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Equality Scheme

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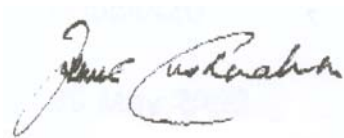
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1. Foreword

This is the Commissioners' Equality Scheme (the Scheme) for implementing the statutory duties imposed by section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

The Scheme highlights the Commissioners' commitment to the effective implementation, monitoring and reviewing progress of the statutory duties referred to above with regard to all its functions, powers and duties relating to Northern Ireland.

Such resources, internal arrangements, training and communications as are necessary to implement, monitor and review the progress of the Scheme will be made available effectively and on time by the Commissioners.



F.C. Cushnahan
Chairman



G.R. Irwin
Chief Executive

Date: 2 August 2001

2. Introduction

2.1 The Belfast Harbour Commissioners

The Belfast Harbour Commissioners (the Commissioners) is a body corporate constituted by the Belfast Harbour Act 1847 which will continue in existence until statutorily dissolved. The powers and duties of the Commissioners are contained in the various Belfast Harbour Acts and Orders 1847 to 1979. Only by legislation can these powers be amended. Under this legal and constitutional framework, The Port of Belfast is known as a 'trust port'.

The underlying purpose of the Commissioners is to promote the maintenance, improvement and efficient management of Belfast Harbour and the powers conferred on the Commissioners must be exercised for that purpose.

In this regard, their duties are akin to the directors of companies. They must act in the best interest of Belfast Harbour and must exercise such reasonable care and skill as might be reasonably expected of persons in that position. The Commissioners' principal interfaces are commercial with the private business sector community.

In addition to the above, the Commissioners must comply with directives from time to time issued by Government and which have a direct bearing on the Commissioners. These include matters relating to marine safety, oil pollution safeguards and environmental issues.

2.2 Equality of Opportunity and Promotion of Good Relations

Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 (the Act) imposes on Belfast Harbour Commissioners (the Commissioners) a duty, in the carrying out of all their functions powers and duties relating to Northern Ireland, to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity:

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

In addition, and without prejudice to these obligations, the Commissioners are required, in carrying out their functions, to have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious beliefs, political opinion or racial groups.

2.3 The Commissioners' Equality Scheme

The Act requires the Commissioners to prepare an Equality Scheme to show how the duties of promoting equality of opportunity and good relations will, in relation to their policies, be implemented, monitored and reflected. This is the function of this document, which sets out arrangements for:

- Consulting on the draft Scheme (S 3)
- Assessment of compliance with the Section 75 duties (S 4)
- Consulting on matters to which a duty under that section is likely to be relevant (S 5)
- Assessing and consulting on the impact of policies adopted or proposed to be adopted on the promotion of equality of opportunity (S 4)
- Monitoring adverse impacts of policies adopted on the promotion of equality of opportunity (S 8)
- Publication of equality impact assessments and monitoring and commitment to taking account of such equality impact assessments and consultations when making policy decisions (S 6)
- Training of staff (S 7)
- Public access to information and services provided by the Commissioners (S 8)
- Publication of the scheme (S 9)
- Handling complaints arising from failure to comply with the Scheme (S 10)
- Commitment to reviewing the Scheme within five years and forwarding a copy of such review to the Equality Commission. (S 4.3)

2.4 Organisational Structure of the Commissioners

The Commissioners operate in a competitive commercial environment within the statutory framework outlined at 2.1 above.

The Chairman of the Commissioners and the Commissioners, with the exception of the Chief Executive, are appointed by Government. The Chief Executive is an ex officio Commissioner. The Belfast City Council and trades unions are represented on the Board. Appointments by Government are normally for three years and are renewable at the discretion of Government to provide continuity to the business.

The Chief Executive has overall responsibility to the Commissioners for the efficient and safe operation of the Port within the statutory powers conferred upon the Commissioners.

Other senior management, reporting directly to the Chief Executive, and their functions are:-

Manager	Function
Port Operations and Development	Overall responsibility for port operations and business development
Harbour Master	Management of maritime operations, marine safety and day-to-day port operations
Estate	Management of non-Port lands
Technical Services	Maintenance of Harbour assets, management of capital works projects and Health and Safety
Personnel and Administration	Human resources and administration
Finance	Finance, pensions, IT and purchasing

2.5 Key Policies

The Commissioners have identified the following key policies in relation to the execution of their duties which may involve obligations under the Act for the promotion of equality of opportunity and good relations.

- Open Port Policy.
- Provision of Port facilities.
- Application of Port charges for the use of the Port facilities.
- Provision of adequate land for the future development and expansion of the Port.
- Acquisition and disposal of interests in land on the open market.
- Employment policies.
- Procurement.
- Provision of policing and security of Harbour Estate.
- Health and Safety.
- Environmental Policy.
- Application for such grants as may be available for any of the Commissioners activities
- Licensing of stevedores
- Implementing Codes of Practice where required
- Provision of Pilotage into and out of the Port.

- Business Development
- Maintain the Port as a Trust Port but with extended powers

3. Arrangements for Consulting on the draft Scheme

The draft Scheme was made available for consultation between 25 May and 20 June. Its availability was advertised in the Irish News, Newsletter, Belfast Telegraph and on the BHC web site.

185 copies of the Scheme (over 100 to port-related organisations with whom BHC have most interfaces) were sent to the bodies listed in Appendix 1 including the Equality Commission, other public authorities, voluntary groups, community groups, trade union groups and other groups who have a legitimate interest in the work of the Commissioners and/or the impact of the Commissioners' policies on equality of opportunity and good relations. Responses were received from 22 organisations, viz.:

Agricultural Research Institute of NI
 Association of Chief Officers of Voluntary Organisations (NI)
 British Deaf Association NI
 C.A.J.
 Carrickfergus Borough Council
 Coalition on Sexual Orientation
 Community Relations Council
 Community Relations Training & Learning Consortium
 Downs Syndrome Association
 Equality Commission for NI
 Equality Forum NI
 Health & Safety Executive NI
 Lesbian Line
 Mencap NI
 N.I. Women's European Platform
 NIACRO
 NIPSA
 Road Haulage Association
 Royal National Institute for Deaf People
 Rural Community Network
 West Belfast Economic Forum
 Women's Resource & Development Agency

Of the foregoing:

- 5 had no comments to make
- 14 were standard responses which mainly re-stated the principal terms of the legislation and did not directly address the BHC Scheme, and
- 3 made specific comments on the BHC Scheme

This BHC Scheme has been amended to take account of specific comments, where considered relevant. A summary of such comments is included at Appendix 2.

4. Arrangements for the assessment of compliance with the Section 75 duties

4.1 General

The contact point for comments from those affected by the Scheme or for those who wish to comment on the Commissioners statutory functions within the Scheme is:

Mr T. Lenehan
Belfast Harbour Commissioners,
Harbour Office
Corporation Square
Belfast BT1 3AL
Telephone 028 9055 4422
Fax 028 9055 4411
E-Mail t.lenehan@belfast-harbour.co.uk

A committee will be formed comprising the Chief Executive and two senior managers. This committee will meet quarterly, under the chairmanship of the Chief Executive, to monitor and review the implementation and progress of the Section 75 duties. This committee will report to the Chair and the Commissioners on a quarterly basis.

BHC are committed to providing the necessary resources, either internal or external, which are required to ensure compliance with their statutory duties.

Any issues, procedures objectives and targets arising from these meetings will be communicated to relevant staff and staff performance relating to the statutory duties and such objectives and targets will be monitored and reviewed through performance review arrangements.

The Commissioners will prepare an annual review of the Scheme. This will include an assessment of progress made and limitations experienced concerning implementation of the arrangements specified in the Scheme and in complying with the duties. This review will be included in the Commissioners' Annual Report.

The Commissioners will liaise with the Equality Commission with a view to ensuring that such progress is maintained.

Arrangements for screening and impact assessment

In fulfilling its statutory obligations, the Commissioners intend to adopt a four stage approach:

- | | |
|---------|---|
| Stage 1 | Initial screening of policies |
| Stage 2 | Timetable for setting priorities |
| Stage 3 | Consultation on the further screening of policies identified in Stage 1 as requiring impact assessment. |
| Stage 4 | Report on the screening exercise |

These are described below.

4.2.1 Stage 1 – Initial screening of policies

The Commissioners will screen all of their policies in order to determine which would require a further equality analysis in the form of an impact assessment.

The proposed procedure for screening policies will be subject to consultation with those listed in Appendix 1, including the Equality Commission, other public authorities, voluntary groups, community groups, trade union groups, and other groups who have a legitimate interest in the matter.

The screening criteria which the Commissioners will use are:

- (a) Is there any evidence, or other reason to believe, that there is higher or lower participation or uptake by different groups?
- (b) Is there any evidence that different groups have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to the particular policy issue?
- (c) Is there an opportunity to better promote equality of opportunity or better community relations by altering the policy or working with others in government or in the wider community?
- (d) Have consultations with relevant groups, organisations or individuals indicated that particular policies create problems which are specific to them?

The same criteria and factors as those identified above will be applied when considering which new policies will be subject to equality impact assessment.

4.2.2 Stage 2 – Timetable for setting priorities

The Commissioners will subject all of its policies detailed at paragraph 2.5 to the screening criteria. If the answer to any of the criteria set in paragraph 4.2.1 is positive, consideration will be given to whether to subject the policy to impact assessment.

Having screened their policies as outlined in Stage 1 and defined which policies they believe should be subjected to full impact assessment, the Commissioners will prioritise these using the following criteria:

- Relevance to social need
- Effect of economic, social and human rights
- Effect on peoples daily lives
- Scale of expenditure incurred by the policy

The Commissioners will consult with the Equality Commission, other public bodies, voluntary, community, trade union and other groups with a legitimate interest in the matter whether or not they have a direct economic or personal interest. Equality impact assessments of relevant policies will be completed within 6 months of the policy having been identified as requiring an impact assessment.

Other new policies may be developed during the five year period which cannot yet be specified. Any new policies will be screened for impact assessment using the criteria identified at paragraph 4.2.1.

4.2.3 Stage 3 – Consultation on the duties required by S 75 and the further screening of policies identified in Stage 1 as requiring impact assessment

The Commissioners will commence Stages 1 and 2 in October 2001. The screening will include consultation with the organisations listed at Appendix 1 on both the procedure for screening and the result of screening and the timetabling/prioritisation exercise (see Appendix 3). Stage 3 will be carried out within a further 3 month period. In addition to writing to interested parties the Commissioners will also consult through meetings with groups or individuals, press releases and the internet.

The Commissioners consider it particularly important that sufficient, timely and appropriate information is provided to enable all affected groups and individuals to consider the full implications of proposals, and it will take steps to ensure this.

The Commissioners will make available to those being consulted

- Information which has informed a decision taken by them
- Information which has been directly responsible for a decision taken by them

where such information is not commercially or legally sensitive.

The same criteria and factors as those identified in paragraph 4.2.1 will be applied when considering which new policies will be subject to impact assessment.

4.2.4 Stage 4 – Report on the screening exercise

The Commissioners will include a report of the screening exercise including the results of consultation in its annual report to the Equality Commission. This will include the outcome of consultation on proposed screening procedures, details of those consulted, policies proposed by those consulted as appropriate for impact assessment and timetables for carrying out impact assessments. Policies proposed for impact assessment by those consulted and in respect of which the Commissioners have not carried out impact assessments will be identified and the reasons noted.

The Commissioners Annual Report will include the results of the screening exercise.

4.3 Other arrangements for ongoing compliance

The Chief Executive has a personal responsibility to the Commissioners to ensure that the Scheme is complied with.

Any paper presented to the Commissioners, or any Sub-committee of the Commissioners, for approval will include a statement from the manager presenting the paper that any new policy (whether stated or implied) has been assessed with regard to the equality of opportunity duties referred to above and will also include a note of what steps, consultations or impact assessments have been or will be carried out with regard to satisfying the equality of opportunity duties.

The Commissioners will monitor complaints that the statutory duties have not been fulfilled and will seek to resolve such complaints to the satisfaction of the complainant. Where the complainant is not satisfied for whatever reason, the Commissioners will liaise with the Equality Commission on the matter.

The Commissioners will conduct a comprehensive review of their Equality Scheme within five years of its submission to the Equality Commission and will forward a copy of this review to the Equality Commission and will make this review public.

4.4 Equality impact assessments

4.4.1 The Commissioners intend to carry out equality impact assessments where policies adopted or proposed to be adopted are perceived to impact on the promotion of equality of opportunity and good relation, while being mindful of the need to maintain confidentiality of legally or commercially sensitive information.

4.4.2 Equality impact assessments will be carried out in accordance with Annex 1 of the Guidelines within 6 months of the policy having been identified as requiring impact assessment.

- 4.4.3 In making any decision with respect to a policy adopted or proposed to be adopted, the Commissioners will take into account any equality impact assessment and consultation carried out in relation to the policy.

5. Arrangements for consulting on matters to which a duty under Section 75 is likely to be relevant

In relation to the Equality Scheme, screening, impact assessments, and any other matters relating to the Section 75 duties, the Commissions will consult with those listed in Appendix 1, including the Equality Commission, Community Relations Council, voluntary groups, community groups, trade union groups, and organisations represented in the various categories included in the Guide to the Statutory Duties.

The Commissioners will work with representative groups and individuals of the S 75 categories in order to identify how best to obtain their views. This may involve face to face meetings, advisory groups, surveys, consultative panels, internet discussions, citizens juries, and other innovative ways of consulting as there will be different means of consultation for different groups and it will be important to establish the basis for dialogue and engagement during the life of the Scheme.

Appropriate measures will be taken to ensure full participation in any meetings held. In addition, consideration will be given to the time of day, appropriateness of the venue, in particular whether it can be accessed by those with disabilities, how the meeting is to be run, the use of appropriate language, whether a signer is necessary and the provision of childcare. With regard to such meetings, information will be made available to ensure meaningful consultation. Specific consideration will be given to how best to communicate information to young people and those with learning disabilities through consultation with relevant representative organisations. The Commissioners will also release all relevant data and other documentation, such as consultant's reports, where such information is not commercially or legally sensitive, prior to consultation taking place.

The consultation process will include discussion with relevant individuals and representative organisations to determine the most effective method of consultation. Information will be made available in consultation with the affected groups to ensure the highest level of inclusivity in any policy decision making. The Commissioners are committed to ensure that systems are put in place to ensure that information will be available in timely fashion and in accessible formats as appropriate such as Braille, large print, audio cassette and minority languages for those who have difficulty understanding English.

In consulting on impact assessments or on new policies, the Commissioners will consider using any of the following methods :

- Letter
- Meetings with the public in groups or as individuals
- Standing or ad hoc consultative for a
- Attitude surveys of service users and potential service users
- Consultative panels
- Press releases/advertisements in publications which could best target the relevant groups
- Internet
- Direct invitation to groups

The Commissioners are committed to ensuring that consultation with groups and individuals will begin as early as possible and will be timely, open and inclusive. The Commissioners will allow a period of 2 months for such consultation and will ensure that adequate time will be allowed for groups to consult among themselves as part of the process of forming a view. Where exceptional circumstances do not permit compliance with this, such occurrences will be monitored, kept under review, justified and reported on in the Commissioners annual review.

When consultation is carried out with regard to the equality of opportunity duty, consultation with regard to the promotional duty of good relations will be undertaken at the same time.

6. Publication of assessments and monitoring

- 6.1 The Commissioners will make publicly available the outcome of any equality impact assessment and of any monitoring carried out as described in Section 4. Information will be accessible and comprehensible and systems will be established to ensure that information is available in such accessible and comprehensible form and in timely fashion. Information will be available in braille, disc, audio cassette, and in minority languages to meet the needs of those not fluent in English. This will be done in the following ways:
- 6.2 The material will be published on the Commissioners' website at www.belfast-harbour.co.uk
- 6.3 It will also be available in printed form and in other accessible formats at the Commissioners' offices at Harbour Office, Corporation Square, Belfast, BT1 3AL.
- 6.4 All groups and individuals consulted during the preparation of the assessment will be advised of the availability of the information.
- 6.5 Where general consultation has taken place the general public will be advised of the availability of the information through a press release.
- 6.6 Other methods and formats of publication will also be considered including publications and media associated with the S 75 categories and will take into account how best to communicate with young people and people with learning disabilities.
- 6.7 Published documentation on an equality impact assessment will include:
- The aims of the policy.
 - Details of consideration given to alternatives which might better achieve the promotion of equality of opportunity.
 - Details of any consideration given to mitigate any adverse impact the policy might have on equality of opportunity

6.8 Monitoring

Knowledge of the uptake of services provided by the Commissioners and the impact of its policies on the different groups within the Section 75 categories will be of assistance in assessing progress towards equality of opportunity. Within one year of approval of this scheme, the Commissioners will assess the extent of existing monitoring and the scope for extending it. The Commissioners will report on proposed amendments before they are introduced, consult with those affected as they carry out this assessment and consult on the findings and recommendations of the assessments prior to implementation.

In addition to the value of any further information required for assessing progress towards equality of opportunity, this review will also take into account the following factors:

- availability of information from specialist data collection agencies
- availability of proxy measures (e.g. postcode analysis)

A system will be established to monitor the impact of policies in order to identify their effects on the various groups. This will be reviewed on an annual basis and the results will be made known to the relevant groups and will be widely and openly published e.g. by press releases, prominent advertisements in the press, the internet and direct mail shots to groups representing the various categories in Section 75.

If monitoring and evaluation show that a policy results in greater adverse impact than predicted or if opportunities arise which would allow for greater equality of opportunity to be promoted, the Commissioners will ensure that the policy is revised.

- 6.9 In some cases an equality impact assessment may identify an anticipated differential adverse impact on particular groups within the Section 75 categories. Assuming that no alternative policy is feasible, steps will be taken, wherever possible, to mitigate such anticipated adverse impact. The Commissioners will consider, in these circumstances, undertaking special monitoring to confirm the extent of the adverse impact and/or the success of any mitigating measures. Information collected in this special monitoring would be taken into account in any future review of the policy.

7. Arrangements for training staff on issues relevant to the duties

The Commissioners are fully committed to the implementation of the Scheme and will ensure that staff receive a programme of effective communication and training on the content of the Equality Scheme and that BHC's commitment is also externally communicated. Management, specialist staff and staff engaged in monitoring and evaluation will receive more focussed training. Staff engaged in consultation exercises will also receive necessary training. It is proposed that training will be organised through the Department of Regional Development and will be developed in consultation with the affected groups.

This programme of training will commence in the first year and will be ongoing throughout the period covered by the Scheme.

Training for staff will be undertaken following the approval of this Scheme and a programme of ongoing communication will then be put in place.

A detailed training plan will be prepared for all staff over the 5-year period to which the Scheme refers which will aim to achieve the objectives outlined below;

- To raise awareness of current anti-discrimination legislation in Northern Ireland including the provisions of S 75, Schedule 9 and S 76 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. This will include an explanation of the duties and their implications for all employees.
- To provide those employees involved in the screening of policies with the necessary skills and knowledge to do this work effectively
- To provide those employees involved in the equality impact assessment of policies with the necessary skills and knowledge to do this work effectively
- To provide those employees who deal with complaints in relation to the implementation of the Scheme with the necessary skills and knowledge to investigate and monitor complaints effectively
- To provide those employees involved in the consultation processes with the necessary skills and knowledge to do this work effectively
- To provide those employees involved in the implementation and monitoring of the effective implementation of the Scheme to do this work effectively
- To evaluate the extent to which all participants in this training programme have acquired the necessary skills and knowledge to achieve each of the above objectives and to assess the extent to which staff understand their role in implementing the duties.

An annual review will be carried out of the extent to which these objectives have been met and will be included in the Commissioners Annual report to the Equality Commission.

All employees and those within the remit of the Scheme will be given a summary of the approved Equality Scheme and will have access to a copy of the full Scheme.

As part of their induction training all new employees will be informed of the requirements of Section 75 and given a summary of the Scheme.

8. Public access to information and services

Arrangements will be made to ensure that there is public access to information and services provided by the Commissioners. These arrangements will be continually monitored to ensure equality of opportunity.

The Commissioners will take measures to ensure that the free flow of information between the Commissioners and any individuals or groups of people is not impeded because:

- they have sensory and learning disabilities and may have particular difficulties with information in print;
- they are not completely fluent in English;
- they are young people; or
- some local newspapers are read predominantly by members of only one community.

In this connection BHC will consider the most appropriate form in which to provide information, e.g. audio, Braille, language.

In disseminating information through the local press, the Commissioners will ensure that press statements and public notices or advertisements are placed in all three Belfast daily newspapers including the North West version of the Belfast Telegraph.

9. Publication of the scheme

- 9.1 On submission of the final scheme to the Equality Commission it will be made available at the Commissioners' office and also on the Commissioners' website. It will also be circulated to those organisations who have responded to the Draft Scheme.
- 9.2 This Scheme will be published widely in a manner which will ensure equality of access and will include press releases, prominent advertisements in the press, the internet and direct mail shots to groups representing the various categories in Section 75. A summary of the Scheme will also be available.

10. Arrangements for dealing with complaints

- 10.1 The Commissioners seek a positive public perception of its aims and activities. It is open and responsive to suggestions towards and criticism of the way it conducts its business and especially in terms of issues of equality of opportunity and the promotion of good relations.
- 10.2 Any complaint will be treated courteously, promptly and effectively and in accordance with the following procedure.

10.3 Complaints will be received by post, fax, or e-mail, addressed to:

Mr T. Lenehan
Belfast Harbour Commissioners,
Harbour Office
Corporation Square
Belfast BT1 3AL
Telephone 028 9055 4422
Fax 028 9055 4411
E-Mail t.lenehan@belfast-harbour.co.uk

10.4 A complaint perceived to be of a minor nature will be dealt with and a response given within five working days. A complaint perceived to be of a more serious nature will be acknowledged within five working days and if investigation is likely to be protracted an intended response date will be given. This will not normally be longer than two months.

10.5 Complaints may be pursued with the Equality Commission in accordance with paragraph 10 of Schedule 9 to the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

List of Consultees on the Draft Scheme

Age Concern Northern Ireland	Foyle Friend
Agricultural Research Institute of Northern Ireland	Gay and Lesbian Youth Northern Ireland
Alliance Party	General Municipal Boilermakers and Allied Trades Union
Amalgamated Engineering and Electrical Union	Gingerbread Northern Ireland
Amalgamated Transport and General Workers Union	Greater East Belfast Partnership
Association of Chief Officers of Voluntary Associations	Guide Dogs for the Blind Association
Barnardos	Health & Safety Executive
Belfast City Council	Help the Aged, Northern Ireland
Belfast Lough Sea and Shore Group	Indian Community Centre
Belfast Shipping Agents Association	Laganside Corporation
Boating Services	Lesbian Line
British Deaf Association	Local Government Staff Commission for Northern Ireland
Carafriend	MENCAP
Carers National Association Northern Ireland	Missions to Seamen
Carrickfergus Borough Council	Multi-Cultural Resource Centre
Cedar Foundation	Newtownabbey Borough Council
Child Care Northern Ireland	North Down Borough Council
Child Poverty Action Group (NI)	North West Forum of People with Disabilities
Children's Law Centre	Northern Ireland African Cultural Centre
Chinese Welfare Association	Northern Ireland Anti-Poverty Network
Coalition on Sexual Orientation	Northern Ireland Association for Mental Health
Committee on the Administration of Justice	Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities
Community Development and Health Network (NI)	Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action
Community Relations Council	Rural Community Network
Community Relations/Training/Learning Consortium	Northern Ireland Gay Rights Association
Democratic Unionist Party	Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission
Department of Agriculture and Rural Development	Northern Ireland Public Service Alliance
Department of Regional Development	Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency
Disability Action	Northern Ireland Women's Aid Federation
Down's Syndrome Association	Northern Ireland Women's European Platform
East Belfast Community Development Agency	NSPCC
Employees	NUS USI Northern Ireland Student Centre
Employers Forum on Disability	Parents and Professionals and Autism
Equality Commission	Port Users
Equality Forum NI	Putting Children First
Equality Unit	Queer Space
Falls Community Council	Rainbow Project
Family Planning Association NI	River Users Forum

Royal National Institute for Deaf People (NI)
Royal National Institute for the Blind (NI)
Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
Sailortown Cultural and Historical Society
Save the Children
Sense NI
Sinn Fein
Social Democratic and Labour Party
Staff Commission for Education and Library Boards
Stella Maris Seamen's Residential Club
Stevedores
Trades Associations
Traveller Movement Northern Ireland
Tug Companies
Ulster Unionist Party
Union of Construction, Allied Trades and Technicians
West Belfast Economic Forum
Women's Centre
Women's Forum Northern Ireland
Women's Information Group
Women's Resource and Development Agency
Women's Support Network
Youth Council for Northern Ireland

This list is not exhaustive and may be amended in the light of experience.

Summary of Comments Received on BHC's Draft Scheme

Only three organisations made specific comments on the BHC Scheme.

Northern Ireland Public Service Alliance (NIPSA) – 19 June 2000

- NIPSA wishes to see BHC conduct an assessment of their employment policies with regard to the Fair Employment and Treatment Order 1998.
- NIPSA wishes to be consulted on BHC's annual statement.
- NIPSA emphasises the importance of additional resourcing to take forward the BHC Scheme.

Northern Ireland Women's European Platform (NIWEP) – 27 June 2000

NIWEP's comments included:

- the importance of resourcing;
- circulation of BHC's annual report to organisations which responded to the draft Scheme;
- ensuring that satisfactory arrangements are put in place for consultations;
- publication of impact assessments to be as wide as possible;
- monitoring should be carried out in co-operation with specialist agencies;
- all staff should be trained on the Equality Scheme and community organisations could be involved;
- BHC should ensure that information is provided to those with sensory and learning disabilities and young people;
- the BHC Scheme should be published as widely as possible and to those groups which responded to the draft.
- satisfactory arrangements should be put in place for receiving complaints.

Equality Commission for Northern Ireland – 27 June 2000

Specific comments included

- the inclusion in the BHC Scheme of commitments to early consultation with groups and individuals, consideration of accessibility of language and format of information to ensure that there are no barriers to the consultation process;
- systems being put in place to ensure that information is available in accessible formats in a timely fashion;
- objectives and targets being built into corporate and annual operating plans and reflected at all levels of strategic planning, including staff objectives;
- staff performance relating to the statutory duties being monitored and reviewed;
- consideration of how best to communicate information to young people and those with learning disabilities;
- consideration of training for those engaged in consultation exercises;
- providing adequate time for consultation;
- taking appropriate measures to ensure full participation in any meetings that are held and to make information available to ensure meaningful consultation;

- the release by BHC of relevant quantitative and qualitative data and other documentation such as consultants' reports;
- the outcome of consultation on screening, including details of those consulted, being included in BHC's report to the Equality Commission together with details of which policies will be subject to impact assessment and which policies proposed by those consulted as appropriate for impact assessment have not been included and why;
- BHC consulting with those directly affected by the policy to be assessed, whether or not they have a direct economic or personal interest, as well as other public bodies, voluntary, community, trade union and other groups;
- BHC taking into account any equality impact assessment and consultation carried out in making any decision with respect to a policy adopted or proposed to be adopted;
- BHC monitoring access to information and services to ensure equality of opportunity;
- BHC's Scheme including a timetable for the measures included;
- ensuring that the Scheme will be published widely and in a manner which will ensure equality of access.

Summary Timetable/Action Plan

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Impact Assessments			
Employment	X		
Environmental (including waste management and pollution)	X		
Procurement		X	
Business development		X	
Employee handbooks			X
Provision of Port Facilities			X
Outline policy statements	X		
Staff training	X	X	X
Staffing structure	X		