

**EQUALITY COMMISSION  
FOR NORTHERN IRELAND**

**Public Authority Progress Report  
2008 - 2009**

**Newry and Mourne District Council**

**EQUALITY COMMISSION FOR NORTHERN IRELAND  
Public Authority 2008 – 2009**

**Annual Progress Report on Section 75 of the NI Act 1998 and  
Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Order (DDO) 2006**

**Introduction**

This report covers the period 1 April 2008 to 31 March 2009 and has been submitted to the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland further to approval by Newry and Mourne District Council during September 2009.

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 important developments in the effective implementation of Newry and Mourne District Council's Section 75 duties and Disability duties.

Name of public authority (Enter details below)

Newry & Mourne District Council

Equality Officer (Enter name and contact details below)

S75:

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DDO (if different from above):

## **S75 Executive Summary**

- What were the key policy/service developments made by the authority during this reporting period to better promote equality of opportunity and good relations and what outcomes were achieved?

### **Response**

As indicated in previous annual reports on progress, Newry and Mourne District Council view all of its programme as work in progress. Accordingly, the key policy/service developments made by Newry and Mourne District Council to better promote equality of opportunity and good relations included:

- Acknowledging the growing numbers of migrant workers within the Newry and Mourne District Council area, the Council continued to take forward a number of projects aimed at addressing the needs of Black and Minority Ethnic residents. Two such initiatives are the Council managed Wellbeing Action Partnership Ethnic Support Worker, providing advice and support, and Challenge of Change project.

The Challenge of Change project is a partnership between Newry and Mourne and Louth County Council. This initiative employs two Challenge of Change Development Workers and takes a cross-border approach to examine the barriers to services and cultural awareness in the Councils. This has also led to the development of an Ethnic Minority Support Centre ('one stop shop') as an initial point of contact for information, support and appropriate signposting. Approximately 1050 clients accessed the services of the centre during the period April 2008 to March 2009. Funding for the Centre is now mainstreamed through the Council's Good Relations Programme.

Other work under the Challenge of Change Programme included an intercultural awareness training programme for Council staff and Elected Representatives, cross border/cross community training for local communities focusing on relationship building with ethnic minority residents. Further initiatives were a major cross-border conference, an anti-racism campaign utilizing billboards, back of buses and posters, and undertaking research including a needs assessment and a study on the economic impact of migrant workers in the Newry and Mourne and Louth County Council areas.

- On-call language Service for employees providing telephone interpreting.

- Council's Investing for Health Officer promoted the Newry and Mourne Community Summer Challenge. This specifically targeted two groups of young adults with learning difficulties. In addition Council also worked in partnership with the Southern Investing for Health Partnership in the provision of energy efficiency packs for older people.
- Under Priority 1.1 Building Positive Relations at the Local Level, the Southern Cluster was formed to develop and deliver the Peace III Peace and Reconciliation Plan. The Southern Cluster comprises four Councils: Armagh, Banbridge, Craigavon and Newry and Mourne, with Newry and Mourne District Council being the lead partner for this process. Newry and Mourne District Council's External Good Relations Officer co-ordinated this partnership process. During the reporting period the Southern Cluster Peace III Partnership was successful in gaining approval from SEUPB for its Peace and Reconciliation Action Plan, and undertook an open recruitment process to appoint the sixteen Social Partners of the thirty-two person Southern Cluster Partnership. Newry and Mourne District Council's External Good Relations Officer and Equality Officer attend Southern Cluster Partnership Meetings and continue to provide advice and support in the effective implementation of the action plan.
- The ongoing implementation of the Council's Disability Employment Action Plan and Policy which has been invaluable in assisting the Council in the development of our Disability Action Plan which was submitted to the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland.
- Continuing to avail of opportunities to meet with numerous community and voluntary organisations for the sharing of information. A vital part of this has been the Mayor's Programme where numerous community and voluntary organisations are invited to receptions in the Council Offices. While these events have allowed Council Officers and Councillors to talk about their work, the question and answer sessions have proved to be beneficial in allowing groups and individuals to raise issues of concern directly with the Council Officers and Councillors present. This has enabled many issues to be resolved at source.
- Having adopted a Declaration of Principles on Gender Equality, the Council had appointed the Director of Administration as its Gender Diversity Champion. The Council's Gender Action Plan continues to have a direct impact for Councillors, employees and members of the public. For example, Newry and Mourne District Council has 30

Councillors of which 26 are male and 4 are female. With regard to the Council's nineteen committees, monitoring indicated females held four Chairperson positions, while three Vice-Chairperson positions were held by females. In addition, of five Committees with lay members, two females held the position of Chairperson, while one female held the position of Vice-Chairperson.

- Continuing to mainstream equality objectives into the corporate structure and performance improvement. This has included an ongoing process to mainstream equality of opportunity and good relations into decision-making and service delivery which has meant the screening of all new or proposed policies, regular service reviews and further amending procedures such as the Council's grant application form and assessment process.
- With regard to the Council's Voluntary Contribution process two of the ten questions on which each applicant's project is assessed relate directly to how the project promotes equality of opportunity and improves good relations.
- The continued implementation of a structured formal appeal mechanism for applicants who are unsuccessful in the Voluntary Contribution process.
- The Good Relations Grant Programme which provides financial assistance for groups and organizations addressing issues of good relations within the community.
- Development and implementation of the Council's RARE Awards. RARE is an acronym for Recognising Achievement and Rewarding Excellence, and is designed to highlight good practice across the Council. One of the categories is 'Bridge Builder: For the employee or team who has promoted good relations in the workplace through building partnerships and relationships, and/or built and maintained partnership with other departments or services within the Council'.

The Council's ongoing commitment to engagement through civic dialogue and community dialogue is illustrated by:

- Ongoing meetings of 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 of both

their own and other participant's views on issues impacting upon the area.

- The establishment of the Greater Mourne Good Relations Forum, facilitated and attended by Council Officials including the Clerk and Chief Executive, Director of Administration, Equality Officer and External Good Relations Officer. During the reporting period meetings of the Greater Mourne Good Relations Forum were designed and facilitated by the Council's Equality Officer and External Good Relations Officer.
- During the reporting the period Council restructured the membership of its Household Panel to further increase representativeness across the Section 75 categories. The Council's Household Panel continues to meet on a bi-monthly basis, rather than on a quarterly basis. It is attended by Members of the Council's Senior Management Team, and has continued to be an effective means of assisting the Council directly engage with citizens and seek views on Council policies and the delivery of services.
- Co-ordinating the Sights and Sounds project and partnership. This initiative was funded through the Newry Local Strategy Partnership and completed in August 2008. It involved members from both statutory and voluntary sectors and engaged 300 participants around the theme of 'What Peace means to you'. The three main outcomes were: 1) an outdoor visual display 2) a DVD for every household in the District, and 3) a travelling exhibition, all on the topic of 'What Peace means to you'.
- What are the main initiatives planned in the coming year to ensure the authority improves outcomes in terms of equality of opportunity and good relations for individuals from the nine categories covered by Section 75?

## **Response**

While the Council will continue with its overall programme to implement its Section 75 statutory duties, the main initiatives for the coming year will be to:

- Co-ordinate and implement relevant training, including Disability Awareness and Child Protection training, which will raise awareness and understanding of equality issues.
- Implementation of the Southern Cluster Peace III Peace and Reconciliation Plan (Beyond Tolerance) under Priority 1.1 Building Positive Relations at the Local Level.

- Take forward the Wellbeing Action Partnership Ethnic Support Worker and Challenge of Change initiatives. This will encompass a number of projects aimed at addressing the needs of Black and Minority Ethnic residents, providing advice and support, signposting of services, and examining the barriers to services and cultural awareness. It should be noted the Challenge of Change initiative will be further delivered through the Peace III Peace and Reconciliation Action Plan across the area of the Southern Cluster of Councils.
  - Deliver assistance and support to Council Departments in relation to equality screening, consultation, decision-making and policy development.
  - Mainstream equality issues within the Council and in partnership with others within the district.
  - Encourage further civic dialogue and engagement through meetings of the Good Relations Forum, Greater Mournes Forum and Household Panel.
  - Implementation the Council's Disability Action Plan.
  - Further development implementation of the Council's Good Relations Plan taking account of the Good Relations Audit undertaken during 2009-2010.
  - Further develop and implement its Gender Action Plan.
  - Leadership and Performance Management training.
  - Take forward the Customer Service Excellence model across various Council Departments.
- Please give examples of changes to policies or practices which have resulted in outcomes. If the change was a result of an EQIA please tick the appropriate box in column 3:

	Outline change in policy or practice which have resulted in outcomes	Tick if result of EQIA
Persons of different religious belief	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implementation of Council's Good Relations strategy</li> <li>• Civic and community dialogue such as Newry Good Relations Forum and Greater Mournes Forum</li> <li>• Household Panel</li> </ul>	

<p>Persons of different political opinion</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implementation of Council's good relations strategy</li> <li>• Councillors Civic Leadership training sessions</li> <li>• Civic and community dialogue such as Newry Good Relations Forum and Greater Mournes Forum</li> <li>• Household Panel meetings</li> </ul>	
<p>Persons of different racial groups</p>	<p>Black and Minority Ethnic Projects such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council employs Ethnic Support Worker on behalf of Wellbeing Action Partnership. This employee provides advice and support.</li> <li>• Development of 'One stop shop' as initial point of contact for information, support and appropriate signposting</li> <li>• Anti-racism and interculturalism awareness training programme for Council staff and Councillors</li> <li>• Research including a needs assessment and a study on the economic impact of migrant workers</li> <li>• Working in partnership with NICMA to identify and train registered childminders from the BME community</li> <li>• Initiative with Cuan Mhuire and local church to address alcohol issues in the Polish Community Working in partnership with Sisters of Mercy and Surestart to provide English language classes (with crèche facility) for mothers of small children thus addressing the isolation of a vulnerable section of the Black and Minority Ethnic</li> </ul>	

	<p>community.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two Challenge of Change Development Workers – funded through Peace II split between Newry &amp; Mourne District Council and Louth County Council. This takes a cross-border approach to addressing barriers of service delivery</li> <li>• Welcome pack regarding issues such as housing, education, health, legal issues and advice and support services. These are produced in Lithuanian, Polish, Portuguese and Russian and is also downloadable from the Council’s website.</li> <li>• On-call language Service providing telephone interpreting.</li> <li>• Establishment of Polish Consulate within Newry Town Hall</li> </ul>	
Persons of different age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hosting ongoing visits by various groups such as University of the Third Age, Women’s Institutes, Primary Schools etc to the Council Chamber</li> <li>• Events for post primary schools during Local Democracy Week</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> <li>• Gender Action Plan</li> </ul>	
Persons with and without a disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disability Action Plan</li> </ul>	
Persons with and without dependants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flexible working policies</li> </ul>	

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

- Please outline evidence of progress made in developing and meeting equality and good relations objectives, performance indicators and targets in corporate and annual operating plans during 2008-09

### **Response**

During the period 2008-2009 Newry and Mourne District Council has continued to allocate both direct physical and financial resources to enable the implementation of its Section 75 statutory duties. This is structured as follows:

- 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, good relations, performance management, public relations, communications, and Member Services, and has seven 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 £10010.00 in the period 2008-2009 for Training, Positive / Affirmative Action and Consultancy fees. In the previous financial year 2007-2008 this figure was £10700.00.

Newry and Mourne District Council believe it has continued to deliver upon its commitment to progress the equality statutory duties during the period 2008-2009. As a civic leader, the Council has maintained the development of equality and good relations objectives through:

- An Equality Unit encompassing the functions of equality, performance management and continuous improvement, good relations, public relations, communications and Member Services.
- The Equality Unit whose mission statement is 'To enable the Council to make decisions and deliver its services having recognized the

impact of its actions in terms of promoting equality of opportunity, good relations, performance management, good communication and Member services' was awarded Charter Mark in 2007.

- In addition to the monthly Equality Committee meetings, the Council has continued to mainstream equality objectives into the corporate structure and performance improvement. There has been an ongoing process to mainstream equality of opportunity and good relations into decision-making and service delivery which has meant the screening of all new or proposed policies, regular service reviews and further amending procedures such as the Council's grant application form and assessment processes.
- The Council's Environmental Health Department was successful in achieving the Charter Mark award during 2008-2009.
- The Council's Building Control Department was successful in achieving the Customer Service Excellence award during 2008-2009.
- In addition, during the reporting period 2008-2009 the Council agreed to further integrate principles of effective and efficient customer service through taking forward the Customer Service Excellence model across various Council Departments including Administration and Finance.
- Having undertaken a good relations audit during 2007-2008, the Council reviewed the delivery of the good relations programme in light of the Racial Equality Strategy and A Shared Future document. The good relations audit assisted Council define good relations within Newry and Mourne as, 'enabling the continued development of an inclusive district through the building of good relations and trust thereby enabling mutual understanding and respect for the diverse cultures and heritages of the district'. The Council's Internal and External Good Relations Officers have continued to deliver a programme across the four key themes of mainstreaming, engagement, Black and Minority Ethnic community and symbolism.
- Acknowledging the growing numbers of migrant workers within the Newry and Mourne District Council area, the Council continued to take forward a number of projects aimed at addressing the needs of Black and Minority Ethnic residents. Two such initiatives are the Council managed Wellbeing Action Partnership Ethnic Support Worker, providing advice and support, and Challenge of Change project.

The Challenge of Change project is a partnership between Newry and Mourne and Louth County Council. This initiative employs two

Challenge of Change Development Workers and takes a cross-border approach to examine the barriers to services and cultural awareness in the Councils.

Other work under the Challenge of Change Programme included an intercultural awareness training programme for Council staff and Elected Representatives, cross border/cross community training for local communities focusing on relationship building with ethnic minority residents.

Further initiatives were a major cross-border conference, an anti-racism campaign utilizing billboards, back of buses and posters, and undertaking research including a needs assessment and a study on the economic impact of migrant workers in the Newry and Mourne and Louth County Council areas.

This has also led to the development of an Ethnic Minority Support Centre ('one stop shop') as an initial point of contact for information, support and appropriate signposting. Approximately 1050 clients accessed the services of the centre during the period April 2008 to March 2009. Other examples of work includes 1) working in partnership with NI Child Minding Association to identify and train registered childminders from the Black and Minority Ethnic community, 2) working in partnership with Cuan Mhuire and a local church to address alcohol issues in the Polish community, and 3) working in partnership with Sisters of Mercy and Surestart to provide English language classes (with crèche facility) for mothers of small children thus addressing the isolation of a vulnerable section of the Black and Minority Ethnic community.

Funding for the Ethnic Minority Support Centre is now mainstreamed through the Council's Good Relations Programme.

- On-call language Service for employees providing telephone interpreting.
- In relation to Investing for Health the Council promoted the Newry and Mourne Community Summer Challenge. This specifically targeted two groups of young adults with learning difficulties. In addition Council also worked in partnership with the Southern Investing for Health Partnership in the provision of energy efficiency packs for older people.
- As a key feature of the 'Women in Local Councils' initiative, the Council adopted a Declaration of Principles on Gender Equality, and have appointed the Director of Administration as its Gender Diversity Champion. The Council's Gender Action Plan continues to have a direct impact for Councillors, employees and members of the public.

For example, Newry and Mourne District Council has 30 Councillors of which 26 are male and 4 are female. With regard to the Council's nineteen committees, monitoring indicated four Chairperson positions were held by females while three Vice-Chairperson positions were held by females. In addition, of five Committees with lay members, two females held the position of Chairperson, while one female held the position of Vice-Chairperson.

- With regard to the Council's Voluntary Contribution system two of the ten questions on which each applicant is assessed relate directly to how the project promotes equality of opportunity and improves good relations. The Council has now also adopted a structured formal appeal mechanism for those applicants who are unsuccessful in this process. In addition the Council's Equality Officer is a key member of the Council's Voluntary Contribution Assessment Team.
- In acknowledging our duty of care towards employees and recognizing the sensitivity and personal nature of many issues the Council continues to provide 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 the Argyll System for those employees who may work alone, have to attend meetings in remote locations or work alone at night.
- 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. Within the past year, in light of the increasing expectations placed upon Local Government, the Council has found this has provided a support for informed discussion on the development of the equality agenda within local government, and helped formulate practical responses to the many consultative documents produced by the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland and Central Government.
- The Council's Equality Officer and Council's Disability Liaison Officer have also continued to work in conjunction with the Conifers, Southern Health and Social Care Trust, to enable further access to opportunities for people with a disability to play an active role in society be it through sporting or social activities.

As stated in previous annual reports participative democracy through civic and community dialogue is a key strategy for Newry and Mourne District Council. This approach was illustrated by:

- During the reporting period Council restructured the membership of its Household Panel to further ensure its membership reflects a broad cross-section of people across the Section 75 categories. The Council's Household Panel continues to meet on a bi-monthly basis, rather than on a quarterly basis. It is attended by Members of the Council's Senior Management Team, and has continued to be an effective means of assisting the Council directly engage with citizens and seek views on Council policies and the delivery of services.
- In conjunction with Mediation Northern Ireland, Newry and Mourne District Council continued to co-ordinate and facilitate 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.
- The establishment of the Greater Mournes Good Relations Forum, facilitated by the Council Officials including the Clerk and Chief Executive, Director of Administration, Equality Officer and External Good Relations Officer. During the reporting period meetings of the Greater Mournes Good Relations Forum were designed and facilitated by the Council's Equality Officer and External Good Relations Officer.
- Co-ordinating the Sights and Sounds project and partnership. This initiative was funded through the Newry Local Strategy Partnership and completed in August 2008. It involved members from both statutory and voluntary sectors and engaged 300 participants around the theme of 'What Peace means to you'. The three main outcomes were: 1) an outdoor visual display 2) a DVD for every household in the District, and 3) a travelling exhibition, all on the topic of 'What Peace means to you'.

During 2008-2009, Newry and Mourne District Council continued to have 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. The Council's Equality Officer participates in all grant assessment processes.

Examples of other areas of influence and partnership work include:

- Newry and Mourne District Council Clerk and Chief Executive's membership of the Northern Ireland Local Government Staff Commission, the Northern Ireland Good Relations Panel and Northern Ireland Race Forum.
- Newry and Mourne District Council membership of Opportunity Now and the Employers 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. During the 2008-2009 reporting period Newry and Mourne District Council's Management Team participated in an Opportunity Now's Cares initiative with Newry Women's Aid.
- The Council's Environmental Health Department, as part of the Southern Group Environmental Health Committee, has produced information and leaflets in many languages such as Mandarin and Chinese, Polish, Russian, and Portuguese.
- Providing signers for Council Officer invited to talk at meetings of Newry Deaf Club

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. A vital part of this has been the Mayor's Programme where numerous community and voluntary organisations are invited to receptions in the Council Offices. While these events have allowed Council Officers and Councillors to talk about their work, the question and answer sessions have proved to be beneficial in allowing groups and individuals to raise issues of concern directly with the Council Officers and Councillors present.

## Section 2: Screening

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

Title of policy subject to screening	Was the <u>F</u> ull Screening Report or the <u>R</u> esult of initial screening issued for consultation? <i>Please enter <u>F</u> or <u>R</u></i>	Was initial screening decision changed following consultation? <u>Y</u> es/ <u>N</u> o	Is policy being subject to EQIA? <u>Y</u> es/ <u>N</u> o? If yes indicate year for assessment.
Swimming Instructors Pay Salary Scale (report considered at Staff and Policy meeting 22 April 2008)	R	No	No
Proposed lease of playing pitch and extra training area at Council's Carginagh Road Playing Fields to Ballyvea FC	R	No	No
Proposed lease of playing pitch at Council's Milltown Playing Fields to St Peter's GFC	R	No	No
Draft policy and procedural arrangements for the Control of Legionella in Water Systems in Council owned buildings	R	No	No
Erection of Monuments / Headstones	R	No	No
<b>Draft Equal Opportunities policy</b>	R	No	No

### Section 3: Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA)

- Please provide an update of policies subject to EQIA during 2008-09, stage 7 EQIA monitoring activities and an indicative EQIA timetable for 2009-10

#### EQIA Timetable – April 2008 - March 2009

Title of Policy EQIA	EQIA Stage at end March 09 (Steps 1-6)	Outline adjustments to policy intended to benefit individuals, and the relevant Section 75 categories due to be affected.
Re-naming of Patrick Street Play Park in 2001 as Raymond McCreesh Play Park	1	To consider the Council's re-naming of Patrick Street Play Park in 2001 as Raymond McCreesh Play Park.

- Where the EQIA timetable for 2008-09 (as detailed in the previous annual S75 progress report to the Commission) has not been met, please provide details of the factors responsible for delay and details of the timetable for re-scheduling the EQIA/s in question.

### Response

N/A

#### Ongoing EQIA Monitoring Activities April 2008- March 2009

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

#### 2009-10 EQIA Time-table

Title of EQIAs due to be commenced during April 2009 – March 2010	Existing or New policy?	Please indicate expected timescale of Decision Making stage i.e. Stage 6
N/A		

## Section 4: Training

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

### 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 or attended by Council Officers during 2008-2009 has included:

<b>Training</b>	<b>Number of employees in attendance</b>
APSE Workshop	2
Argyll Telecom Mobile Personal Safety	16
Aspects of Leadership	2
Attendance Management	26
Business Writing and Grammar Skills	2
Charter Mark Training Session	21
Competency Interviewing Skills	5
Conducting a Formal Investigation	22
Cultural Awareness Training	40
Disability Awareness and use of transfer board	29
Employment Rights Training	1

Equal Pay in a Day Conference	1
Equality Network Seminar – Case Law and Employment Legislation	3
Equality Network Seminar – Sexual Orientation and transgender issues (hosted by ECNI)	1
European Mediation Conference	1
Evacuation Chair	59
Events Management	5
Handling life's conflicts	1
Employee inductions (Health and Safety inductions)	121
Health and Wellbeing	1
How to Manage and Deal with Difficult People	1
Introduction to Polish	10
Leadership and Performance Management Programme	35
Leisure Services Disability Awareness Training	4
Local Government Child Protection Training (Advanced)	2
Local Government restructuring: Guidance on Staffing Issues	3
Managing Work Related Stress	2
Mediation Training	
Personal Safety	120
PPMA Equal Pay/Single Status Implementation Event	4
Practical and Effective Management Skills	1
Prince 2 Project Management Training – Information Session	6
Recruitment and Selection	9
Recruitment and Selection Refresher	7
Resuscitation of babies and children	17
Review of Effectiveness of Communication and Implementation of RPA	1
Risk Register Workshop	1
Selection and Interview Training	2
Stress Awareness	114
Towards new excellence local governance in Northern Ireland	1
TUPE Awareness Training	4
Vacancy Control System – briefing session	1
Good Relations Training (Elected Members Forum) – facilitated by Duncan Morrow, Chief Executive, Community Relations Council	seminars and facilitated discussion for

	all the Council's Elected Members.
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Evaluations of training have enabled participants to indicate their views upon the benefits and relevancy of their training, and identifying further training needs.

## **Section 5: Communication**

- Please outline how the authority communicated progress on delivery of the Section 75 Duties during the year and evidence of the impact/success of such activities.

### **Response**

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 Council's 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 Equality Unit, which was awarded Charter Mark status during 2007, is working towards the Customer Service Excellence award.
- The Council's communications strategy has been equality screened and is continuously updated to reflect the changing needs of the community. The Council is a member of the Plain English Campaign. In addition, the Council's Corporate Style Guide continues to provide guidance for employees in relation to accessible communication and documents / publications.
- The Challenge of Change anti-racism campaign including the use of billboards, back of buses and posters.
- A major cross-border conference with Terry Waite as the key-note speaker and speakers from minority ethnic and travelling communities.
- The Council's website is used to disseminate information. Documents are provided in a way that they may be downloaded. Welcome packs are also downloadable in Polish, Lithuanian, Portuguese and Russian.
- An On-call language Service for telephone interpreting.
- Producing and circulating advice to all employees on language etiquette relating to disability, gender and sexual orientation.
- The Council utilizes its website to administer an e-procurement system with suppliers.

- 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.
- 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 every household 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 University of the Third Age, RNID, William Keown Trust, the Conifers Centre, Southern Health and Social Care Trust, the Local Government Staff Commission, Business in the Community, Employers Forum on Disability NI, and the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland.
- Presentations and meetings with target groups such as Newry Rainbow Community (LGBT), Newry and Mourne Vision Forum, Newry Deaf Club, Newry Women's Aid, University of the Third Age, Shopmobility, William Keown Trust, primary and post-primary schools etc.

In addition to the actions listed above Newry and Mourne District Council provided a good practice case study on Stakeholder Engagement: Involving People in Decisions about Public Services at a DoE Local Government Modernisation Seminar held on 20 May 2008.

## **Section 6: Data Collection & Analysis**

- Please outline any systems that were established during the year to supplement available statistical and qualitative research or any research undertaken/commissioned to obtain information on the needs and experiences of individuals from the nine categories covered by Section 75.

### **Response**

Newry and Mourne District Council continue to take forward Charter Mark and the new Customer Service Excellence model. At the heart of these awards is quality customer service and effective stakeholder engagement. During the reporting period 2008-2009 the Council's Environmental Health Department was successful in achieving the Charter Mark award, while our Building Control Department was successful in achieving the Customer Service Excellence award.

In addition, during the reporting period 2008-2009 the Council agreed to further integrate principles of effective and efficient customer service through taking forward the Customer Service Excellence model across various Council Departments including Administration and Finance.

With reference to research commissioned during the 2008-2009 period, the Council's Challenge of Change initiative undertook research on the minority ethnic populations in the area including a needs assessment and a study on the economic impact of migrant workers.

Various systems of monitoring services are in operation such as:

- The Council's Corporate Complaints system has been complemented by the development of the Equality Unit complaint procedure which was developed in conjunction with Business in the Community.
- The Council's Customer Services Section monitors refuse collection and the numbers of households receiving assisted bin collections.
- The Council's Good Relations Section monitors and evaluates the impact of funding provided to groups through its small grant programme.
- 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.

As stated previously, for Newry and Mourne District Council, civic dialogue and relationship building initiatives continues 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 on this basis that to further supplement available statistics 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
- Local Government Staff Commission Statutory Duty Equality Network
- Community Relations Unit, OFMDFM
- Southern Region Community Relations Officers Forum
- Northern Ireland Good Relations Panel
- Northern Ireland Race Forum
- Southern Cluster Peace III Partnership
- Northern Ireland Good Relations Forum
- Southern Investing for Health Partnership
- Wellbeing Action Partnership
- Membership of Opportunity Now / Business in the Community
- Southern Health and Social Services Trust
- Social Security Agency
- Southern Regional College
- Newry Rainbow Community
- Membership of Employers Forum on Disability and Business in the Community
- Links with locally based community networks e.g. ROSA, ROMAL, Confederation of Community Groups
- Newry and Mourne Visually Impaired Persons group, 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 (NINIS) and the Community Relations Council

- Liaison with other organisations such as NICEM, Coalition on Sexual Orientation, Mediation Northern Ireland and the Parades Commission etc.
  - Internet research
- 
- Please outline any use of the Commission's Section 75 Monitoring Guide.

### **Response**

The Equality Commission's Section 75 Monitoring Guide has proved to be an invaluable addition as a reference guide in all aspects of work.

'Appendix D: Data Requirements and Data Collection – Illustrative Service Provision Scenarios' has proved particularly useful, and was utilised in the recruitment process of Social Partners for the Peace III Southern Cluster Partnership.

## **Section 7: Information Provision, Access to Information and Services**

- Please provide details of any initiatives/steps taken during the year, including take up, to improve access to services including provision of information in accessible formats.

### **Response**

During the period 2008-2009 Newry and Mourne District Council continued to liaise with service providers, individuals and consultants such as Newry Rainbow Community, University of the Third Age, Southern Health and Social Care Trust, Social Security Agency, RNID, RNIB, Disability Action, Newry Visually Impaired Group, 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, Local Government Staff Commission, Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission, Opportunity Now, Business in the Community, Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure, Ulster Scots Agency, POBAL, and the Plain English Campaign.

People can choose to contact the Council in person, telephone, email, fax and in writing in a language of their choice. 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 the Irish Language. The Council has also continued to produce relevant documents and information leaflets in Mandarin and Chinese, Polish, Russian, Italian, Portuguese and Ulster Scots.

However, as stated in previous annual reports on progress, following consultation with the Southern 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. The Council also uses the Northern Ireland national press to advertise certain job opportunities etc.

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

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

- Conducting research on the minority ethnic populations in the area including a needs assessment and a study on the economic impact of migrant workers.
- Development of an Ethnic Minority Support Centre ('one stop shop') as an initial point of contact for information, support and appropriate signposting. Approximately 1050 clients accessed the services of the centre during the reporting period.
- Relevant training including Introduction to Polish, anti-racism and cultural awareness training, and Leisure Services Disability Awareness Training, Review of Effectiveness of Communication and the importance of the Review of Public Administration.
- Producing and circulating advice to all employees on language etiquette relating to disability, gender and sexual orientation.
- Providing signers for meetings of the Newry Deaf Club.
- 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. Prior to publication the draft is consulted upon with the Conifers, Southern Health and Social Care Trust to ascertain any amendments which might enable the publication to be more accessible.
- In addition, to ascertain how people wish to receive information in a way which best suits their needs the Council consulted through a full page in the Council's 'Citizens News' booklet providing contact details for the Council's Equality Officer if they wished their name to be placed on a database.
- The Council's website is used to disseminate information. Documents are provided in a way that they may be downloaded.
- Welcome packs are also downloadable from the Council's website in Polish, Lithuanian, Portuguese and Russian.
- An On-call language Service for telephone interpreting.
- The Council utilizes its website to administer an e-procurement system with suppliers.
- Meetings of the Council's Household Panel are bi-monthly rather than quarterly. Members of the Council's Management Team also attend these meetings.

- Monthly meetings of the Good Relations Forum and quarterly meetings of the Steering Group.
- Question and answer sessions with groups and individuals who are visiting the Council as part of the Mayor's programme. This has enabled groups and individuals to raise issues directly with the relevant Council Officers responsible for particular services.
- Information seminars run in conjunction with the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, Employer's Forum on Disability Northern Ireland, the Local Government Staff Commission, Opportunity Now and Business in the Community.
- Participating and speaking at meetings of Newry Deaf Club, Newry Rainbow Community, Newry and Mourne Visually Impaired Club, Newry Users Group, Newry Vision Forum, Shopmobility etc
- Partnership events involving the Investing for Health, Community Safety Partnership etc
- Information events regarding the Council's Good Relations Small Grant programme and Voluntary Contribution grant process.

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

- Monitoring the number of clients accessing the Council's Ethnic Minority Support Centre ('one stop shop').
- The Council's Customer Services Section monitors refuse collection and the numbers of households receiving assisted bin collections.
- The Council's Good Relations Section monitors and evaluates the impact of funding provided to groups through its small grant programme.
- 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.
- The Council's Corporate Complaints system has been complemented by the development of the Equality Unit complaint procedure which was developed in conjunction with Business in the Community.

## **Section 8: Complaints**

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

## **Response**

As stated in our 2007-2008 progress report Newry and Mourne District Council received correspondence (letter dated 7 February 2008) from the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland re: Promoting Equality and Good Relations in Newry and Mourne Council Area.

This was in relation to the Council's Patrick Street Play Park in 2001 having been re-named Raymond McCreesh Play Park.

Legal Counsel opinion regarding this matter was considered at a Special Staff and Policy Meeting of Newry and Mourne District Council on 13 January 2009.

The recommendation of the above meeting, which was ratified at the Council's Monthly Meeting on 2 February 2009, was as follows:

- Newry and Mourne District Council follow legal advice received from Mr Paul O'Kane, Solicitor in relation to the naming of Raymond McCreesh Park, Newry and proceed to carry out an equality impact assessment as specified under the Council's Equality Scheme.

Newry and Mourne District Council propose to proceed to undertake an Equality Impact Assessment in relation to the naming of Raymond McCreesh Park.

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

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

### **Response**

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 2008-2009, Newry and Mourne District Council used various mechanisms to engage and consult.

Examples of these included:

- Conducting research on the minority ethnic populations in the area including a needs assessment and a study on the economic impact of migrant workers,
- Development of an Ethnic Minority Support Centre ('one stop shop') as an initial point of contact for information, support and appropriate

signposting. Approximately 1050 clients accessed the services of the centre during the reporting period,

- ongoing contact with the Newry Rainbow Community which is representative of the LGBT community within Newry and Mourne – this provides an opportunity to hear of the group’s ongoing work and to advise them of potential funding opportunities within the Council,
- consulting with user groups of facilities as part of the process to equality screen the potential impact of decisions of Council,
- consultation with the community with regard to numerous requests from members of the public to erect bilingual street signage,
- to ascertain how people wish to receive information in a way which best suits their needs the Council consulted through a full page in the Council’s ‘Citizens News’ booklet providing contact details for the Council’s Equality Officer if they wished their name to be placed on a database.
- bi-monthly meetings of the Council’s Household Panel,
- Mayor’s programme of hosting visits of community and voluntary organisations to the Council,
- the Newry Good Relations Forum,
- the Greater Mournes Good Relations Forum,
- providing numerous presentations to groups such as to University of the Third Age, Newry Visually Impaired Group’s visit to the Council hosted by the Mayor. These provided time for direct engagement through question and answer sessions where groups and individuals could raise issues of concern directly with the Council Officers and Councillors present.
- As part of Democracy Week events such as ‘I’m a Councillor, Get me out of here’ which enabled young people to interact with Councillors online.

In addition to the above Newry and Mourne District Council provided a good practice case study on Stakeholder Engagement: Involving People in Decisions about Public Services at a DoE Local Government Modernisation Seminar held on 20 May 2008.

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

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

### **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, OFMDFM for approval.

As stated in our annual report 2006-2007, Newry and Mourne District Council provided the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland with a case study of their work detailing the evolution of the Council's Good Relations Programme. This can be accessed within Chapter 5 of the Equality Commission's consultation document, 'Promoting Good Relations – A Guide for Public Authorities'.

The Council's Good Relations Programme continues to be underpinned by work undertaken during the Relationships in Equity, Diversity and Interdependence initiative (REDI). Details of the REDI initiative with the University of Ulster and Counteract can be accessed in the University of Ulster's Summary Report, 'Investing in Trust Building and Good Relations in a Public Sector Organisation'. (ISBN 1-85923-167-5)

Newry and Mourne District Council's Good Relations Audit reviewed the delivery of the good relations programme in light of the Racial Equality Strategy, A Shared Future document and Triennial Action Plan.

The audit developed the strategic direction for an effective action plan which would have both an internal and external dimension, and is delivered by the Council's Internal and External Good Relations Officers. It defines that good relations within Newry and Mourne should be, 'enabling the continued development of an inclusive district through the building of good relations and trust thereby enabling mutual understanding and respect for the diverse cultures and heritages of the district'.

The current focus of Newry and Mourne District Council's Good Relations programme is primarily on raising awareness and understanding, and encouraging relationship building through providing space for difficult

conversations to take place between citizens of different backgrounds and traditions.

The Good Relations audit identified the following four key strategic areas of work:

- **Mainstreaming** – of Good Relations both within Council and within the community. The aim of mainstreaming is to bring Good Relations to the heart of the Council and Communities thought processes in terms of their development and structure. This will be achieved through examples of good practice, opening communication, development of partnerships and training.
- **Engagement** – of the community and Council in Good Relations projects to make it a real and tangible process.
- **BME Community** – there is a growing BME community within the Newry and Mourne district. The aim of this area is to address the needs of the BME community on a partnership basis. The action plan will address the needs externally with the community and the service delivery of the Council internally.
- **Symbolism** – This will address the physical manifestations within the District such as flags, emblems, and sectarian graffiti. The aim of this area is to work with the community to address symbolism whilst addressing the policy areas within Council.

Under the four strategic areas above, Newry and Mourne District Council's programme of work has included:

- Community Relations Week – the External and Internal Good Relations Officers worked together and in partnership with outside agencies to produce a week long programme of events to raise the awareness of good relations work in the district and to promote understanding of good relations principles. The programme was produced to reach across as wide an audience as possible and include opportunities to mainstream the ethos of good relations and to get people talking and sharing information and experiences. The programme of events for the week included, Prevention of Hate Crime Sessions in Newry, Crossmaglen and Kilkeel, a 'Slavery In Newry' event with speakers from Womens' Aid, the Law School at QUB and Newry and Mourne Council.
- Schools Quiz – the cross community quiz took place in April to coincide with community relations week. Teams are mixed in terms of school and age. The feedback from teachers was also positive and

as the teachers also sit at mixed tables there was an opportunity for inter school networking and new introductions.

- Traveller Focus Week – Newry and Mourne District Council hosted the Southern regional event in Newry Town Hall on Wednesday 3 December 2008. Workshops included speakers from the NI Housing Executive, Southern Education and Library Board, Equality Commission, and Traveller Cultural Awareness training led by An Munia Tober and Crushan Munia.  
The Michael Collins play, 'Mobile', was performed in Newry Town Hall with approximately 160 people in attendance.  
As a further part of the programme Crushan Munia delivered a session of Traveller Cultural Awareness training to a mix of staff and Councillors on Friday 5 December 2008.
- Acknowledging the growing numbers of migrant workers within the Newry and Mourne District Council area, the Council continued to take forward a number of projects aimed at addressing the needs of Black and Minority Ethnic residents. Two such initiatives are the Council managed Wellbeing Action Partnership Ethnic Support Worker, providing advice and support, and Challenge of Change project.  
The Challenge of Change project is a partnership between Newry and Mourne and Louth County Council. This initiative employs two Challenge of Change Development Workers and takes a cross-border approach to examine the barriers to services and cultural awareness in the Councils. This has also led to the development of an Ethnic Minority Support Centre ('one stop shop') as an initial point of contact for information, support and appropriate signposting. Approximately 1050 clients accessed the services of the centre during the period April 2008 to March 2009. Funding for the Centre is now mainstreamed through the Council's Good Relations Programme.  
Other work under the Challenge of Change Programme included an intercultural awareness training programme for Council staff and Elected Representatives, cross border/cross community training for local communities focusing on relationship building with ethnic minority residents.
- Further initiatives were:
  - a major cross-border conference with Terry Waite as key-note speaker and speakers/facilitators from minority ethnic and travelling communities.

- an anti-racism campaign utilizing billboards, back of buses and posters, and undertaking research including a needs assessment and a study on the economic impact of migrant workers in the Newry and Mourne and Louth County Council areas.
- Partnership working including:
  - Working in partnership with Cuan Mhuire and local church to address alcohol issues in the Polish community.
  - Work in partnership with Sisters of Mercy and Surestart to provide English language classes (with crèche facility) for mothers of small children thus addressing the isolation of a vulnerable section of the BME communities.
  - Work in partnership with NICMA to identify and train registered childminders from the BME community.
- Elected Members Forum – this is co-ordinated by the Internal Good Relations Officer. Working in partnership with the Community Relations Council, it is facilitated by Dr Duncan Morrow and operates under Chatham House Rules. The aim of the forum is to provide Councillors with an opportunity to engage in facilitated discussion about good relations based issues outside of the Council Chamber, with no press present. This continues to be a valuable mechanism for meaningful engagement between Councillors.
- Good Relations Grant Programme - this provides financial assistance for groups and organizations addressing issues of good relations within the community. It is administered by the External Good Relations Officer, and all programmes which receive funding are evaluated to identify the benefits and outcomes of the projects.
- Newry Good Relations Forum – as already stated in this report the Council views facilitating and co-ordinating community discussion and dialogue as a key element of building and sustaining relationships. The Newry Good Relationships Forum, co-ordinated by the External Good Relations Officer, is widely regarded as a model of good practice both in Northern Ireland and also in Great Britain.
- Greater Mournes Good Relations Forum – facilitated and attended by Council Officials including the Clerk and Chief Executive, Director of Administration, Equality Officer and External Good Relations Officer. During the reporting period meetings of the Greater Mournes Good Relations Forum were designed and facilitated by the Council's Equality Officer and External Good Relations Officer.

- Production of a welcome pack regarding issues such as housing, education, health, legal issues and advice and support services. These are produced in Lithuanian, Polish, Portuguese and Russian and is also downloadable from the Council's website.
- On-call language Service for employees providing telephone interpreting.
- Co-ordinating the Sights and Sounds project and partnership. This initiative was funded through the Newry Local Strategy Partnership and completed in August 2008. It involved members from both statutory and voluntary sectors and engaged 300 participants around the theme of 'What Peace means to you'. The three main outcomes were: 1) an outdoor visual display 2) a DVD for every household in the District, and 3) a travelling exhibition, all on the topic of 'What Peace means to you'.
- Under Priority 1.1 Building Positive Relations at the Local Level, the Southern Cluster was formed to develop and deliver the Peace III Peace and Reconciliation Plan. The Southern Cluster comprises four Councils: Armagh, Banbridge, Craigavon and Newry and Mourne, with Newry and Mourne District Council being the lead partner for this process. Newry and Mourne District Council's External Good Relations Officer co-ordinated this partnership process. During the reporting period the Southern Cluster Peace III Partnership was successful in gaining approval from SEUPB for its Peace and Reconciliation Action Plan, and undertook an open recruitment process to appoint the sixteen Social Partners of the thirty-two person Southern Cluster Partnership. Newry and Mourne District Council's External Good Relations Officer and Equality Officer attend Southern Cluster Partnership Meetings and continue to provide advice and support in the effective implementation of the action plan.
- Development and implementation of the Council's RARE Awards for employees. RARE is an acronym for Recognising Achievement and Rewarding Excellence, and is designed to highlight good practice across the Council. One of the categories is 'Bridge Builder: For the employee or team who has promoted good relations in the workplace through building partnerships and relationships, and/or built and maintained partnership with other departments or services within the Council'.
- Events such as 'I'm a Councillor, Get me out of here' which enabled young people to interact with Councillors online.

- 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 Departments, employees, individuals, groups and external organizations such as the Southern Cluster Peace III Partnership, Community Safety Partnership, Drugs and Alcohol Partnership and SELB Youth Service.
  - Influencing policy and enabling informed decision-making through participation on various committees such as the Council's Finance Committee, Community, Sport and Public Works Committee, St Patrick's Day Committee, Ulster Scots Committee, Bilingualism Internal Liaison Committee, and contributing to projects delivered through Newry Museum, Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership and Community Services Section (Community Support Plan).
  - Continuing to mainstream a good relations ethos throughout Council.
- 
- Please outline any use of the Commission's Good Relations Guide.

**Response**

N/A

## **Section 11: Additional Comments**

- Please provide any additional information/comments

### **Response**

As indicated in previous annual reports on progress Newry and Mourne District Council views its programme as ongoing work in progress. We continue to be committed to mainstreaming equality and good relations principles into everything we do.

Developing and maintaining sustainable relationships is the key principle underpinning civic society, and initiatives centred around structured dialogue processes such as household panels, civic and community forums and Councillor forums are pathways to this.

As stated within this report on progress, Newry and Mourne District Council provided a good practice case study on Stakeholder Engagement: Involving People in Decisions about Public Services at a DoE Local Government Modernisation Seminar held on 20 May 2008.

While Newry and Mourne District Council have strived to develop examples of good practice, it must be recognised that these are initiatives which have worked for us, and not all initiatives are directly transferable to other Public and Local Authorities within Northern Ireland.

Annual Report 1 April 2008 / 31 March 2009  
'Disability Duties' Questions

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

5

Fully  
Achieved

2

Partially  
Achieved

Not  
Achieved

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

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

Level	Public Life Action Measures	Outputs <sup>1</sup>	Outcomes / Impact <sup>2</sup>
National <sup>3</sup>			
Regional <sup>4</sup>			
Local <sup>5</sup>	Investing for Health Newry and Mourne Community Summer Challenge  Visits of groups to the Council hosted by the Mayor which	Specifically targeted participation of two groups of young adults with learning difficulties.  Presentation about the function of Council	Encouraging healthy lifestyles for people with disabilities.  The programme of visits give groups and individuals

<sup>1</sup> **Outputs** – defined as act of producing, amount of something produced over a period, processes undertaken to implement the action measure e.g. Undertook 10 training sessions with 100 people at customer service level.

<sup>2</sup> **Outcome / Impact** – what specifically and tangibly has changed in making progress towards the duties? What impact can directly be attributed to taking this action? Indicate the results of undertaking this action e.g. Evaluation indicating a tangible shift in attitudes before and after training.

<sup>3</sup> **National** : Situations where people can influence policy at a high impact level e.g. Public Appointments

<sup>4</sup> **Regional**: Situations where people can influence policy decision making at a middle impact level

<sup>5</sup> **Local** : Situations where people can influence policy decision making at lower impact level e.g. one off consultations, local fora.

	<p>included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prospects</li> <li>• Newry Deaf Club</li> <li>• Speech Matters</li> <li>• William Keown Trust</li> </ul> <p>Disability Action Count Us In Democracy Working Group</p> <p>Equality Working Group</p>	<p>Department and services provided such as assisted bin collections, production of documents in alternative formats etc. There is then a question and answer session and a photocall at every event.</p> <p>Council participation in group which included people with a disability, MLAs, Councillors, and Public Sector representatives</p> <p>Meetings between Council's Disability Liaison Officer, General Manager Newry Sports Centre, Sport and Recreation Officer, and Southern Health and Social Services Officers.</p>	<p>direct access to decision-makers within Council. This has had a direct impact upon service delivery as the process enables groups and individuals to raise issues directly with relevant Council Officers responsible for particular services, with many issues resolved on that day.</p> <p>Encouraging people with a disability to play their role in society through active citizenship and participative democracy.</p> <p>Developing and promoting programmes of activity involving people with a disability.</p>
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2(b) What **training action measures** were achieved in this reporting period?

	Training Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
1	Recruitment and Selection Training / Recruitment and Selection Training Refresher / Selection and Interview Training	18 employees in attendance	Interviewers participating in the Council's Recruitment and Selection Process are aware of the new Disability Duties.
2	Leisure Services Disability Awareness Training	One session with 4 employees in attendance	Increase skills base of employees working directly with customers with disabilities.
3	Disability Awareness and use of transfer board	Three sessions with 29 employees in attendance	Building the capacity and knowledge within the organisation of the specific needs of people with a disability.
4	Evacuation Chair	59 employees in attendance	Building the capacity and knowledge within the organisation including the specific needs of people with mobility issues.

2(c) What Positive attitudes **action measures** in the area of **Communications** were achieved in this reporting period?

	Communications Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
1	Document providing advice to all employees on language etiquette relating to disability	Production and circulation of advice to all employees on language etiquette relating to disability. The information was prepared in conjunction with the Employers' Forum on Disability Northern Ireland.	Provides guidance for employees in relation to the use of oral and written language, and assists employees become more disability confident.  This will also be referred to during disability awareness training sessions.
2	Use of a signer at two presentations to Newry Deaf Club	Environmental Health Department presentations to Newry Deaf Club on sustainability and recycling issues	Increasing understanding of Council services in relation to recycling, the Council's colour coded bins system and collection issues.
3	Citizen's News	The Citizen's News is the Council's Corporate publication and is produced twice per year. It is available upon request in Braille, large print and audio transcription. Council consult with the Southern Health and Social Care Trust, who refer it to their user group for comment	Mainstreaming equality / disability principles into the publication design process, so increasing accessibility, whilst also ensuring it is available in alternative formats upon request.

		in relation to the content, colour schemes, font sizes and style.	
4	Full page advert in Citizen's News regarding methods of accessible communication	To ascertain how people wish to receive information in a way which best suits their needs the Council consulted through a full page in the Council's 'Citizens News' booklet providing contact details for the Council's Equality Officer if they wished their name to be placed on a database.	To ensure Council communicates effectively and appropriately.

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

	Encourage others Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
1	Disability Action Count Us In Democracy Working Group	Council participation in group which included people with a disability, MLAs, Councillors, and Public Sector representatives	Encouraging people with a disability to play their role in society through active citizenship and participative democracy. Encouraging MLAs, Councillors and Public Sector representatives to fully engage on disability issues.
2			

2 (e) Please outline **any additional action measures** that were fully achieved other than those listed in the tables above:

	Action Measures fully implemented (other than Training and specific public life measures)	Outputs	Outcomes / Impact
1			

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

	Action Measures partly achieved	Milestones <sup>6</sup> / Outputs	Outcomes/Impacts	Reasons not fully achieved
1	Review Corporate and Departmental practices and procedures	Mainstreaming of disability duties through launch of Corporate Style Guide, documents available in alternative formats, use of signers and interpreters, ensuring venues are accessible in terms of physical access and loop systems, regular meetings with Southern Health and Social Services Trust, consulting directly with groups and individuals directly affected.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ guidance for employees in relation to ensuring services and venues are accessible.</li> <li>○ Increased understanding of the issues impacting upon people with a disability.</li> </ul>	This is ongoing work with Departments and their Sections within Council

<sup>6</sup> **Milestones** – Please outline what part progress has been made towards the particular measures; even if full output or outcomes/ impact have not been achieved.

2	Organise appropriate and relevant training on the disability duties for all staff and Elected Members	<p>As stated in section 2b, training was organised in relation to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Recruitment and Selection Training / Recruitment and Selection Training Refresher / Selection and Interview Training</li> <li>○ Leisure Services Disability Awareness Training (4 employees in attendance)</li> <li>○ Disability Awareness and use of transfer board</li> <li>○ Evacuation Chair</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ interviewers participating in the Council's Recruitment and Selection Process are aware of the new Disability Duties.</li> <li>○ Increase skills base of employees working directly with customers with disabilities.</li> <li>○ Building the capacity and knowledge within the organisation of the specific needs of people with a disability.</li> <li>○ Building the capacity and knowledge within the organisation including the specific needs of people with mobility issues.</li> </ul>	This is continuous ongoing work with Departments and their Sections within Council
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4. Please outline what **action measures have not been achieved** and the reasons why?

	Action Measures not met	Reasons
1		

5. What **monitoring tools** have been put in place to evaluate the degree to which actions have been effective / develop new opportunities for action?

(a) Qualitative

**Response**

- Evaluation / feedback from training sessions
- Discussion / consultation with disability groups and individuals

(b) Quantitative

**Response**

- Number of employees who have received training
- Number of Councillors who have received training
- Number of documents requested in alternative formats
- Number of complaints received

6. As a result of monitoring progress against actions, has your organisation either:
- made any **revisions** to your plan during the reporting period or
  - taken any **additional steps** to meet the disability duties which were **not outlined in your original** disability action plan / any other changes.

Please delete: **Yes / No**

If yes please outline below:

	Revised/Additional Action Measures	Performance Indicator	Timescale
1	Review Corporate and Departmental practices and procedures	Mainstreaming of the Disability Duties into Departmental Service Delivery	Ongoing during 2009-2010
2	Organise appropriate and relevant training on the disability duties for all staff and Elected Members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Disability Awareness Training for Employees and Elected Members</li> <li>○ Further Specialist Training for frontline staff, Senior Officers, Personnel Officers and supervisors.</li> </ul>	Ongoing during 2009-2010

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