



Belfast Harbour Commissioners Policies and Procedures

Good Relations Policy

Introduction

This document sets out the policy of BHC to comply with its obligations and responsibilities, in respect of Section 75 (2) of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. Under the scope of this legislation BHC is committed to the promotion of good relations between persons of different religious beliefs, political opinions or racial groups.

The Statutory Duty Context

Section 75 (1) of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 (the Act) requires a public authority in carrying out its functions relating to Northern Ireland, to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between:

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

Section 75 (2) of the Act states that without prejudice to these obligations, a public authority is also required, in carrying out its functions, to have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group.

Aim

The aim of this policy is to ensure that BHC supports and is committed to the principles of equity, diversity and interdependence, through the promotion of good relations, within its workforce and its dealings with Port Users and other stakeholders

BHC wishes to meet the needs of the diverse nature of the society with which it interacts in the execution of its duties.

Definitions

The three principles are defined as:

Equity – providing equality of opportunity to its employees

Diversity - recognition, understanding and tolerance of difference.
Interdependence – recognising obligations and commitments to others.

Although not defined in the legislation the Equality Commission has agreed the following working definition of good relations:

“The growth of relationships and structures for Northern Ireland that acknowledge the religious, political and racial context of this society, and that seek to promote respect, equity and trust, and embrace diversity in all its forms”. (Equality Commission – Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, A guide to the Statutory Duties).

Scope

This policy on Good Relations is applicable to all Board Members and BHC employees and will influence how BHC interacts and communicates with its stakeholders.

Policy

BHC has published an Equality Scheme. Through this BHC’s commitment is extended to ensure that the methods used to promote equality have positive effects on good relations.

BHC is committed to the promotion of good relations in policy development and in the delivery of services. This applies to workplace relationships within BHC as well as its relationship with external stakeholders.

BHC will treat all employees, Port Users and other stakeholders with respect and dignity and will seek to provide a positive working environment, free from political, religious or racial discrimination, harassment or victimisation.

Effective policies are in place for dealing with harassment and discrimination and employees are made fully aware of these policies. BHC has also implemented procedures to deal with complaints of harassment and discrimination. Such offences will be taken very seriously and complaints from individuals in relation to harassment or discrimination will be dealt with in a sensitive manner.

Training will be provided for staff with a view to creating a positive, inclusive ethos where issues of good relations, stereotyping and discrimination can be discussed openly.

A formal procedure has been put in place to monitor and record all events and activities undertaken or taking place in relation to good relations work by BHC (see Appendix 1).

Roles and Responsibilities

Senior management of BHC will implement the good relations duty in consultation with its employees. All BHC employees will be expected to recognise and respect the diversity and interdependence of others, and ensure

that they are aware of BHC's statutory duties in relation to the Section 75 legislation.

Training

BHC will initiate and implement an awareness-training programme on good relations for all staff. Training is an integral part of any good relations strategy and will be a continuous process, which is evaluated, monitored and revised as required. It will be relevant and meaningful to staff and include awareness of responsibilities and attitudes. Awareness of the duty will also be incorporated into induction courses for new employees.

BHC will work closely with others in the development and delivery of good relations training where practical. The development and provision of this training will be reviewed taking account of BHC's experience and other relevant guidance e.g. from the Equality Commission.

Monitoring

BHC will monitor its work on good relations and will communicate progress on the delivery of its statutory duties through its annual progress reports to the Equality Commission.

This policy may need to be adapted from time to time in the future as the Northern Ireland community in general, and BHC, gain experience in the outworking of the legislation in practice and will be reviewed in light of guidance from the Equality Commission or from DRD, BHC's sponsor department.

Appendix 1

Good Relations Work

Under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 BHC is required in carrying out its functions, to have regard to the promotion of good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group.

The aim is to enhance and build on the Good Community Relations which exist throughout the harbour areas and to be a part of and support such work.

1.0	Who	- the work involved	<input type="text"/>
2.0	What	- it was exactly	<input type="text"/>
3.0	When	- did this take place (date)	<input type="text"/>
4.0	Where	- did this take place (location)	<input type="text"/>
5.0	Why	- did this happen, what was the reason	<input type="text"/>
6.0	Any other Comments	- in relation to this Good Relations Work	<input type="text"/>

Signed: _____

Date: _____

(Forms are to be returned to HR Department as soon as possible)