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| Equality Scheme Action Plan  The Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission continually aims, in accordance with the United Nations Paris Principles and statutory duties under the Northern Ireland Act 1998, to identify and respond to inequalities as breaches of human rights within the jurisdiction.  The Commission in fulfilment of its strategic plan (2011-13) and throughout 10 years’ operating as a national human rights institution has sought to identify activities and deliver objectives that have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity and the desirability of promoting good relations.  The centrality of the statutory equality duties to the Commission’s business is demonstrated by the considerable volume of work that has already taken place in this area. Some examples include, our engagement with Treaty monitoring processes across the United Nations system, work with the United Nations European group of National Human Rights Institutions, our choices of strategic litigation, initiatives undertaken in partnership with the Council of Europe, Government, public authorities and civil society.  The Commission operates by engaging legal, policy, education and investigative powers, providing a range of services to the public across the full range of s75 categories. This broad remit will continue. Activities to be completed by the Commission are set out in this Equality Scheme, and each one remains very much at core of our daily work.  Equality of opportunity and good relations are understood by the Commission to be interdependent and complementary. For the next year the Commission has identified the following 4 key themes:   * Internal corporate awareness of our equality and diversity objectives; * Empowerment of vulnerable and marginalised groups to self advocate on their rights; * Promotion and Protection of the most vulnerable and marginalised; * Responding to equality issues in a jurisdiction emerging from conflict.   As a priority issue the Commission will focus on economic and social need as it impacts on the most marginalised in society. By developing a new initiative on budget analysis the organisation will, over the period of 2012-13, advice government on the application of rights and the consequences for allocating welfare provision within the jurisdiction. This work will involve engagements with civil society, the Northern Ireland Executive and Assembly.  The Commission has considered how budget analysis has been used internationally to secure changes which positively assist vulnerable groups. We intend to develop tools that can be used to analysis the Programme for Government for human rights outcomes. These will be disseminated and made broadly available to representative groups across all s75 categories.  Over ten years of operation the Commission has identified access issues for areas outside Greater Belfast. We are responding to that need in 2012-13 by developing a pilot service provision outside of Belfast on at least a monthly basis. In addition, full Commission meetings and targeted engagements with local communities throughout Northern Ireland will continue on a rolling basis. The focus for this work will, once again, be the most vulnerable and marginalised across all s75 categories.  Since its inception the Commission identified an increasing need for civil society groups to be empowered so as to provide effective human rights advocacy. In 2012-13 we aim to focus on the development and provision of training to meet this need. Our objective is to improve the proportion of early resolutions to complaints affecting all s75 groups. In the first instance, a training manual will be developed and piloted with a focus on access to services for older persons.  Following an increased reporting of hate crime incidents, the Commission has decided to engaged its statutory powers during 2012-13 to carry out an investigation. The purpose of this work will be to consider human rights and necessarily equality issues arising in relation to reporting and processing cases. It is the intention of the Commission that this focus will increase awareness of the issues facing victims of hate crime and provide information regarding the application of international standards so as to improve future outcomes. This work will consider all s75 groups impacted, but is likely to maintain a particular focus on racism. The investigation will be published and follow up action plans developed with engagement from stakeholders.  As an overarching theme for 2012-13, the Commission will focus its attention on building good relations through the delivery of a transitional justice project. It is our aim to provide advice on the application of international standards and human rights good practice in two areas: 1 dealing with the past 2. the promotion of tolerance, mutual understanding and reconciliation. The outcome of this project will be a series of events and publication. We anticipate that the Commission will subsequently advise the Secretary of State and Northern Ireland Executive on matters such as religious freedom and political opinion and gender equality. |

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| **Internal corporate awareness of our equality and diversity objectives** | | | | | |
| Key Inequalities | Action Measure | Output | Impact for s75 Group/Outcome | Monitoring Arrangements | Lead Responsibility |
| As the National Human rights institution the Commission recognises an on going need to develop awareness of and support for equality of opportunity | Provide all new staff and Commissioners with introductory training on equality and diversity  Develop mechanisms for the inclusion of equality and diversity updates in regular management and Audit and Risk Committee meetings  Continue to develop staff and Commissioners awareness in accordance with international developments in equality and diversity  Identify and share internally and in external work, international best practice on participation and marginalised groups | Completed training  Inclusion in meetings as identified  Information sharing events and potentially delivery of training following international developments such as CEDAW and UNCRPD reporting. | Improved access for s 75 groups and identification of further need  Inclusion in all planning for the Commission and prioritisation of issues arising  Availability of information for the preparation of future strategic plans to ensure targeting at most vulnerable and marginalised. Ensure that at 100% of those who make contact with the Commission are requested to participate in the provision of equality data.  Improved access to effective services for the public and communication of key concerns to the monitoring bodies and mechanisms including the Council of Europe and UN Treaty bodies. | On going review through Commission and Management meetings.  As above  In accordance with United Nations and Council of Europe timetables | Director  Director  Deputy Director |
| Access to equality and human rights services outside Belfast. This impacts all s75 groups. | Pilot Commission services in area of deprivation outside Belfast  Meetings with access to equality information on a rolling bases outside Belfast | Operational services outside Belfast  At least 12 meetings with Commissioners and Staff outside Belfast | Improved access. By the end of 2012-13 provide at least monthly services in the pilot area with legal and general human rights advice. We hope to facilitate at least 10% of our general legal inquiry line service currently operated in Belfast by provision in the pilot area.  Rolling engagement across Northern Ireland of Commission meetings which involve civil society and public services will ensure the Commission awareness of inequality issues and the consideration by the Commission of opportunities to deal with same as part of the Commission programme of work. | Set up of contact by December 2012 and review | Director |

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| **Empowerment of vulnerable and marginalised groups to self-advocate on their rights** | | | | | |
| Key Inequalities | Action Measure | Output | Impact for s75 Group/Outcome | Monitoring Arrangements | Lead Responsibility |
| Reduced engagement in public discourse around rights of marginalised and vulnerable groups. Need to optimize capacity for self-advocacy in accordance with international human rights and equality standards and best practice. This impacts all s75 groups. The initiatives outlined will begin with a focus on age. | Develop an empowerment initiative to support marginalised and vulnerable groups to self-advocate on human rights in accordance with international developments in equality and diversity.  Identify and share internally and in external work, international best practice on participation and marginalised groups. This will be particularly relevant for issues around disability given the work of the UNCRPD Joint Independent mechanism. | Completed training programme and pilot training  Development with UN and COE guidance. | Improved access for s 75 groups and identification of further need. A training manual for trainers and trainees will be produced within the year. Two pilot sessions of training will be delivered. These will focus on equality issues associated with old age.  Better access to effective services for the public. Ensuring that the voice of s75 groups is communicated to the regional and international monitoring bodies. | Analysis of training in 2012.  Quality assurance process built in, with review of stakeholders also e.g. Carers NI.  On going. | Director  Deputy Director |

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| **Promotion and Protection of the most vulnerable and marginalised** | | | | | | |
| Key inequalities identified | | Action Measure | Output | Impact for s75 Group/outcome | Timescale and Monitoring Arrangements | Lead Responsibility |
| Access to justice issues for the most marginalised and vulnerable. A range of s75 groups including disability, race, political opinion and religion.  Inequality of adoption on grounds of marital status and sexual orientation  Inequality in access to accommodation for travellers on the basis of race | | Review into Hate Crime and vulnerable groups e.g. on the basis of race  Support for the development of an All Party Assembly on Trafficking  Membership of the OFMDFM Racial Equality Panel and immigration sub-group  Membership of the ECNI and CRC Good Relations Forum  Strategic litigation to challenge adoption legislation  Strategic legal work to challenge current failures in provision. | Investigation and report with an event.  Working of the All Party Group  Advice to the Department of Justice, OFMDFM and Assembly  As above  Litigation to change legal obligations and current discrimination.  Litigation to change legal obligations and current discrimination | Identification of issues, advices to government, and improved access to justice.  Identification of Treaty Monitoring issues internationally to the UN and as part of on going work of NIHRC. A publication of the investigation and securing opportunities for follow up work with service providers so as to improve services.  Ensure compliance with international best practice and standards through attendance at meetings and provision of guidance.  As above  As above  A changed legal obligation so as to end discrimination. This also has an impact upon children in age equality through greater access to care.  A clarified legal obligation so as to end discrimination, This also has an impact on a number of s75 groups such as age and disability. | 2012- report 2013 with follow up work through the life of the Equality Scheme  On going work of the All Party Group with identification Of issues to GRETA as they arise in the life of the plan.  As above | Deputy Director  Deputy Director  Deputy Director  Director  Director |
| Protection and promotion of rights for those with disabilities | Development of work as the Joint Mechanism for the oversight of the Convention on Persons with a Disability | Advice to Assembly  Joint Monitoring Reports  Engagement with the public as the Joint Mechanism  Developmental engagement with the UN Committee | Identification of issues, advices to government, and improved access to justice.  Identification of Treaty Monitoring Issues internationally to the UN and as part of on going work.  Through new initiatives with the UN Disability Committee we hope to ensure that Northern Ireland is current with international initiatives.  Increased engagement in external events as outlined above will ensure that the Commission can identify that at least 10% of advice is provided on disability matters.  Better oversight in this jurisdiction and greater communication of issues for the disabled in Northern Ireland. | 2012- report 2013 with follow up work through the life of the Equality Scheme  Through the Joint Mechanism Board review.  As above  As above | Deputy Director  Deputy Director  Deputy Director  Deputy Director |
| Protection and Promotion of Gender equality | Engagement in the treating monitoring of CEDAW | Treaty reporting | Better oversight in this jurisdiction through raising awareness of international obligations and increased communication to the UN of issues relating to gender equality in Northern Ireland. | Through Commission oversight and in accordance with the time table of the UN Committee. | Deputy Director |
| Social support for all relevant s75 groups and in particular older people, with disabilities and those living in poverty including children.  Economic need in s75 groups. | Provide advice to government on welfare reforms and measures taken to protect those living in areas of socio-economic deprivation  Initiate human rights budget analysis. | Engage Commission’s powers to advice government on welfare reform Bill, Social investment Fund etc… and take both investigative and legal action where necessary  Development of training on budget analysis for Northern Ireland. | Analysis of welfare reform and the Programme for government will facilitate engagement with Ministers. The Commission has already been advised that initial stages of this work have been of considerable value to consideration of allocation of grant in Northern Ireland  This ground breaking work has proven value in the securing of resource to need of s75 groups and in particular women, those with disabilities, ethnic minorities and children. | Through Commission and with increased involvement with stakeholders and feedback.  Through the Commission and the quality assurance of international leaders in the field. | Deputy Director  Deputy Director |

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| **Responding to equality issues in a jurisdiction emerging from conflict** | | | | | |
| Key Inequalities Identified | Action Measure | Output | Impact for s75 Group/outcome | Timescale and Monitoring Arrangements | Lead Responsibility |
| Disadvantages to a range of s75 groups and in particular associated with religion, political opinion, age and gender in this jurisdiction as a community emerging from conflict.  The need to identify opportunities in relation to the Good relations duty  Children rights | Development of support for the Assembly recognising the special status of sub national protection and promotion of human rights  Review of the human rights (to include relevant standards on equality and good relations) concerns of transitional justice, to include victims and survivors, children, women and ex-combatants  Increased engagement with the Equality Commission and Community Relations Council on transitional justice issues  Review reforms in the education system for human rights compliance (to include relevant standards on equality and Good Relations) | Products looking at sub national protection of human rights in countries emerging from conflict in particular  A report and potential event  As above  Meetings with actions arising  Advice to the Department of Education and executive agencies | Identification of issues. Advices to government, and improved access to justice. Engagement with Programme for Government. Link to Annual Statement.  Report and event will ensure development of Parliamentary skills in recognition of equality issues.  Ensure better protection of international obligations  Ensure that during review of the education system that children’s rights are a central theme. | 2012- report s 2013 with follow up work through the life of the Equality Scheme  Through the Commission reporting.  Through Commission reporting and partnership arrangements  Through Commission reporting | Director  Deputy Director  Director  Deputy Director |