Group (SMG) meetings and Assembly Commission meetings. During the reporting period the Equality Manger and Head of Commission Support and Compliance attended 10 SMG meetings and 5 Assembly Commission meetings where papers were tabled in relation to progressing equality and good relations.

5.9 A Draft Communications Strategy is being developed to identify audiences, messages and channels for Assembly information and news. This strategy is currently undergoing equality screening.

- 5.10 We maintain communication with our consultees including targeted stakeholders in the early stages of development of new policies. We conducted two consultation exercises during the reporting period.
- A Screening of Policies consultation document was prepared and made available for distribution to the public on Monday 25 January 2010. The consultation period lasted for a 13 week period until 26 April 2010, and was later extended by 5 weeks to 24 May 2010 to allow a meeting to take place with a representative group. A report will be written and tabled at the September 2010 Assembly Commission Meeting for approval.
 - A Good Relations consultation document and Action Plan was prepared and circulated to our consultees and the public on 29 March 2010. The consultation period concluded on 4 June 2010 but was later extended until 2 July 2010 to allow some organisations to have their submissions ratified by their Boards. A results paper will be written and tabled at the September 2010 Assembly Commission Meeting for approval.
 - Work commenced on a screening document and public consultation paper on the establishment of an Independent Statutory Body to determine pay, pensions and financial support for Members of the Northern Ireland Assembly. It is expected that consultation will commence in June 2010.
- 5.11 Redevelopment of the Assembly's website was initiated during this reporting period in order to improve content, layout, accessibility and to improve communications with users. (For further detail see Information Provision at Section 7).
- 5.12 The Commission's continued commitment towards Equality and Good Relations has also been demonstrated by its facilitation of events, seminars, conferences and tours on behalf of Members. During the reporting period a total of 48,796 people attended events which were facilitated by the Commission's Events Office. This enabled communication and engagement to take place. A variety of groups attended Parliament Buildings, many of which were organisations which come under Section 75 categories.
- 5.13 Towards a Northern Ireland Youth Assembly. During autumn 2009, informal meetings and workshops were held with a range of stakeholders including representatives of Section 75 groups to outline initial plans for the development of a youth assembly.

Following feedback, plans were restructured to include a youth led approach and a longer development timescale. In early 2010, a youth panel of 30 young people aged 16-18 was created to work with the Assembly in developing a policy proposal for a youth assembly by March 2011. The recruitment process was designed with assistance from a number of organisations including the Equality Commission, the Commission for Children and Young People and representatives from disability groups.

A launch was hosted by the Speaker at Parliament Buildings on 26 January 2010 and the opportunity for young people to nominate themselves for Youth Panel membership was widely advertised on Facebook, local radio, by Bluetooth, and by mail / email to schools, youth organizations and existing contacts representing Section 75 groups.

Two hundred and fifty-nine nominations were received. Of these one hundred were randomly chosen to attend a day long peer selection event in Belfast on 12 March 2010. Following a series of workshops, nominees elected 25 young people to the Panel. Five seats were reserved for people with a disability who were appointed based the election results. The Panel met for the first time at a residential from 26-28 March 2010 at the Derrynoid Centre. Activities included training, team building and forward planning. (For further detail see Consultation and Engagement at Section 9).

- 5.14 The Equality Manager Chaired meetings with the Commission's Disability Advisory Group. This group has representatives from Disability Action, MENCAP, RNIB, RNID, Chest, Heart and Stroke Association, Cedar Foundation and Leonard Cheshire Disability. Quarterly meetings with the Advisory Group enable any plans and policies to be discussed and communication is maintained with groups in the intervening periods between meetings. During the reporting period the group met on the 25 November 2009 and 23 March 2010. A further meeting is planned to take place on 23 June 2010.
- 5.15 A Guide for Witnesses Appearing before Committees. This guide provides information and advice that will be of benefit to witnesses appearing before committees of the Northern Ireland Assembly. Following consultation with the Disability Advisory Group, the Guide for Witnesses appearing before Assembly Committees has been revised to ensure that it fully reflects requirements under the Disability Discrimination Act. It now more accurately reflects and informs witnesses of the adjustments that can be made and the additional services that are available to people with disabilities. The policy was revised and screened out.

Opportunities have also been provided for all sections of the community to contribute to policy development and legislative scrutiny processes through the advertisement of Committee inquiries and the Committee stage of Bills in each of the main daily newspapers.

- 5.16 During the reporting period the Equality Manager attended the DCAL Interdepartmental Charter Implementation Group (ICIG) of which the Assembly Commission is a member. The ICIG was set up to meet the obligations of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages. DCAL Chair and supply the secretariat support to meetings of the ICIG which is attended by representatives of all Northern Ireland Departments also from all Whitehall Departments that operate in Northern Ireland.

The terms of reference for Interdepartmental Charter Implementation Group are:

- To oversee and monitor the implementation of the Charter by Government Departments in Northern Ireland
- To prepare periodic reports for the Committee of Experts (COMEX) of the Council of Europe Council of Ministers
- To develop guidance to Northern Ireland Departments (and Whitehall Departments that operate in Northern Ireland) as necessary
- To advise on resource implications

The Commission has prepared a draft Language policy. Formal responses, to the draft Policy were invited from the Political parties. The Assembly Commission will give further consideration to the draft Policy, in light of formal submissions from the Parties, following the 2010 summer recess.

- 5.17 The Commission developed its Sustainable Development Strategy during the reporting period (December 2009 –March 2010).

The development and general content of the Strategy was communicated to staff, MLAs and external interested parties.

The Strategy sets out the Commission's aspirations to operate more sustainably, thereby improving on how it considers the economic, environmental and social impacts of its decision making and every activity.

In terms of social impact, the Strategy contains a Sustainable Workplace section, within which was a subsection on Equality and Good Relations.

By including Equality and Good Relations within the Strategy, the Commission recognises the positive social impact in going beyond compliance of its Section 75 duties and how it contributes to improving its wider sustainable development performance.

- 5.18 Communication through Social media (Facebook, Twitter, U-Tube and Flickr) is now firmly embedded as communication channels. For example Twitter now has 1,626 followers, Facebook - 445 fans, YouTube - 258 videos with 15,909 views, 50 subscribers to the channel and Flickr - 574 pictures shared and 99,899 views.

5.19 The Assembly Commission has referred to its statutory duties through a number of written and oral questions it has answered during this reporting period.

	Written Questions
Mr P Butler (Lagan Valley) 13/11/09	To ask the Assembly Commission how many Equality Impact Assessments have been carried out by or on behalf of the Commission over the last three years. (AQW 2770/10)
Mr B McElduff (West Tyrone) 29-01-10	To ask the Assembly Commission if he will introduce head-set equipment to facilitate a simultaneous translation system for Irish in the Assembly chamber for all members. (AQW 4417/10)
Mr J Dallat (East Londonderry) 15/02/2010	To ask the Assembly Commission to detail the number of occasions on which (i) the Union flag; (ii) the European Union flag; (iii) the Assembly flag; and (iv) the Irish Tricolour were flown on Parliament Buildings, in each of the last three years (AQW 4765/10)
Mr D McKay (North Antrim) 18/02/10	To ask the Assembly Commission to list the flags that is in the possession of the Assembly. (AQW 4921/10)
Mr D McKay (North Antrim) 18/02/10	To ask the Assembly Commission how much the Assembly has spent on flags in its possession since 1998. (AQW 4922/10)
Mr D McKay (North Antrim) 18/02/10	To ask the Assembly Commission to list the number of statues of (i) Unionist politicians; and (ii) Nationalist/Republican politicians there are within Parliament Buildings and the Assembly grounds. (AQW 4923/10)
Mr P Butler (Lagan Valley) 15/06/10	To ask the Assembly Commission to outline the procedures followed in relation to the flying of flags on Parliament Buildings on designated days of the year. (AQW 7728/10)

Mr D McKay (North Antrim) 16/06/2010	To ask the Assembly Commission whether it has carried out any research into the impact, on people from the nationalist community visiting the Assembly, of flying the Union Jack at Parliament Buildings. (AQW 7785/10)
Mr M Storey (North Antrim) 24/06/2010	To ask the Assembly Commission what plans there are to mark the 70th anniversary of the death of Lord Craigavon in November 2010; and whether the anniversary will be used as an opportunity to promote information relating to his tomb to the general public. (AQW 8016/10)
Mr B McElduff (West Tyrone) 1/07/ 2010	To ask the Assembly Commission whether the planning group of the Assembly's Youth Council is representative on geographic and constituency grounds; and if the location of future meetings of the Youth Council will be rotated geographically. (AQW 8309/10)
Mrs Naomi Long 29/09/2009	To ask the Assembly Commission to provide an update on its plans for a youth Assembly ; and (i) how it envisaged it will function; and (ii) its planned role and remit. (AQW 1050/10)
Mr Jim Shannon 10/11/2009	To ask the Assembly Commission if Hansard is translated into Irish, and if so, at what cost per publication. (AQW 2676/10)
Mr A Ross (East Antrim) 1/072010	To ask the Assembly Commission how many school groups have visited Parliament Buildings in each of the last 24 months. (AQW 8265/10)
	Oral Questions
Ms Jennifer McCann 24/09/2009	To ask the Assembly Commission what plans it has to provide bi-lingual signage both inside and outside Parliament Buildings (AQO 186/10)
Mr Francie Brolly 21/04/2009	To ask the Assembly Commission what plans it has to provide an Irish Language version of the Assembly's website and its other publications. (AQO 2648/10)

Mr Raymond McCartney 21/04/2009	To ask the Assembly Commission what steps it is taking to ensure that emblems and symbols, inside and outside Parliament Buildings, reflect the culture and ethos of both traditions. (AQO 2649/09)
Mr D McKay 24/04/2010	To ask the Assembly Commission what discussions it has had with Disability organisations to ensure that facilities and services available within Parliament Buildings and its precincts and accessible to everyone. (AQO 1225/10)

Section 6: Data Collection & Analysis

- Please outline any systems that were established during the year to supplement available statistical and qualitative research or any research undertaken/commissioned to obtain information on the needs and experiences of individuals from the nine categories covered by Section 75, including the needs and experiences of people with multiple identities.
- 6.1 The Secretariat holds information which is used in the development and monitoring of the Commission's Corporate Plan.
 - 6.2 Each Directorate conducts appropriate research related to their own requirements.
 - 6.3 An Annual Disability Survey of staff was conducted in October 2009. This indicated that 20 members of staff declared a disability which equates to 5.8% of all staff.
 - 6.4 During the period, the Article 55 Review for 2006-2008, and the Annual Fair Employment Return (as at 1 January 2010) were completed. Key findings were presented to the Secretariat Management Group and indicate that Protestants are under-represented in the Management and Professional job group when compared to the community composition of economically active persons aged 16-64 within Northern Ireland. Roman Catholics are under-represented in the Elementary job group when compared to the community composition of economically active persons aged 16-64 within the Belfast Travel to Work Area (TTWA). Advice was sought from the Equality Commission and affirmative action taken in relation to a recruitment scheme for posts within the Elementary job level. Similar consideration will be given when advertising future vacancies within the Management and Professional job group.
 - 6.5 A procurement process was initiated to appoint a provider to conduct an Internal Good Relations Audit. The purpose of this audit will be to elicit data and information from staff and Members in relation to Good Relations issues and will help us to develop a clear picture of the current position on good relations within the Assembly.
 - 6.6 Facebook and Twitter are now used to gather data and views on consultations.
 - 6.7 Commonwealth Conference: During the reporting period the Commission hosted a Commonwealth Conference. This involved hosting delegates from 32 countries. To assist in delivering the conference there was significant data collection and preparation to ensure that the diverse range of all delegates needs were met. This included dietary requirements, both personal and for religious observations; space and appropriate time for worship and translations.

- 6.8 NI Assembly and Business Trust (NIABT). Requests were made to the Commission's research services to give a preliminary profile on current Business Trust members. The intention was to give an overview of the Trust companies to identify gaps in the geographical spread; company size and gender representation at the Trust.
- 6.9 Assembly Road shows: Specific Section 75 issues were identified at each event via questionnaires. Staff proactively targeted attendees to initiate dialogue on access to Parliament Buildings and participation in events.
- 6.10 Polish Memorial. Following the death of the Polish President and members of the Government, the Commission accessed specialist information and guidance from representatives of the Polish Community to deliver a Memorial Service at Parliament Buildings. Specific advice was sought on the appropriate tone and content of the event, input on cultural concerns to meet the needs of attendees, and other useful advice.
- 6.10 Central Support Unit: The Engagement Directorate commissioned a public attitudes survey to cover the spectrum of NI society, as fully as possible within resource constraints, in order to establish the views of NI citizens on the work of the Assembly and their levels of interest in it, and to gain a better understanding of the main sources of public information on the work of the Assembly which are used by NI citizens.

The survey recognized that general political awareness, knowledge of the work of the Assembly, and exploitation of sources of political information can be skewed by demographic characteristics, and so considered demographic and equality characteristics such as age, gender, marital status, religion, racial group, disability, dependents, political opinion, sexual orientation, and socio-economic group/class.

- 6.11 Engagement Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA): Consideration of available data for an Engagement EQIA was considered during this reporting period and consideration was given to the generation of data to supplement this research.
- 6.12 A public feedback sheet was produced and made available to all visitors. This sheet seeks to elicit data and information from visitors on the provision of services, their overall experience of visiting Parliament Buildings and access to services.

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

- 6.13 The Commission will be developing a Monitoring Strategy and will make use of the Equality Commission's Monitoring Guide. During this reporting period a paper on monitoring was submitted to the SMG and a further paper will be presented to

the Assembly Commission. A working knowledge of the guidance is maintained by Commission researchers responsible for data collection and analysis.

Section 7: Information Provision, Access to Information and Services

- Please provide details of any initiatives/steps taken during the year, including take up, to improve access to services including provision of information in accessible formats.
- 7.1 The Commission is committed to providing information in alternative formats as stated in its Equality Scheme. Arrangements are in place to produce work in alternative formats as required.
- 7.2 The IS Office continues to supply specialist hardware and software to staff that require it. Examples include voice dictation software, large screens and software to assist those with Dyslexia. For those software applications developed internally for use within the Assembly and by others, reporting systems include options to produce large print versions of documents and options to change the standard font sizes on interactive screens
- 7.3 A programme of work has been undertaken by the Facilities Directorate/Office of the Keeper over the reporting period to improve access to services. This included:
- Induction loops fitted in Room 21, The Members' Reading Committee Room, The Commonwealth Committee Room, the Senate Chamber and the 2 Education Suites.
 - Videoconferencing was installed in the Members' Reading Committee Room to allow for greater access to Committees and Members.
 - Portable ramps have been provided for use at the front door to facilitate access for all visitors.
 - A portable induction loop has been provided to Engagement to allow Education groups to use it.
 - Following a visit from the Disability Action group, the kerbs around Parliament Buildings and other areas within the Estate have been altered to allow for easier access.
 - The Commission has requested RNIB to conduct an accessibility audit in June 2010.
 - The Commission has requested Disability Action to conduct an accessibility audit in July 2010.
 - The Commission has requested RNID to conduct an accessibility audit in the summer of 2010.
 - Two new committee rooms have been created on the Ground Floor to allow for easier access for visitors
 - A review of the Health & Safety manual and Fire Safety manual are currently taking place with a view to providing leaflets for visitors.

- A new training course has been sourced by Building Services for all Security Guards and Ushers on Communication tactics. It is envisaged that this will be rolled out to all front of house staff later in the year.
 - A member of staff from Building Services has requested sign language training to allow for this service to be available within the building.
 - Work is continuing in relation to providing a welcome message on the screens at Parliament Buildings reception in a range of languages. Discussions have taken place with NICEM and NI Tourist Board to include the top 5 local languages and top 5 visitor languages.
 - A meeting has been arranged with the Assembly telephone provider to ensure that staffs operating the switchboard are aware of all services in relation to translation and text.
- 7.4 Additional structural work is also planned to take place during the 2010 summer recess.
- 7.5 The Commission's Facilities Directorate has presented a draft report to the Assembly Commission in relation to the installation of access ramps at the front entrance to Parliament Buildings. Detailed plans and costs will be presented to the Commission in autumn 2010 to assist them in the decision making process. This scheme, if approved, will provide ramps from the east and west sides at the front of the building and will allow all visitors access via the front entrance.
- 7.6 The Commission's Facilities Directorate will be presenting a paper to the Assembly Commission in relation to the provision of a dedicated disabled toilet/changing facility on the Ground floor of Parliament Buildings. A range of options have been considered and consultation is taking with disability action groups to ensure that the correct approach is taken. Following the conclusion of accessibility audits, over the summer recess, a detailed paper outlining the proposal, the cost and recommendations will be forwarded to the Commission for their consideration in autumn 2010.
- 7.7 A visitor, who is a wheelchair user, visited Carmel Hannah, MLA during the reporting period with the BBC and was filmed giving her thoughts on access in Parliament Buildings. The Commission was unaware of this visit until one hour before it took place. Her thoughts on access were aired on the BBC's 'Politics Show' and she gave the building an access score of 8 out of 10.
- 7.8 The Equality Manager represents the Assembly Commission on the Inter-parliamentary Equality Group. This group has representatives from the Scottish Parliament, Welsh Assembly and Westminster and meets on a quarterly basis to discuss equality issues and share information. The last meeting was held on 28 and 29 January 2010 at Westminster.
- 7.9 The Communications Department undertook a range of work to improve access to services including provision of information in accessible formats:

- Information leaflets on the Assembly were made available in hard copy, online and are available in 11 languages.
- A project was initiated to produce a suite of Plain English leaflets about the Assembly and Parliament Buildings.
- A project was initiated to review all Assembly information in hard copy and online.
- The Assembly Facebook page was introduced to support initiation and development of the Assembly Youth Panel project. Facebook is now embedded as a communications channel for all appropriate information and news.
- The Commission is currently drafting Accessible Information Guidance which Assembly Staff will be required to follow to ensure that the information and service provided are made as accessible and equitable as possible.
- An additional web stream was introduced to increase access to Assembly Committees and their work.

7.10 Commission Outreach and Education:

- Additional Accommodation in Parliament Buildings. Between 1 April 2009 – 31 March 2010, the Education Service delivered a range of programmes to over 14,000 participants. In September 2009, the Education Service acquired additional accommodation (Room 55) on the ground floor of Parliament Buildings. Provision has also been made for deaf and hard of hearing people as the room is equipped with an induction loop system. Additional accommodation (Room 54) on the ground floor will be available in September 2010.
- Introduction of Education Service Outreach programme to areas of low uptake of service. In January 2010, the Education Service analysed the geographic location of current participants in the education programme (from April 2009 – March 2010, 33 groups from Western Education Library Board compared with 103 from Southern Education Library Board). In addition, over 50 adults working in the education sector completed a questionnaire listing their impediments to participation in the education programme. An Outreach Strategy with targets is currently being developed which will give the opportunity for schools/education groups who are unable to come to Parliament Buildings, to learn about the work of the Assembly. Pilot outreach programmes were delivered to the Western Area in May 2010.
- Introduction of video link in order to improve access to services. As cost of transport, teacher sub cover and time pressures impede schools/education groups participating in the programme, the Education Service organised a 30-minute video conference between a group of A Level students studying business and the Enterprise, Trade and Investment Committee in March 2010. This was a new initiative and due to its success, plans are underway for more video links with other groups in order promote engagement.
- Information day for teachers. The Education Service organised an information day for A Level teachers in October 2009. For the first time, this event was a joint initiative between the BBC, Westminster Education Service and the Northern

Ireland Assembly Education Service. All A Level Politics teachers were invited to hear how they could avail of education programmes and how they could prepare students for the BBC School Question Time programme. Additional teacher conferences are planned in order to disseminate information about the NI Assembly and to provide a forum for teachers from all sectors to work together on educational activities.

- Providing information in accessible formats. The Education Service provides information and resources in various formats: website, hard copy and a new DVD will be sent to all schools/alternative education programme in September 2010. This DVD includes a subtitle option and audio description.
- Assembly Website. The Education Service is redeveloping its website in partnership with the Council for Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA). A number of joint meetings have been held between September 2009 and March 2010 in order to plan the content and layout of the new website. The new site will adhere to W3C web usability standards, ensuring that it is accessible to people with disabilities. For example, there will be a screen reading feature for the visually impaired. Website content is being designed to suit a range of age and ability level. A variety of media rich resources will utilise sound, animation and video material.
- DVD. A new DVD resource was produced in March 2010. The DVD titled 'A Snapshot of Democracy' is a free resource aimed at 14-18 years. In order to promote accessibility the DVD has a subtitle option and audio description.
- Hardcopy. A new educational comic titled the 'NI School Assembly' was launched in February 2010. This product is aimed at 11-16 yrs and explains how the Assembly works and the voting system.
- Tours. Reasonable adjustments are made for all tours. A pre tour form has been developed to capture the requirements of groups prior to their arrival, for example, hearing loops are provided, open and assisted access for those with mobility requirements and signers by request in advance.
- Functions. Pre-planning meetings are held to capture the requirements of the groups prior to their arrival.
- DVD (virtual tour) has been developed to deliver a tour where visitors cannot physically come to the building. It is available a number of versions including sign language, closed captions and audio descriptions. There are plans to extend this to cover a number of languages as well.
- Leaflets and written material have been rewritten to ensure the language used is inclusive and accessible.

- Vital Links (and all presentations) have reasonable adjustment built-in. Visual materials all meet DDA requirements for text type and size; an opportunity to audio record presentations for those with sight impairment is available.

Section 8: Complaints

- Please identify the number of Section 75 related complaints:
 - received and resolved by the authority (including how this was achieved);
 - which were not resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant;
 - which were referred to the Equality Commission.

8.1 No comments were received.

Section 9: Consultation and Engagement

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

9.1 Office of the Speaker

- Christmas event - 3 December 2009
This year's Christmas Reception at Parliament Buildings was dedicated to acknowledging the excellent work carried out by so many organisations and volunteers in the field of cancer care across Northern Ireland. It was also an opportunity to acknowledge the courage of those who face the daily challenge of living with cancer and to recognise the support given by carers who work behind the scenes and do not seek recognition or reward.
Numbers: approx 300 people
- Easter event - 13 March 2010
The contribution of women to the life of Northern Ireland was the theme for this year's St Patrick's Day reception at Parliament Buildings. The annual event, which was hosted by the Speaker of the Assembly, Mr William Hay, MLA, took place on Saturday 13 March 2010. This year invitations were issued to a wide range of individuals and women's groups representing women who are working tirelessly to bring about social, political, economic and cultural change for women in Northern Ireland.
Numbers: approx 300 people

9.2 During the reporting period we conducted two consultation exercises as highlighted at 5.10.

9.3 During autumn 2009, consultations in the form of informal meetings and workshops were held a range of stakeholders including representatives of Section 75 groups to outline initial plans for the development of a youth assembly. Details are outlined at 5.13.

- 9.4 Engagement with the Commission’s Disability Advisory Group took place on a range of issues during the reporting period. Details are highlighted at 5.14 and 5.15.
- 9.5 The Assembly’s Discipline Policy, Conduct Policy, Dignity at Work Policy and Grievance Policy has been subject to comprehensive review and consultation with Trade Union Side is ongoing. The revised policies have been through an initial equality screening exercise and this will be revisited once final versions have been agreed. A review of further people management policies including recruitment and attendance management is scheduled for 2010/2011.
- 9.6 The Commission’s Equality Unit manages a Section 75 consultation database. The database is maintained on an ongoing basis and the Commission remains committed to effective consultation and consults in accordance with the guidelines set out in its Equality Scheme.
- 9.7 Commission Education Service

Period	Number of Education Service Visitors to Parliament Buildings
1 st Jan 09 - 1 st Jan 10	14,521
1 st Jan 08 - 1 st Jan 09	14,271
1 st Jan 07 - 1 st Jan 08	10,838
1 st Jan 06 - 1 st Jan 07	7,846
1 st Jan 05- 1 st Jan 06	5,855

- Whilst primarily aimed at schools, other educational establishments and youth groups, the Education Programme is available to any group wanting to learn about the Northern Ireland Assembly.

The School Visits Programme is tailored to meet the requirements of the Northern Ireland Curriculum set out by the Council for Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) in Citizenship, Government & Politics and History. These subjects can be brought alive by a visit to Parliament Buildings.

The Education Service has expanded from 2 Education Officers to 5 in the last 10 months. There are currently two dedicated Education rooms which can hold 50 and 25 people respectively. The provision of another room in September 2010 will increase capacity by a further 25 visitors.

- The Education Service has recently produced a DVD resource aimed at 14-18 year old pupils and is currently developing a new website in conjunction with CCEA. A comic, aimed at Key Stage 3 pupils, has also been produced. The aim

of these resources is to provide relevant and stimulating resource material for pupils and teachers.

- We have recently delivered a series of Outreach visits to schools in Fermanagh and Tyrone with colleagues from Westminster and organised workshops and a road show as part of a Citizenship day at St Colman's, Newry. Other Outreach activities include a lecture to nursing students at QUB and a video conference between pupils from Lurgan College and members of the Education Training Inspectorate (ETI) committee.
- An information day for Constituency staff is planned to take place on 26 May 2010 to enhance their knowledge on the work of the Assembly. Visits to constituency offices to promote the Education Service programmes are expected to commence in September 2010.

9.8 Commission Communications:

- The Website redevelopment project includes focus groups and one-to-one research with Section 75 groups and representatives. Social media sites (Facebook and Twitter) will also be used to gather views for this project.

9.9 Commission Outreach and Education:

- Education Service develops links with Hydebank Wood, young offenders' centre and prison. In February 2010 the Education Service met with the Governor of Hydebank Prison. The outcome of this meeting led to two visits to the Prison to deliver the Education Programme to groups of young men and women.
- Education Service participants were consulted on participation in sport for Culture, Arts and Leisure (CAL) Committee report. From December 2009 to February 2010, a range of groups taking part in the Education Service programme also took part in a research project into young people and sport participation. The findings of this research were presented to the Culture, Arts & Leisure Committee in March 2010.
- Assembly Roadshows were held in all 18 constituencies across Northern Ireland. All venues were fully accessible for wheelchair users; had hearing loops installed; signers for all events; large text upon request and Braille material fully available. Advertising for roadshow events were in local and community outlets, voluntary sectors websites, and specialist groups such as RNIB and Deaf Youth etc. Invitations were also extended through 'community gatekeepers' which were lists of umbrella charities with strong communication networks in specific communities.
- A Fun Day was held on 31 May 2010 and invitations were sent through all constituency offices to encourage a broad geographical spread and through distribution at the Balmoral Show. The attractions in Parliament Buildings were

designed specifically with the event audience in mind (particularly the targeting of young people and families) and provided opportunities for engagement with people who would not usually come to the NI Assembly.

- European Heritage Open Day. Part of the larger Heritage programme, the events in Parliament Buildings are designed specifically with the event audience in mind and provide opportunities for engagement with people who would not normally come to NI Assembly.
- Polish Memorial. Incident driven but was to meet the needs of the Polish community in NI. Measures included a cross community memorial event, full and reasonable adjustment for access, simultaneous translation, and suitable space for private religious observation.

9.10 During the reporting period two short films were posted on youtube and facebook relating to the Assembly Youth Panel. The first film involved the two Co-Chairs of the Youth Panel detailing their experience to date and why young people should become involved. This film can be viewed at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rxo_NFHMF8s. The second film followed Darren O'Reilly, member of NI Assembly Youth Panel as he spent the day shadowing the Minister for Regional Development, Conor Murphy MP, MLA. This film can be viewed at <http://www.youtube.com/theniassembly#p/u/0/smrHQNFr0mI> or the press release can be accessed at: http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/io/youthassembly/YA_03_09_10.htm

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

- 9.11 The Commission's guidance on consulting with and involving children and young people was using during the establishment of the Assembly's Youth Panel. Details can be found at 5.13.
- 9.12 A launch was hosted by the Speaker at Parliament Buildings on 26 January 2010 and the opportunity for young people to nominate themselves for Panel membership was widely advertised on Facebook, local radio, by Bluetooth, and by mail / email to schools, youth organisations and representative of Section 75 groups.
- 9.13 At the launch, the Commissioner for Children and Young People welcomed the initiative and commented that, "We should toast the fact that young people have been involved in the design of the Youth Assembly. After all who better to ask about young people than young people themselves!" She also noted that the Assembly Commission "deserve credit for taking their time in developing the youth assembly and getting it right".

- 9.14 Two hundred and fifty-nine nominations were received. Of these one hundred were randomly chosen to attend a day long peer selection event in Belfast on 12 March 2010. Following a series of workshops, nominees elected 25 young people to the Panel. Five seats were reserved for people with a disability who were appointed based the election results. In a report on the day compiled by the facilitators (RG Consultants (NI)) Ltd, it was noted that participants found the selection process to be challenging but that “the overwhelming majority of young people felt privileged and delighted to have been selected to take part in the peer selection event”.

Section 10: The Good Relations Duty

- Please provide details of additional steps taken to implement or progress the good relations duty during the year. Please indicate any findings or expected outcomes from this work.
- 10.1 In order to progress this area of work the Assembly Commission approved a Good Relations Action Plan on 21 January 2010 for consultation. This plan also contributes to the corporate objective ‘to promote good relations’ as stated in the Commission’s 2008-2011 (Revised 2009) Secretariat Corporate Plan.

A Good Relations consultation document was prepared and made available for distribution to the public on Monday 29 March 2010. The consultation period lasted for an 11 weeks until 4th June 2010 and was later extended by 4 weeks to allow organisations making a written submission to have their comments approved by their respective Boards of Directors.

The consultation document made clear that the Commission wished to consult as widely as possible on the Draft Good relations Action Plan and with this objective in mind, the following actions were taken:

On 29 March 2010 a postmaster email was issued to all 400 Commission staff detailing information about the consultation document, signposting staff to the document and detailing how to respond. Copies of the consultation document were distributed directly to the Commission’s Section 75 consultees and made readily available to the general public.

Advertisements were placed in the three main regional newspapers inviting the public to comment on the consultation report. These advertisements indicated that the consultation document was available on the Assembly website. It also indicated that the consultation document could be made available in alternative formats on request.

A series of consultation meetings were held. Six meetings were held with groups representing a range of the categories of persons specified in Section 75. Consultations were also held with a number of political parties.

In total 10 consultation responses were received by the Commission. Written submissions to the consultation document were received from eight organisations and two responses arose from meetings with representatives from the Community and Voluntary Sector.

A paper detailing the results of the public consultation will be presented to the Assembly Commission at their September 2010 meeting.

- 10.2 Aim 1, under the Good Relations Action Plan sets out how the Commission will *“promote equality of opportunity and good relations in all aspects of its work by ensuring that all its services are delivered impartially and effectively.”*¹

In order to achieve this outcome a range of contributory actions were approved by the Commission. The first of these actions is to conduct an internal good relations audit amongst Secretariat staff and Members to identify all good relations issues to be addressed by the Commission and through this to design an implementation plan for the mainstreaming of good relations.

Approval was given to commence a Good Relations Research Audit by the Senior Management Group on 26 February 2010.

- 10.3 During the reporting period the Youth Assembly Panel took evidence from stakeholders. The first formal evidence taking session took place in the Senate Chamber in Parliament Buildings during Community Relations week 2010. Evidence was presented to the Panel by Eva Grosman and Pete Snodden representing the “Unite Against Hate” campaign and Dr Duncan Morrow, Chief Executive of the Community Relations Council.

The promotion of Good Relations will continue to be a priority in the process of developing proposals for a youth assembly.

- 10.4 The Assembly Commission has made progress on a number of measures contained with the Draft Good Relations Action Plan during the January – April 2010 period. These are detailed below:

¹ Assembly Commission – Draft Good Relations Action Plan 2010

10.4 Draft Good Relations Action Plan Progress January – April 2010

Action	Directorate	Outcome	Date	Progress
Provide advice and guidance to the NI Assembly Commission, and to staff, on how to incorporate equality and good relations into directorate business plans.	Clerk/Director General	Promotion of good relations into secretariat Directorates	Ongoing	A paper has been prepared providing recommendations on how to mainstream good relations into all of the functions within the Assembly. The paper will be presented to SMG for consideration and approval in September 2010.
Continue to utilise applicable Code(s) and Guidance from the Equality Commission NI as it relates to the recruitment of staff.	Resources	Commission policies continue to reflect best practice in recruitment and continue to ensure equality of opportunity for all potential job candidates	Ongoing	This is being addressed through the new Employment Equality Plan which is tabled for Commission approval at their September 2010 meeting. Recruitment policies are scheduled to undergo an Equality Impact Assessment in January 2011.
Secretariat Management will, through its Induction Training Plan, promote positive attitudes, behaviour and actions in all aspects of its business.	Resources	Improved understanding across secretariat employees	Ongoing	Induction training is being revised to include Good Relations issues, including information tailored to be specific to the Assembly's needs. The induction training will also be updated in line with the revised Section 75 guidance, issued in April 2010. The training will be delivered to the newly recruited front of house staff in July 2010.

Provide legal advice to the NI Assembly Commission, and to staff, in relation to obligations under section 75 (2) of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.	Clerk/Director General	Compliance with section 75 (2) of the Northern Ireland Act 1998	Ongoing	Legal Services continue to provide advice on an ongoing basis.
Develop approaches to target unrepresented groups to ensure equal access to services and employment.	Cross-directorate	Mainstreamed into service provision	Ongoing	Education Service maintains a detailed database containing details on each school that participates in the programme. Various measures have been implemented to target schools that have not participated. A new Outreach Strategy has been developed, which will commence in Autumn 2010. This programme will primarily target schools in either social or geographical deprivation. It is also planned to pilot a programme where a school will be selected to host pupils from various surrounding schools to ensure cross community participation.
To review employee relations policies and procedures to ensure fair and consistent application.	Resources	Appropriate policies reviewed to ensure good relations is mainstreamed	Ongoing	This will be addressed through the Employment Equality Plan, screening and EQIA's.
To continue implementation of the NIAC equality scheme to ensure employees	Clerk/Director General	Compliance with Section 75 of NI Act, 1998	Ongoing	The current scheme is continuing to be implemented. A new scheme will be developed in 2011.

understand their obligations concerning equality and good relations.				
The Assembly delivers its education programme in a format which provides for schools from different backgrounds to learn together.	Education	Schools from different backgrounds will have had the opportunity to learn together and about each other	Ongoing	The Education Service welcome cross community groups. They tailor presentations to the needs of the group by focusing on the Peace Process, Power Sharing, etc.
Provide more space within Parliament Buildings to provide a wider range of programmes for more schools and for more schoolchildren, as well as teachers and adult learners.	Education	The Assembly will have increased its capacity to deliver its education programme in a format which provides for schools from different backgrounds to learn together	Ongoing	Education Service has secured further accommodation from September 2010. The service will operate from 3 dedicated rooms. If necessary, larger groups can be divided and can be facilitated then in 2 rooms, in which case staffs take care to ensure that pupils from each school are divided to ensure that the cross community focus is retained.
Northern Ireland Assembly & Business Trust (NIABT).	External Liaison Unit	People from different backgrounds in the business sector will have had the opportunity to learn together and share opinion on issues of mutual interest. The promotion of Good Relations will have been considered and factored	Ongoing	The External Liaison Unit has increased membership of the NIABT by targeting sectors and areas that were underrepresented. NIABT has ensured that fellowships and events take place throughout Northern Ireland. To ensure that the events are tailored to business needs, various breakfast briefings have taken place. NIABT also intends to hold events aimed at

		in as a qualifying / high priority criterion for membership		targeting women in business, and supporting young people in business,
Advertisement of Committee inquiries and the Committee stage of Bills in each of the main daily newspapers offering opportunities to all sections of the community to submit evidence.	Central Committee	Opportunity provided to all sections of the community to contribute to policy development and legislative scrutiny processes	Ongoing	This is carried out on an ongoing basis.
Guidance for witnesses attending committee meetings reviewed to take account of the needs of people with a disability and language barriers.	Central Committee	Improved opportunities for people with a disability to contribute to policy development and legislative scrutiny processes	Ongoing	Guidance has been revised. The final version has now been approved and implemented.
Plans in place to encourage committees to actively engage with the community, including by meeting regularly outside Parliament Buildings.	Central Committee	Improved opportunities for all sections of the community to contribute to policy development and legislative scrutiny processes	Ongoing	The Committee for Agriculture and Rural Development held a Committee meeting and a question-and-answer session at the Balmoral Show in May 2010. The Committee meeting was attended by over 250 people and the question-and-answer session was attended by over 900 people. The Committee for Employment and Learning gathered evidence for its NEETs (young people not in education,

				<p>employment or training) inquiry at the Balmoral Show by way of a questionnaire.</p> <p>Other Committees — Environment, Regional Development, Enterprise, Trade and Investment, and Public Accounts — also held events at the Balmoral Show allowing people the opportunity to have their say and to raise concerns relating to farming and the rural community that impact on their life and work.</p>
Identify external groups to participate in Speaker's events within Parliament Buildings	Speaker's Office	Participation and inclusion of external groups in identified events held at Parliament Buildings	Ongoing	
Actively encourage internal and external dialogue to promote equality of opportunity and good relations.	Cross Directorate	Facilitated dialogue on key good relations issues relevant to the Commission	Ongoing	
Work with the community and voluntary sector in order to inform the NIAC on issues to improve the delivery of services.	Cross Directorate	Increased awareness of services offered by Commission and applicable suggested initiatives implemented	Ongoing	An external good relations audit will commence in August 2010.
Review welcome and	Facilities/Engag	'Welcome' sign provided	March	As a temporary measure, a screen in the

signage displays to reflect an increasingly diverse population and range of visitors.	ement	at reception area in a number of languages, including Irish, Ulster-Scots and other languages e.g. Filipino/Polish etc to reflect multi-cultural composition of visiting public. This could be displayed on the existing Assembly electronic information screen in the great hall.	2010	Great Hall will be used to welcome visitors in a variety of languages including: Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Latvian Slovakian, French, Japanese, Spanish, Italian, and German. The Assembly's Information Systems Office is working on a more long term solution which will include several screens with several messages in a variety of languages.
Develop a Language Policy.	Cross-directorate	Development of a clear and concise policy with measureable standards	March 2010	A Draft Language Policy has been developed and is tabled for the September 2010 Assembly Commission meeting.
Conduct an internal good relations audit with staff and members.	Clerk/Director General	Identification of all issues to be addressed Provision of a framework in keeping with the NIAC structures for the implementation and mainstreaming of good relations	April 2010	The audit has commenced and work is ongoing.
Participate in the Balmoral Show.	External Liaison Unit	People from different rural backgrounds and the agricultural sector	May 2010	This event was extremely successful. It included a road show hosted by the Committee for Agriculture and Rural

		will have had the opportunity to discuss political issues		Development. This event provided an opportunity for people with rural interests to speak directly to the committee, and over the course of an hour, more than 900 people attended. It also included 10 other events, aimed at offering people from rural areas opportunities that they otherwise would not have had. Due to the success of the event, the Northern Ireland Assembly will make this an annual event.
Develop a Section 75 complaints policy.	Clerk/DG/ Resources	Development of a clear and concise policy with measureable standards	June 2010	Completed. Awaiting SMG approval at their September 2010 meeting.
Explore the scope to review and develop the approach to data collection, assessment and monitoring of the good relations duty across the NIAC.	Resources	A structured and common approach to data collection, assessment and monitoring developed A central data collection and monitoring framework implemented	June 2010	A business case is being submitted to SMG on Friday 9 th July to request financial commitment for the purchase of a new HR Management System. This, amongst other things, will record equality data for existing staff and applicants to assist in the compliance of Section 75 requirements and Equality Commission submissions.
Continued implementation of fully compliant procurement policies and practices.	Procurement Office	Installation of Assembly access to the Sourcing NI portal (giving greater access to procurement opportunities for SMEs)	30 June 2010	The new system was implemented in May 2010.

		-Commission policies continue to reflect best practice in public procurement and, in doing so, provides opportunities for economic and social well-being for the community		
Focus groups with lobby and voluntary groups to inform committee business.	Research Service	We will have provided different groups with opportunities to work together to inform Committee decisions/ deliberations.	Ongoing	The Research & Library Service did not facilitate any events in this monitoring period, as opportunities to do so are determined by the Forward Work Plans of the Committees supported by the Service. The Service remains committed to taking advantage of any such opportunity in the future, and continue to liaise with the Committees to do so.

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

10.5 The Commission’s Good Relations Guide and the NI Community Relations Council “*A Good Relations Framework: an approach to the development of Good Relations*” publication was used in the development of the Commission’s Draft Good Relations Action Plan.

Section 11: Additional Comments

- Please provide any additional information/comments

N/A

Annual Report 1 April 2009 / 31 March 2010
'Disability Duties' Questions

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

15

Fully
Achieved

6

Partially
Achieved

Not
Achieved

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

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

Level	Public Life Action Measures	Outputs ²	Outcomes / Impact ³
National ⁴			
Regional ⁵	Assembly Youth Panel Recruitment	5 seats reserved for those with disabilities out of a total of 30 seats	5 people with a disability were appointed based election results
Local ⁶	Assembly Youth Panel Consultation Events	Undertook consultation event with 100 people in attendance representing a range of disability, youth and school groups. Consultation undertaken with a range of disability organisations.	-Plans were restructured to include a youth led approach and a longer development timescale -Effective consultation of Youth Panel Proposals

² **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.

³ **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.

⁴ **National** : Situations where people can influence policy at a high impact level e.g. Public Appointments

⁵ **Regional**: Situations where people can influence policy decision making at a middle impact level

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

	Training Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
1	<p>Provide all staff with awareness training in duties and responsibilities under the DDA and update as required</p> <p>Review Induction Process to promote positive attitudes of people with disabilities</p>	<p>228 staff received 'Equality and Disability Awareness' Training as part of the induction process</p> <p>335 staff received 'Diversity Awareness' Training as part of the induction process</p> <p>Induction process was updated to include the promotion of positive attitudes</p>	<p>Commission staff has increased awareness and confidence which has enabled more positive attitudes towards staff and customers with disabilities.</p> <p>Staff knowledge and understanding of the legislation has been increased.</p> <p>Staff understanding of Diversity in the Workplace and what this means in practice has been increased.</p> <p>Relevant and up to date induction training for all staff.</p>
2	<p>Provide specialist training for staff as necessary</p>	<p>28 Frontline staff received 'Frontline Equality and Disability Awareness Training'</p>	<p>Frontline staff received specific training which has increased their practical knowledge of interacting with staff and customers with disabilities.</p>

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	<p>Develop the AsslSt intranet system as an information tool</p>	<p>Minutes of meetings with the Assembly External Disability</p>	<p>Increased staff awareness of the role of the Disability Advisory Group and current actions</p>

⁶ **Local** : Situations where people can influence policy decision making at lower impact level e.g. one off consultations, local fora.

	to improve disability awareness	Advisory Group published on the intranet and all staff signposted to this posting.	being undertaken.
2	Ensure that Parliament Buildings is accessible to all Members, visitors and staff with disabilities	<p>Induction loops fitted in 6 rooms</p> <p>A portable induction loop provided to Engagement to allow Educational group usage.</p> <p>Two new committee rooms created on Ground Floor to allow easier access for visitors</p> <p>Introduction of video link in order to improve access to services</p> <p>A new DVD resource produced in March 2010. The DVD titled 'A Snapshot of Democracy' is a free resource aimed at 14-18 years. In order to promote accessibility the DVD has a subtitle option and audio description.</p> <p>A new educational comic titled the 'NI School Assembly' was launched in February 2010.</p> <p>DVD (virtual tour) developed to deliver a tour where visitors cannot physically come to the building. It is available a number of versions including sign language, closed</p>	Improved access to Committees and Education which has increased accessibility and inclusiveness.

		captions and audio descriptions.	
3	Ensure equality of access of staff for all ICT services	The IS Office continues to supply specialist hardware and software to staff who require it. Examples include voice dictation software, large screens and software to assist those with Dyslexia. For those software applications developed internally for use within the Assembly and by others, reporting systems include options to produce large print versions of documents and options to change the standard font sizes on interactive screens	Improved accessibility for staff.
4	Customer Feedback Leaflet	Customer feedback leaflet developed and implemented Consultations held with disability groups	Customers enabled to provide feedback on services and access.
5	Commission's screening proforma revised and updated.	A revised proforma to include disability made available to all staff	Updated measure to assist staff in reviewing policies and to seek out ways to promote equality.

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

	Encourage others Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
1			

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	To conduct an annual staff disability audit to encourage staff to declare if they have a disability to enable appropriate support action to be undertaken	Audit completed and monitoring updated	20 members of staff declared a disability which equates to 5.8% of all staff. Any support required provided to staff.
2	Ensure that Parliament Buildings is accessible to all Members, visitors and staff with disabilities	Portable ramps have been provided for use at front door in addition to East and West entrance access Kerbs around Parliament Buildings and other areas within the Estate have been altered to allow for easier access.	Commission can facilitate front door access for all visitors. Improved access for staff, Members and visitors.
3	Guide for Witnesses appearing Before Committees	Consultations held with the Disability Advisory Group. Policy now more accurately reflects and informs witnesses of the adjustments that can be made and the additional services that are available for people with disabilities.	Improved access for staff, Members and visitors.
4	Ensure disability issues are taken into account in all recruitment procedures.	All applicants asked if they wish to declare if they have a disability, and whether they require any reasonable adjustments to be made during any	Improved recruitment and selection processes

		<p>testing/interviews etc. This is carried out with every recruitment campaign.</p> <p>Recruitment staff trained to ensure that they know how to process requests for reasonable adjustments</p>	
5	<p>Ensure that successful job applicants who need adaptations and support within the working environment are facilitated.</p>	<p>Human Resources will make sure that any requested reasonable adjustments are facilitated as appropriate.</p> <p>Interpretation facilities are available on demand.</p> <p>All corporate literature can be made available in alternative formats on request.</p>	<p>The Assembly Commission are aiming to ensure that staff feel able to disclose a disability and that upon doing so they will be provided with any reasonable adjustments that they request. The annual disability audit has revealed an increasing number of staff declaring a disability year on year.</p>

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

	Action Measures partly achieved	Milestones ⁷ / Outputs	Outcomes/Impacts	Reasons not fully achieved
1	Ensure that Parliament Buildings is accessible to all Members, visitors and staff with disabilities	<p>Disability Action, RNIB and RNID procured to undertake access audits</p> <p>A review of the Health & Safety manual and Fire Safety manual is currently taking place with a view to the production of leaflets for visitors.</p> <p>Meetings held with the Assembly telephone provider to ensure that staffs operating the switchboard are aware of all services in relation to translation and text.</p> <p>Presentation of a draft report to the Assembly Commission in relation to the installation of access ramps at the front entrance to</p>	<p>Greater access provided for staff, Members and visitors with disabilities</p> <p>Information provided to staff, Members and visitors with disabilities</p> <p>Services provided to callers in relation to translation and text.</p> <p>Improved front door access</p>	<p>Access audits scheduled to take place over the 2010 summer recess period.</p> <p>Scheduled to take place over the 2010 summer recess period.</p> <p>Ongoing at present due to Commission separation from NICS on 1 April 2010.</p> <p>Commission do not meet over the Summer recess. Paper tabled for first meeting in September 2010.</p>

⁷ **Milestones** – Please outline what part progress has been made towards the particular measures; even if full output or outcomes/ impact have not been achieved.

		<p>Parliament Buildings. Detailed plans and costs will be presented to the Commission in autumn 2010 to assist them in the decision making process. This scheme, if approved, will provide ramps from the east and west sides at the front of the building and will allow all visitors access via the front entrance.</p> <p>The Commission's Facilities Directorate will present a paper to the Assembly Commission in relation to the provision of a dedicated disabled toilet/changing facility on the Ground floor of Parliament Buildings. A range of options have been considered and consultation is taking with disability action groups to ensure that the correct approach is taken. Following the conclusion of accessibility audits, over the summer recess, a detailed paper outlining the proposal, the cost and recommendations will be forwarded to the Commission for their approval</p>	<p>Improved access for staff, visitors and Members.</p>	<p>Commission do not meet over the Summer recess. Paper tabled for first meeting in September 2010.</p>
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2	Review of Education Website	The Education Service is redeveloping its website in partnership with the Council for Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA). A number of joint meetings have been held between September 2009 and March 2010 in order to plan the content and layout of the new website. The new site will adhere to W3C web usability standards, ensuring that it is accessible to people with disabilities.	Production of an accessible website	Ongoing. Due for completion in October 2011
3	Review of Commission's Website	Website development informed by views of disabled people	Production of an accessible website	Commenced in March 2010 and is due for completion in October 2011
4	Continue to ensure all new staff participate in Disability Awareness training as part of their induction training process	All new staff to complete training	Continue to raise awareness, improve understanding, attitudes and implementation of learning	Ongoing by appointment
5	Event Management and tours to include disability access monitoring	Accessible and inclusive events that cater for Members, staff and visitors. Pre-event data collection processes to be reviewed Pre-tour data collection to be reviewed	Improved physical access to all events and tours	Review commenced and is due for completion in next reporting period

6	Implementing Disability Action Plan	Reflected in policy development and planning processes	Consideration given to the needs and impact on disabled people and appropriate action taken	Ongoing commitment
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4. Please outline what action measures have not been achieved and the reasons why?

	Action Measures not met	Reasons
1		
2		
3		

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

- Customer feedback form in place
- Annual Disability Staff Audit
- Feedback from 'Mystery Shoppers'
- Staff Suggestion boxes put in place

(b) Quantitative

- Customer feedback form in place
- Annual Disability Staff Audit

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 – additional steps

Production of Accessible Information Guidance which Assembly Staff will be required to follow to ensure that the information and service provided are made as accessible and equitable as possible.

If yes please outline below:

	Revised/Additional Action Measures	Performance Indicator	Timescale
1	Production of Accessible Information Guidance	Staff are aware of their responsibilities in relation to making information accessible to people with disabilities and other Section 75 groups	2011

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

The Commission will be required to produce a new plan for the 2011-2014 period uncompleted and ongoing actions will be included in the new plan.

NI ASSEMBLY SECRETARIAT BUSINESS PLAN 2009/2011

PERFORMANCE AGAINST OBJECTIVES AT 31 MARCH 2010

2 ENGAGING THE PUBLIC

Corporate Objective		Planned Outcome	2009/2010	Lead Responsibility	Position at 31 March 2010
2.1	To increase public engagement with the Assembly	Engagement Strategy recommendations implemented	31 March 2010 (50%)	Director of Engagement	On target, with the following exceptions: - EQIA policy pre-screening to be completed by 31 May 2010.
		Feedback system for the public and visitors developed	30 September 2009	Director of Engagement	Completed.
2.2	To improve the understanding of the role of the Assembly in the governance of Northern Ireland	Review of Education Service completed and recommendations implemented	30 November 2009	Director of Engagement	Completed.
		Annual Assembly Road Shows to be held	31 October 2009	Director of Engagement	Achieved.

Corporate Objective		Planned Outcome	2009/2010	Lead Responsibility	Position at 31 March 2010
2.4	To promote Good Relations	Good Relations Strategy developed	31 March 2010	Clerk/DG	Good Relations Action Plan drafted to go forward for internal and external consultation.
2.5	To improve access to the Assembly and its services	Contribute to achieving adequate transport links to Parliament Buildings for staff and visitors	31 March 2010	Director of Facilities	NI Assembly is a member of the Stormont Estate Workplace Travel Group. New bus services were introduced in 2009 by Translink which greatly improved links to Parliament Buildings, with regular bus services during peak travel periods for staff to and from work. Service also available throughout the day for visitors, albeit more infrequent. Continue to discuss options with Translink to improve links further.
		Language policy in place	31 March 2010	Clerk/DG	Policy tabled for Commission meeting on 25 March 2010. To be discussed at April 2010 Commission meeting following Party consultation.

4 ENSURING THE EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE OF THE SECRETARIAT

Corporate Objective		Planned Outcome	2009/2010	Lead Responsibility	Position at 31 March 2010
4.3	To reduce the environmental impact of the Assembly	Sustainability Strategy developed	31 March 2010	Director of Facilities supported by Director of Resources	Sustainable Development Strategy has been developed. To be considered at SMG on 16 April 2010.
4.5	To ensure good governance arrangements including statutory compliance	Compliance with statutory duties in respect of Equality, FOI, DDA, DPA etc monitored and reviewed annually	31 March 2010	Clerk/DG	Annual progress report submitted to the Equality Commission for NI. Disability Action Plan continues to be implemented.