

# **EQUALITY COMMISSION FOR NORTHERN IRELAND**

## **Public Authority Progress Report 2005 - 2006**

### **Newry and Mourne District Council**

## **Newry and Mourne District Council Progress Report 2005-2006**

### **Introduction**

This report covers the period 1 April 2005 to 31 March 2006 and has been submitted to the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland further to approval by Newry and Mourne District Council at its Equality Committee at a meeting on 21 September 2006.

This report follows the guidance set out by the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland on assessing the extent to which progress has been made. The report contains twelve sections encompassing important developments in the effective implementation of Newry and Mourne District Council's Section 75 duties.

Name of public authority (Enter details below)

Newry and Mourne District Council

Equality Officer name and contact details (Enter details below)

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## **Section 1: Strategic Implementation of the Section 75 Duties**

- Outline evidence of progress made in developing equality and good relations objectives, performance indicators and targets in corporate and annual operating plans during 2005-06. Your response should include any targets for 2006-07.
- Please provide details of the **direct** resourcing of Section 75 work during 2005–06. This should include staff appointed/directed (*not names*) and details of any budget allocation, to specifically deliver equality scheme commitments.

### **Response:**

#### **Bullet 1**

During the period 2005-2006 Newry and Mourne District Council has continued to deliver upon its commitment to progress the statutory duties, and as a civic leader, Newry and Mourne District Council has various methods of developing equality and good relations objectives such as:

- An Equality Unit encompassing the functions of equality, continuous improvement, good relations, public relations and communications.
- The continued implementation of the Council's Community Relations Audit, through the Internal and External Good Relations Officers.
- The Council has appointed the Director of Administration as its Diversity Champion.
- In addition to the monthly Equality Committee meetings, the Council has continued to mainstream equality objectives into the corporate structure. In assisting the process mainstreaming equality of opportunity and good relations into decision-making and service delivery this meant the screening of all new or proposed policies, regular service reviews and further amending the Council's grant application form and assessment process. In advance of an equality impact assessment of the Council's Voluntary Contribution system, a new scoring and prioritisation process was piloted during the 2005-2006.
- In furthering our duty of care towards employees and recognizing the sensitivity and personal nature of many issues the Council provides a 24 hour Careline with Staffcare. Being confidential and independent, gives confidential advice and support and the service

complements line management, personnel and occupational health. Lone working is also an issue and the Council has initiated the Argyll Systems for those employees who may work alone, have to attend meetings in remote locations or work alone at night.

- In addition, Council has undertaken an independent stress audit with employees and proposals will be implemented during 2006-2007.
- The increasing numbers of migrant workers within the Newry and Mourne District Council area has meant Council Officials increasing awareness of the Council's welcome pack which was produced in five different languages, through information evenings, and specific training for employees and Elected Members on diversity and intercultural awareness training.
- Newry and Mourne District Council is a member of the Local Government Statutory Duty Network which meets on a regular basis to share information and best practice regarding the implementation of the statutory duties.
- As stated in our progress report for 2004-2005, Newry and Mourne District Council worked with the Equality Commission in Northern Ireland and other selected public authorities to develop a Disability Employment Action Plan and Policy. This continued to be implemented during 2005-2006 through a survey of staff to ascertain their views with regard to issues of disability and suggestions regarding further reasonable adjustments which could be made within the workplace. In addition, the survey allowed the Council to raise awareness of its interview guarantee scheme for persons with a disability.
- Furthermore the Council has also worked in conjunction with the Conifers, Newry and Mourne Health and Social Services Trust, to host an event recognising businesses within the private sector who provided workplace opportunities for people with a disability.

Participative democracy through dialogue is a key strategy for Newry and Mourne District Council illustrated by:

- Ongoing meetings of our Household Panel which meets on a quarterly basis. Members of the Council's Senior Management Team attend each meeting and the Household Panel has proved to be a means of assisting the Council directly engage with citizens and seek their views on Council policies and services.

- In conjunction with Mediation Northern Ireland, Newry and Mourne District Council co-ordinates and facilitates civic dialogue through hosting the Newry Good Relations Forum. The aim of the forum is to positively contribute to good relations in Newry between people of different political, religious and ethnic background and improving relationships between Newry and other parts of the district of Newry and Mourne. This forum provides 'quiet' space for citizens of the Newry area to discuss, debate and challenge perceptions so enabling participants to improve understanding both their own and other participant's views on issues impacting upon the area.
- During the 2005-2006 period members of the Newry Good Relations Forum and the Belfast Civic Leadership Group undertook a week-long study visit to Amsterdam to learn more about how Amsterdam is managing the process the diversity within society. This learning assisted during the planning for the three-day Convention: The Challenge of Change in Newry organised by Newry and Mourne District Council, Belfast City Council and Louth County Council during June 2006.

Newry and Mourne District Council also has various committees which comprise Councillors and lay members of the community who have a specific interest and knowledge. Examples of these committees are the Council's Sports Development Committee, Museum Committee, Irish Language Committee and Ulster Scots Committee. It should be noted that each of these committees have specific budgets which allow the committee to allocate funding to the development of the various themes.

Examples of other partnership work include:

- Newry and Mourne District Council's Clerk and Chief Executive membership of the Northern Ireland Race Forum.
- Newry and Mourne District Council membership of Opportunity Now and the Employees Forum on Disability.
- The Council's Assistant Director of Administration (Equality) is on the Board of Opportunity Now NI which strives to progress gender equality in the workplace.
- The Council's Environmental Health Department, in conjunction with Newry Institute of Further and Higher Education, continues to

organize Food Hygiene Training in Cantonese and Mandarin for members of the Chinese community.

In addition to all of the above, Newry and Mourne District Council continues to avail of opportunities to meet with numerous community and voluntary organisations for the sharing of information and has co-ordinated events and seminars.

## **Bullet 2**

With regard to direct resourcing of Section 75 work during 2005-2006:

- The Director of Administration is accountable for the overall development, implementation and review of our equality scheme.
- The Assistant Director of Administration (Equality) will advise the Council of progress in relation to the scheme and delegates the Equality Officer, the duty to supervise implementation of the scheme and be a point of contact.
- The Assistant Director of Administration (Equality) is the lead officer of Newry and Mourne District Council's Equality Unit. This unit encompasses the functions of equality, community relations, best value, public relations and communications, and has six full time employees. Whilst the Equality Officer has a specific remit to advance work on the equality scheme delivery, the Internal Good Relations Officer and External Good Relations Officer also have a specific role in promoting good relations.
- Whilst the Council does not have a specific budget allocation to deliver equality scheme commitments, the Equality Officer was allocated £9000.00 in the period 2005/2006 for Training, Positive / Affirmative Action and Consultancy fees.

## **Section 2: Screening & Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA)**

2a) If a Screening Report has not yet been submitted to the Commission please advise us on the current position with regard to producing this report and forwarding to the Commission.

## **Response**

N/A

2b) If a Screening Report and EQIA Timetable has **previously been submitted** to the Commission please provide an update (**using the matrices in Appendix A**) of policies subject to EQIA during 2005-06, new/proposed/revised policies screened during 2005-06, ongoing EQIA monitoring activities and 2006-07 EQIA timetable.

### **Section 3: Training**

- Outline staff and Management Board/Committee training during 2005-06 associated with the Section 75 duties/Equality Scheme requirements (Provide details of types of training provision e.g. general awareness raising, specialist training on EQIA, Screening and Consultation). Provide a summary of any training evaluations and comments on the benefits of such training.

#### **Response**

Newry and Mourne District Council's commitment to training was set out in Section 12 of its Equality Scheme and further in the Summary Action Plan and Timetable. The Council's believes that the training plan should evolve to not just meet the needs of participants over the lifespan of its Equality Scheme but further into the future. Newry and Mourne District Council is committed to mainstreaming equality which means that all training related to people management and service delivery includes details of the Council's statutory duties to promote equality of opportunity and good relations across the Section 75 categories.

Training undertaken to date has been aimed at increasing awareness and greater understanding of emerging issues, in addition to the Council's statutory equality duties to promote equality of opportunity and good relations and to ensuring improved delivery of our services. Newry and Mourne District Council continues to place value on training that is of both a formal and informal nature.

Examples of training delivered during 2005-2006 has included:

- Diversity Awareness training – delivered by Business in the Community
- Recruitment and Selection interviewing training
- Conflict management training
- Investigator training for employees who undertake investigations into bullying and harassment.
- Child protection training
- Good relations training seminars for Elected Members
- Stress management

Evaluations of training have enabled participants to indicate their views upon the benefits and relevancy of their training, and identifying further training needs.

In addition, the Council in reviewing its overall training needs, has recruited an additional Personnel Officer with responsibility for the co-ordination of the Council's programme of training.

#### **Section 4: Communication**

- Provide details of how the authority communicated progress on delivery of the statutory duties during 2005-06.
- Provide details of any review of communication activities during the year to ensure effective communication on progressing the statutory duties.

#### **Response**

##### **Bullets 1& 2**

Newry and Mourne District Council are fully committed to communicating our commitment to the statutory duties. Examples of internal and external communication include:

- The location of the Council's Corporate Press Office within the Equality Unit. The Corporate Press Office is administered by the Assistant Director of Administration (Equality) and Public Relations Officer. All speeches, press releases, statements and corporate documents continued to reiterate our commitment to equality.

- The Council's communications strategy has been equality screened and is continuously updated to reflect the changing needs.
- The Mayor, Clerk and Chief Executive, Officers and Elected Members express their commitment to the Council's Section 75 duties during speeches at corporate events and public meetings etc.
- The Council's website is used to disseminate information. This can be viewed in both the English and Irish language.
- Publication of the 'Citizens News' booklet which is available in all accessible formats such as braille, large print, audio transcription, and the Irish language. This is produced on a six-monthly basis and circulated to all households in the Newry and Mourne District Council area.
- Council's monthly internal newsletter – 'The Grapevine'.
- Use of the Equality Unit stand at all promotional events.
- Production of staff information leaflets on a range of issues.
- Awareness raising seminars and lectures for the community. Newry and Mourne Council continues to meet with various community and voluntary groups on a regular basis for the sharing of information and has co-ordinated events and seminars such as that with the Conifers Centre, Newry and Mourne Health and Social Services Trust, the Local Government Staff Commission, Business in the Community, Employers Forum on Disability NI, and the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland.
- Presentations to target groups such as Newry and Mourne Vision Forum, representatives of the Polish Resource Centre and Newry Deaf Club.

## **Section 5: Data Collection & Analysis**

- Describe any systems that were established during 2005-06 to supplement available statistical and qualitative research, including consideration given to using internal organisational data and external networks.
- Describe any systems established during the year to monitor the future adverse impact of policies that were subject to EQIA.

- Detail any research undertaken/commissioned during 2005-06 to obtain data/information relating to the nine equality categories.

## **Response**

### **Bullets 1,2 & 3**

As stated in our previous annual progress report for 2004-2005, Newry and Mourne District Council worked with the Equality Commission in Northern Ireland and other selected public authorities to develop a Disability Employment Action Plan and Policy. This continued to be implemented during 2005-2006 through a survey of staff to ascertain their views with regard to issues of disability and suggestions regarding further reasonable adjustments which could be made within the workplace. In addition, the survey allowed the Council to raise awareness of its interview guarantee scheme for persons with a disability.

To further supplement available statistical and research the Council continues to look to develop and enhance the quality of its relationships and links in the voluntary, community and private sectors.

A variety of these have been established and these include:

- The Equality Commission for Northern Ireland
- LGSC Statutory Duty Network
- Southern Region Community Relations Officers Forum
- Membership of Opportunity Now
- Membership of Employers Forum on Disability
- Links with locally based community networks e.g. ROSA, ROMAL, Confederation of Community Groups,
- Newry Vision Forum
- Newry and Mourne Deaf Club, RNID and RNIB
- Newry and Mourne Women, South Armagh Rural Women's Network
- Newry and Mourne Users Consortium
- Links with NISRA and the Community Relations Council
- Liaison with other organisations such as NICEM, CoSO, Mediation Northern Ireland and the Parades Commission etc.
- Internet research

## **Section 6: Information Provision, Access to Information and Services**

- Outline what action has been taken during 2005-06 to develop arrangements for the provision of information in accessible formats.
- Detail any initiatives/steps taken to improve access to services.

### **Response**

#### **Bullets 1 & 2**

During the period 2005-2006 Newry and Mourne District Council continued to liaise with service providers, individuals and consultants such as Newry and Mourne Health and Social Services Trust, Visual Access Northern Ireland, RNID, RNIB, Disability Action, Newry Vision Forum, Newry Deaf Club and Newry and Mourne Users Consortium. This has also meant seeking advice and support from organizations such as the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure, POBAL, Ulster Scots Heritage Council and Plain English Campaign.

As a matter of good practice, Newry and Mourne District Council makes all corporate documents available in alternative formats such as large print, audio CD, Braille and Irish Language. The Council has also produced documents in Cantonese, Mandarin, Polish, Russian, Italian, Portuguese and Ulster Scots.

However, following consultation with Newry and Mourne Health and Social Services Trust, many of the documents are now purely provided on request, which has led to a cost effective approach to providing documents in alternative formats.

Newry and Mourne also advertises widely using the six local weekly papers, to communicate Council events and services such as changes to bin collection, funding opportunities, sporting summer schemes etc.

In addition, Newry and Mourne District Council engages directly with stakeholders to discuss and provide information regarding services provided by the Council.

Various initiatives have been undertaken to improve access to services. Examples of this include:

- Quarterly meetings of the Household Panel
- Monthly meetings of the Good Relations Forum
- Publication of the Council's 'Citizens News' booklet is produced on a six-monthly basis and circulated to all households in the Newry and Mourne District Council area. This provides information regarding services offered by the Council such as assisted bin collections for members of the community who are unable to move bins to the front of their houses.
- Information seminars run in conjunction with the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, Employer's Forum on Disability Northern Ireland, the Local Government Staff Commission, Disability Action
- Speaking at meetings of Newry Users Group, Newry Vision Forum, Shopmobility etc
- Partnership events involving the Community Safety Partnership, Newry and Mourne Senior Citizens Consortium, Conifers Resource Centre etc
- Information roadshows regarding the Council's Voluntary Contribution grant process
- Meet and greet sessions with minority ethnics and representatives of the Newry Polish Resource Centre

Various systems of monitoring access to information and services are in operation such as:

- The Council's Customer Services Section monitors refuse collection and the numbers of households receiving assisted bin collections.
- The Council's Finance Department keeps a detailed record of groups who are successful in receiving grant aid from the Council's Voluntary Contribution programme.
- The Council's Irish Language Department monitors the implementation of the Council's Bilingualism Policy for the promotion and use of the Irish Language and prepares regular reports to the Irish Language Committee.

## **Section 7: Complaints**

- Identify, during 2005-06, the number of Section 75 complaints:
  - received by the authority;
  - resolved by the authority;
  - which were not resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant; and
  - which were referred to the Equality Commission.

### **Response**

Newry and Mourne District Council received no Section 75 complaints during 2005-2006.

## **Section 8: Scheme Timetable**

- Provide an update of your equality scheme implementation timetable (covering all the scheme commitments), identifying any changes since your previous report. Please detail any planned actions outstanding.

### **Response**

Newry and Mourne District Council's five-year equality scheme implementation timetable is monitored and reviewed by Newry and Mourne District Council's Equality Committee. This committee is a full Council committee including all 30 Elected Representatives. The Equality Committee meets on a monthly basis and the agenda is comprised of a variety of issues that enable the elected members keep up to date with work undertaken to promote equality of opportunity and good relations.

In the previous annual report for the period 2004-2005 Newry and Mourne District Council indicated that with regard to its equality scheme implementation timetable, it had decided that to best mainstream equality, future reviews of policies and practices would be integrated into ongoing service reviews. This process was evident in the approach undertaken in relation to review the Council's Voluntary Contributions Policy, wherein during 2005, following on from a preliminary review in the early stages of an equality impact

assessment, it was decided to amend the policy in line with Section 75 obligations.

At 31 March 2006 Newry and Mourne District Council's Equality Impact Assessment of the Council's Voluntary Contributions Policy, on the promotion and active use of the Irish Language, was at stage 3 of the process, consideration of measures which might mitigate any adverse impact and alternative policies which might better achieve promotion of equality of opportunity.

### **Section 9: Consultation, Participation and Engagement**

- Provide details of the processes adopted to engage with representative groups during 2005-06.
- Outline measures taken to enhance the level of engagement that were successful and unsuccessful.

#### **Response**

##### **Bullets 1 & 2**

Newry and Mourne District Council's Equality Unit has responsibility for co-ordinating and managing Section 75 consultation exercises and processes.

The Council set out its commitment to consultation on its equality scheme, namely:

- ensuring that it is proactive, in its work with representative groups and individuals of the Section 75 categories;
- finding out how best to obtain their views;
- using participative and user-friendly consultation techniques to ensure that consultation is innovative, inclusive and meaningful; and
- ensuring that any barriers to effective consultation are removed.

All levels of engagement with groups and organizations, be they formal or informal, are viewed by Newry and Mourne District Council as being an opportunity to better understand views and opinions regarding the Council, its policy and its delivery of services.

In view of the limited nature of engagement and feedback based purely on using written consultation, Newry and Mourne District

Council prefers a more qualitative interactive approach to engaging consultees. This ensures processes are meaningful and inclusive, with consultation events being designed to raise awareness of the Council, engage interest, be user friendly, non-wordy, participative, time efficient and encourage positive feedback.

During the period 2005-2006, Newry and Mourne District Council used various mechanisms to engage and consult. Examples of these included the Newry Good Relations Forum, our Household Panel, interagency roundtable discussions, meet and greet evenings with the minority ethnic community and representatives of the Polish Resource Centre, and events such as Local Democracy Week which encouraged participation by primary and post primary schools.

## **Section 10: The Good Relations Duty**

Provide details of steps taken to implement or progress the good relations duty during the year. Please indicate any findings or expected outcomes from this work.

### **Response**

Newry and Mourne District Council has had an active Community Relations / Good Relations Programme since 1989. The Council receives 75% of programme funding from the District Council Community Relations Programme and an annual strategic plan must be submitted to the Community Relations Unit in the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister for approval.

Following the implementation of recommendations from a Community Relations Audit, commissioned by the Council, the Council's Community Relations Section has been reorganized. The two full-time posts have been re-graded and their titles changed from Community Relations Officer to Good Relations Officer (Internal Good Relations Officer and External Good Relations Officer), each with a specific role and responsibility.

Progressing the good relations duty must take into consideration the Government's proposals contained within the 'Shared Future' document. The current focus of Newry and Mourne District Council's Good Relations programme is primarily on relationship building and in

providing space for difficult conversations to take place between citizens of different backgrounds and traditions.

Newry and Mourne District Council's Good Relations Strategic Plan has four aims:

Aim 1 – To encourage greater understanding within the community in Newry and Mourne.

Aim 2 – To enable the Council make decisions and deliver services recognizing the impact of its actions.

Aim 3 – To encourage the development of civic capacity.

Aim 4 – To continually improve the capacity of the Good Relations team to provide a quality service.

Under the four aims of the Council's Good Relations Strategic Plan key elements of Newry and Mourne District Council's programme of work has included:

- Meet and greet sessions with members of the minority ethnic and foreign national community, including meeting with representatives of the Newry Polish Resource Centre.
- A Good Relations Grant Programme which provides financial assistance for groups and organizations addressing issues of good relations within the community.
- Facilitating and co-ordinating community discussion and dialogue including the unique Newry Good Relationships Forum, which is widely regarded as a model of good practice both in Northern Ireland and also in Great Britain.
- Working in partnership with the Community Relations Council to organize and deliver a programme of good relations training to meet the needs of the Elected Members of Newry and Mourne District Council.
- Support for a programme of cross community events with a particular focus upon diversity and a programme of events aimed at increasing understanding of cultural traditions and identity.
- Providing advice and support to employees, individuals, groups and organizations.
- Continuing to mainstream a good relations ethos throughout the Council through the REDI<sup>1</sup> initiative.

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<sup>1</sup> Relationships in Equity, Diversity and Interdependence.

## **Section 11: Additional Comments on Mainstreaming**

The main aim of the statutory duties is to mainstream equality of opportunity and good relations considerations into the functions of the authority, leading to better policies and service delivery. Please provide any additional information/comments you think may be relevant.

### **Response**

Newry and Mourne District Council views the Section 75 statutory duties as having made a positive impact through contributing to improved decision-making processes, formulation of policy and service delivery.

There is no doubt that the Section 75 duties continue to enable our Council meaningfully engage issues which previously may have been viewed as contentious and / or sensitive. This has meant the statutory duties have encouraged greater consultation and specific projects and programmes, so enabling organizations and persons from the nine groups to have greater access to decision-makers in the area.

In addition, we believe that it is difficult to progress the equality agenda without a twin track process which also addresses good relations issues. For Newry and Mourne District Council civic dialogue and relationship building initiatives continue to be key motivators for enabling individuals, groups and organisations to live the spirit of the statutory duties, so creating informed decision-making process.

It is in this respect Newry and Mourne District Council has initiated progressive work in terms of recognising and respecting diversity within its organisation and the community it serves through its Diversity Dimensions Model. It is through the development and implementation of this Model, which we believe will provide the basis for the strategic evolution of promoting equality of opportunity and good relations over the immediate future in the Newry and Mourne District.

## Section 12: Concluding Questions

12A) Does the authority believe its work on implementing the statutory duties during 2005-06 produced positive benefits for the organisation? **YES**  if yes please complete the following

**No**

	Very noticeably	Noticeably	No real change
i) Increased awareness of equality issues in policy making	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>
ii) Increased ability to ensure policies are designed and targeted to reflect equal opportunities objectives	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>
iii) Increased awareness of good relations issues in policy making	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>
iv) Increased ability to ensure policies are designed and targeted to reflect good relations objectives	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>
v) Increased awareness of equality issues in service delivery	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>
vi) Increased ability to ensure services are designed and targeted to reflect Section 75 requirements	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>

**12B )** Does the authority believe its work on implementing the statutory duties during 2005-06 produced positive benefits for groups within the Section 75 categories?

**YES**  if yes please complete the following

**No**

	<b>Very noticeably</b>	<b>Noticeably</b>	<b>No real change</b>
Persons of different religious belief	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>X</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Persons of different political opinion	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>X</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Persons of different racial groups	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>X</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Persons of different age	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>X</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Persons with different marital status	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>X</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Persons of different sexual orientation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>X</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Men and women generally	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>X</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Persons with and without a disability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>X</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Persons with and without dependents	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>X</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Please go to Question C over**

## QUESTION 12C

If you answered **yes** to **QUESTION 12 B**, for each of the categories where a noticeable or very noticeable change has occurred, please give examples of those changes to policies or practices which have resulted in positive change. If the change was a result of an EQIA please tick the appropriate box in column 3:

	Policy or Practice	Tick if result of EQIA
Persons of different religious belief	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Civic and community dialogue such as Newry Good Relations Forum</li> <li>• Household Panel</li> </ul>	
Persons of different political opinion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Civic and community dialogue such as Newry Good Relations Forum</li> <li>• Councillors Civic Leadership training sessions</li> <li>• Household Panel meetings</li> </ul>	
Persons of different racial groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meetings with representatives of Polish Resource Centre</li> <li>• Meet and greet sessions with minority ethnic and foreign nationals within Council area.</li> <li>• Welcome pack produced in five languages outlining key services and contact details.</li> </ul>	
Persons of different age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hosting ongoing visits by Primary Schools to the Council Chamber</li> <li>• Events for post primary schools during Local Democracy Week, conducted in conjunction with the Electoral Commission.</li> <li>• Household Panel</li> </ul>	

Persons with different marital status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flexible working policies</li> </ul>	
Persons of different sexual orientation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff Care 24 hour Careline</li> <li>• Investigators Training</li> </ul>	
Men and women generally	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff Care 24 hour Careline</li> <li>• Household Panel</li> </ul>	
Persons with and without a disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disability Employment Action Plan</li> <li>• Staff survey seeking information regarding employees' disability and suggestions regarding further reasonable adjustments.</li> </ul>	
Persons with and without dependents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flexible working policies</li> </ul>	

## Appendix A

## Screening & EQIA Update

Please enter details relating to the authority's progress using the following matrices.

### i) EQIA Timetable – 2005-06

<b>Title of policy EQIA underway during April 2005- March 2006</b>	<b>Stage (as per Steps 1-7 of EQIA Process) As at end March 2006</b>	<b>If joint-EQIA please state partner authorities</b>	<b>Outline any adjustments to policy intended to benefit individuals from the nine equality categories and outline the relevant categories affected.</b>	<b>Were adjustments to policy a result of <u>A</u>ssessment of adverse impact/ <u>C</u>onsultation, or <u>B</u>oth <i>Please enter A, C or Both</i></b>	<b>If EQIA decision making stage completed, is amended policy being implemented? <u>Y</u>es/<u>N</u>o</b>
1. Voluntary Contributions Policy	Stage 3	N/A	Review of funding procedures, simplification of the application form, integrated assessment process taking into consideration equality of opportunity, and a structured formal appeals mechanism.	Both	

ii) Ongoing Screening Activities 2005-06

<b>Title of policy subject to screening during April 2005- March 2006</b>	<b>If joint policy please state partner authorities</b>	<b>Was initial screening decision changed following consultation? <u>Yes/No</u></b>	<b>If Screening completed is policy being subject to EQIA? <u>Yes/No</u></b>	<b>If EQIA planned indicate year for assessment</b>
1. None				

iii) Ongoing EQIA Monitoring Activities 2005-06

<b>Title of EQIA subject to Stage 7 monitoring during April 2005- March 2006</b>	<b>If joint policy please state partner authorities</b>	<b>Indicate if differential impacts previously identified have reduced or increased</b>	<b>Indicate if adverse impacts previously identified have reduced or increased</b>
1. None			

iv) 2006-07 EQIA Time-table

<b>Title of EQIAs due to be commenced during April 2006 – March 2007</b>	<b>Existing or New policy? Please enter E or N below.</b>	<b>If joint-EQIA please state partner authorities</b>	<b>Please indicate expected date of completion of EQIA Stage 6 i.e Decision making stage</b>
1. None at present			