

Equality Scheme Summary

SIB's Equality Scheme

SIB's Equality Scheme is a statement of SIB's commitment to and proposals for fulfilling statutory obligations in compliance with Section 75 and Schedule 9 of the Northern Ireland Act (1998). SIB is committed to the fulfilment of the Section 75 duties in all areas of responsibility. Responsibility for the effective implementation of the Equality Scheme lies with the Chairman of the Board and the Chief Executive Officer (CEO). This document summarises our Equality Scheme and sets out what we intend to do to implement it.

Section 75 duties

Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 requires SIB, as a designated public authority,, as a designated body, in carrying out all of its functions, powers and duties relating to Northern Ireland, to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity:

- Between people of different religious beliefs, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status and sexual orientation;
- Between men and women generally;
- Between people with a disability and those without; and
- Between people with dependants and those without.

Without prejudice to these obligations, SIB is also required, in carrying out all its functions, powers and duties to have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group.

Compliance with Section 75 duties

SIB has put in place arrangements to ensure that the organisation's commitments to the Section 75 duties will be effectively carried out, and that progress will continue to be monitored and reviewed. These include:

- the Chief Executive Officer overseeing implementation of the Equality Scheme;
- screening any new policies;
- carrying out consultation;
- conducting an annual review of progress;
- carrying out a five year review of the Scheme; and,
- addressing any complaints relating to SIB's statutory duties.

Assessing the impact of policies

In making any decision with respect to a policy adopted or proposed to be adopted, SIB will take into account any assessment and consultation carried out in relation to the policy. SIB uses screening and equality impact assessment to assess the likely impact of a policy on the promotion of equality of opportunity and good relations.

(a) Screening

Screening is completed at the earliest opportunity in the policy development/review process by applying the following questions:

- What is the likely impact on equality of opportunity for those affected by this policy, for each of the Section 75 equality categories? (minor/major/none)
- Are there opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity for people within the Section 75 equality categories?
- To what extent is the policy likely to impact on good relations between people of a different religious belief, political opinion or racial group? (minor/major/none)
- Are there opportunities to better promote good relations between people of a different religious belief, political opinion or racial group?

Relevant information and data will be gathered to inform the screening of the policy.

(b) Equality impact assessment

If our screening concludes that the policy is likely to have an impact on one or more of the equality and/or good relations categories, the policy may be considered for an Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA). An EQIA will examine how the policy impacts upon each of the Section 75 categories, and seeks ways to more effectively promote equality of opportunity and good relations.

Alternatively, if the likely equality impact is considered likely to be 'minor', measures that might mitigate the policy impact or a different policy will be considered. If screening concludes that the likely equality impact is 'none', the policy will be screened out which means that an EQIA is not deemed necessary.

Consultation

When consulting on any matter to which the Scheme relates, SIB will employ a variety of consultation techniques to ensure that effective consultation is achieved. SIB will make available consultation documents in alternative formats or languages upon request.

Monitoring

Monitoring involves the collection, collation and analysis of data from primary and secondary sources and the commissioning of new data where necessary. We review our monitoring information on an annual basis and include the results in our annual progress report to the Equality Commission, which is published on our website.

Publication of assessments and monitoring

SIB will make available on its website the outcome of any equality impact assessment once the impact assessment has been completed. Screening reports will also be published in SIB's website. EQIA and policy monitoring information will be addressed within the Section 75 Annual Report.

Staff training

We recognise that awareness raising and training play a crucial role in the effective implementation of our Section 75 duties. All staff are made aware of the Equality Scheme and the duties imposed by Section 75. These duties are also addressed in SIB's induction for new staff. Training is provided for key staff within SIB who are directly engaged in taking forward the implementation of our Equality Scheme commitments.

Access to information

SIB strives to ensure that its information is accessible, and is aware that some groups will not have the same access to information, and where practicable will seek to address this.

Timetable for action measures

SIB's timetable sets out actions, timescales and responsible officers for a range of actions relation to the Section 75 duties. Implementation of these actions are monitored annually and addressed in the Section 75 Annual Report.

Complaints

SIB will carry out an internal investigation of any complaint by a person who believe that they have been directly affected by a failure of SIB to comply with its Scheme. SIB will undertake to respond within one month of receiving the complaint, informing the complainant of the procedure for pursuing the complaint further with the Equality Commission. Complaints relating to SIB's failure to comply with its Scheme must be submitted to the Equality Commission within twelve months from the date on which the complainant first knew of the matters alleged.

Copies of the Equality Scheme can be made available in alternative formats upon request. The Scheme is available at www.sibni.org or by contacting:

Ursula Doherty
Human Resources Manager
Strategic Investment Board Limited
5th Floor, 9 Lanyon Place
Belfast
BT1 3LP

Telephone: 02890 250 930
Mobile/Text: 07887 808480
E-mail: ursula.doherty@sibni.org