



**Summary
Equality Scheme for
Libraries NI**

January 2019

Introduction

This document is a summary of the Libraries NI Equality Scheme [the Scheme] which has been subject to a review completed in January 2019. The full Scheme is available on the equality section of the Libraries NI website. It outlines how Libraries NI proposes to fulfil the statutory duties set out in Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

Requirements of the Act

Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 requires Libraries NI, while carrying out its functions, powers and duties, to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity:

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

There is also a requirement to have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group.

Commitment

To ensure that Section 75 duties are complied with and that the Scheme is implemented Libraries NI is committed to:

- allocating the necessary resources in terms of people, time and money; implementing effective internal arrangements to monitor and review progress;
- developing an effective communication and training programme to raise awareness of obligations to staff and Board members.

Libraries NI Equality Scheme

The Scheme is a plan indicating how we intend to meet the obligations of the Section 75 duties and make the promotion of equality of opportunity and good relations an integral part of what we do. The key elements of the Scheme are:

1. Compliance

To monitor compliance with the Section 75 duties managers will incorporate equality objectives and targets into corporate and operational plans. Where relevant, job descriptions and appraisals will include reference to Section 75 duties and Scheme commitments. Progress reports will be submitted to the Board, Department for Communities and the Equality Commission.

2. Consulting

Libraries NI will seek the views of those directly affected by new strategies and policies. All consultations will be carried out in accordance with the principles contained in the Equality Commission's guidance '*Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 – A Guide for Public Authorities.*'

3. Assessing, monitoring and publishing the impact of policies

All new, or amended, strategies and policies will be screened to assess their likely impact on the promotion of equality of opportunity and good relations. Where significant impact is identified a full equality impact assessment will be undertaken. Equality impact assessments, quarterly screening reports and completed screening templates will be published on the website.

4. Action Plan

Libraries NI will audit the services provided to identify Section 75 inequalities. The action plan, developed from the audit of inequalities, is a timeframe outlining the measures we are committed to taking to address inequalities. The audit of inequalities and action plan will be published on the web site.

5. Training

Staff and Board members will receive the level of equality training / awareness required in relation to their responsibilities. Training objectives will be monitored and evaluated via the Section 75 Annual Progress Report.

6. Public access to information and services

Libraries NI will keep under review arrangements currently in place to ensure that the services and information we provide are fully accessible to all parts of the community. Published information can be made available in alternative formats on request.

7. Complaints

The Scheme provides a complaints procedure enabling individuals to challenge alleged failure to comply with the Scheme.

8. Review

The Scheme will be reviewed every 5 years.

Further Information

The Scheme, screening template and guidance on policy screening and publication are available on request. For further information contact:

Desi Miskelly
Director of Business Support
Portadown Library
24-26 Church Street
Portadown
BT62 3LQ

Tel: 028 38 393000
Desi.miskelly@librariesni.org.uk

Heather Gardiner
Data Protection Officer
Libraries NI
25-31 Demesne Avenue
Ballymena
BT43 7BG

Tel: 028 25 664135
heather.gardiner@librariesni.org.uk