

SIB Staff Handbook

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1 Introduction and Welcome to SIB Limited

This SIB Staff Handbook has been designed to help shape and govern our behaviour. If you need clarification you should, in the first instance, speak to the Human Resources (HR) Manager. Amendments will be added as and when necessary.

The SIB Staff Handbook contains a statement of SIB's conditions of employment. Every member of staff is provided with a personal copy when they join SIB and the hand book is made available on the SIB Intranet and the SIB Website.

1.1 Handbook Format

The areas covered by the SIB Staff Handbook are as follows:

- “Main Terms and Conditions of Service” – on page 3.
- “General Conduct, Rules and Regulations” – on page 27.
- Equal Opportunities – see Appendix 1 on page 57.
- Discipline – see Appendix 2 on page 61.
- Grievances – see Appendix 3 on page 65.
- Health and Safety – see Appendix 9 on page 101.
- Redundancy – see Appendix 6 on page 89.
- Equality Scheme – see Appendix 11 on page 121.

We hope that you enjoy your time with the Company and I look forward to working with you in order that together we will achieve great things for Northern Ireland.

Brett Hannam
Chief Executive
Strategic Investment Board Limited

2 Main Terms and Conditions of Service

2.1 Probation

The first six months of employment for a new employee is recognised as a probationary period, which will be subject to ongoing review. At the end of the probationary period, subject to satisfactory service and conduct, employment with the Company will be confirmed. The Company reserves the right to terminate employment within the six months probationary period if inadequate progress is being made. Similarly, the Company may extend the probationary period if deemed to be necessary.

2.2 Hours of Work

The hours of work are 37 hours per week. This does not include lunch breaks.

Time keeping is conducted on an “honour” basis but Directors/Managers may insist on members of staff completing timesheets. In all cases staff will have to complete “myHours.com” (www.myhours.com) or an alternative time recording system should this be needed.

2.3 Overtime

Overtime is paid only in exceptional circumstances, when authorised, in writing, in advance, by the Chief Executive (CE). Time spent on training courses outside normal working hours does not constitute overtime. Payment is assessed on the hours worked in excess of 37 hours gross per week (excluding lunches). For part-time workers payment will be at single time until the hours worked exceed 37 hours (exclusive of lunch breaks).

2.4 Pay System

The pay system is operated by the Strategic Investment Board Limited Finance Team which is responsible for the issuing of payslips, P60s, etc.

2.5 Statement of Pay

Details of salary and deductions are set out in the itemised pay statement that is issued by Finance when salaries are paid. Suspected errors or queries should be raised without delay with the Strategic Investment Board Limited Finance Manager.

Salaries will be paid into bank accounts three days before the last working day of each month.

2.6 Attendance and Timekeeping

2.6.1 General

Employees must attend work each day regularly and punctually as indicated in section 2.2 above. Persistent poor timekeeping and attendance will be subject to disciplinary action. A record of attendance covering all attendance and absences will be maintained by the Company.

2.6.2 Notification of Absence

Absence for reasons of sickness must be notified to the HR Manager (or the Chief Executive if he is not available) as early as possible on the first day of absence, preferably before 10.00 AM. It is the responsibility of the employee to keep the Company informed of the reasons preventing attendance at work together with an indication of the anticipated date of return. Employees who are unable to inform the Company personally on the first day of absence should arrange for someone to act on their behalf. If the required notification is not received on the first day of absence, employees will be asked to furnish an explanation of their failure to do so.

2.6.3 Certification of Absence/Sick Leave

Staff must as soon as possible provide evidence of incapacity and a statement of the cause of incapacity throughout the illness. Evidence of incapacity must either be by self-certificate (see Annex F) for the first seven calendar days or a statement by a qualified medical practitioner thereafter until work is resumed. On return to work, the employee should submit a certificate confirming fitness to resume work. Sick pay may be withheld if satisfactory evidence is not provided.

The Company will monitor both self-certified sick absence and that covered by a doctor's statement. If an employee's sick absence record is giving cause for concern, consideration will be given to seeking an independent medical opinion.

In addition the employee should keep the line manager informed of his / her progress throughout the duration of their absence. Likewise the HR Manager should maintain contact with the employee off on sick leave. Maintaining contact during periods of absence will have benefits to both the employee and the company. For example the line manager will be able to re-prioritise work, whilst considering any impact the absence will have on the workload of colleagues. It will also give the HR Manager the opportunity to offer advice to the employee in relation to the various support networks available to them.

Contact should not be intrusive rather it should be for the purpose of letting the employee know he/she is valued and is missed. Contact may be maintained in a variety of ways, telephone, get well cards, letter or in the case of a long term absence a home visit may be appropriate. Home visits should never be undertaken without the prior consent of the HR Manager.

2.6.4 Pay During Sick Leave

- An employee may be allowed sick leave on full pay (offset by statutory sick pay or equivalent statutory payment) for not more than six months in all in any period of twelve months and thereafter on half pay, subject to a maximum of twelve months paid sick absence in any period of four years or less.
- All such absences, whether self-certified or medically certified, will count as sick absence for the purpose of determining this period of absence.
- Sick pay is calculated on rolling periods. Calculation begins on the first day of absence from work. Periods of absence occurring at intervals will be treated as cumulative.

- When full pay or half pay has ceased it will not be restored during the same sick absence, even if the restriction outlined at Annex E on page 41 ceases to apply with the passage of time.
- Pregnant women in the period during which Statutory Maternity Pay or Maternity Allowance is payable may not qualify for Statutory Sick Pay under any circumstances.
- The periods on full and half pay are the maximum and will not be allowed as a matter of course in all cases.
- The Company may seek an independent medical opinion if it wishes to know the prospect of an employee returning to work at an early stage of an illness, so that essential decisions regarding staffing cover may be made. The Company will arrange and pay for a Doctor's appointment if a medical opinion is required.

2.6.5 Calculation of Sick Absence Period

In calculating any sick absence period, Saturdays, Sundays and public and privilege holidays will be treated as follows.

- a. Those occurring within a period of sick absence will be included and reckoned as part of the absence; payment for these days will be only that to which the employee is entitled under the sick absence rules and not ordinary pay.
- b. Those occurring at the beginning or end of a period of sick absence will not be included or reckoned although such days may count towards a Period of Incapacity for Work (PIW) for Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) purposes.

For sick absence purposes three months means 92 days, six months means 183 days and 12 months means 365 days.

2.6.6 Unsatisfactory Levels of Sick Absence

In the interest of overall consistency the HR Manager will monitor the absence records of all staff. In monitoring the level of sick absence HR aim to identify problems at an early stage in order to provide staff with the opportunity to obtain timely support in relation to their health problems, so that absences can be kept to a minimum.

Attendance is measured on a continual basis using trigger mechanisms (number of days absent and number of occasions absent) to identify staff that have unsatisfactory levels of sick absence. The current trigger is set at two occasions in one month or more than six occasions in twelve months. Each case will be considered on its own merits.

2.6.7 Return to Work Interviews

Following each absence from work, and regardless of the reason for the sick absence, the line manager, or HR Manager must conduct a return to work interview. The interview is as much about showing concern for the well being of the member of staff as it is about discussing absence levels.

The interview should be carried out on the day of the employee's return to work or within 2 working days. Where a delay occurs a brief note should be made in the return to work interview report to explain the delay.

2.6.8 Unauthorised Absence

- An employee who is absent without permission will be considered to have committed an offence, which will be dealt with under the Company's disciplinary procedures.

2.6.9 Persistent Poor Timekeeping

Persistent lateness is considered to be a breach of conditions of employment and will result in disciplinary action being taken. Persistent lateness is defined as:

- More than two occasions in one month.
- More than six occasions in one year.

2.6.10 Permitted Absence

The Company will consider requests for leave arising from special circumstances such as, serious illness or bereavement. Such requests will require a recommendation from the HR Manager and the approval of the Chief Executive. All such requests and approvals must be made in writing, although such requests may be made retrospectively.

2.6.11 Domestic Crises

The term "domestic crises" covers a wide variety of circumstances which may be unplanned: e.g. sudden serious illness of a close relative or dependent which requires an employee to be at home or to make longer term plans; or severe damage or disruption to an employee's property. Staff may take time off to deal with such issues at the discretion of the HR Manager and / or Chief Executive (CE).

2.6.12 Bereavement Leave

Up to five working days special leave with pay may be granted by the Chief Executive or HR Manager on the death of a near relative such as a partner, parent, brother, sister, husband, wife or child. This may also be given in the case of the death of a more remote relative where special circumstances exist, such as the necessity of taking charge of funeral arrangements or where the deceased was a member of the staff member's household. Consideration may also be given where a stable relationship exists, especially between two individuals who reside together, though they are related by neither marriage nor blood.

2.7 Holidays

Where possible leave will be granted as requested but staff should be aware that leave may be refused if the needs of the business are such that leave cannot be granted. Clearly it is not possible for everyone to be on holiday at the same time.

2.7.1 Public and Privilege Holidays

The following days are normally observed as holidays.

New Years Day	(or the following Monday when it falls on a Saturday or Sunday)
17 March – Patrick’s Day	(or the following Monday when it falls on a Saturday or Sunday)
Easter Monday	
Easter Tuesday	
May Day Bank Holiday	(First Monday in May)
Spring Bank Holiday	(Last Monday in May)
12 July	(or any day proclaimed a Public Holiday in place of 12 July)
13 July	(or the next working day following either (i) 12 July or (ii) any day proclaimed a Public Holiday in place of 12 July)
Late Summer Bank Holiday	(last Monday in August)
Christmas Day	(or the following Monday when 25 December falls on a Saturday)
Boxing Day	(or the following Monday if 26 December falls on a Saturday or the following Tuesday if 26 December falls on a Sunday)
A third day at Christmas, which will be announced annually	

Where a public or privilege holiday occurs during a period of annual leave, the holiday will not reckon against the annual leave entitlement. However a public or privilege holiday falling within a period (but not on the first or last day) of sick leave will be reckoned against the total number of days taken.

2.7.2 Annual Leave

- The leave year runs from 1 April to 31 March and you are entitled to 25 days leave per year.
- A leave folder is kept by the HR Manager. This system is currently under review. All leave approvals must be sent to the HR Manager.
- Annual leave on particular dates cannot be claimed as a matter of right but approval will not be unreasonably withheld provided that the work of the Company is not seriously affected and approval has been sought in advance.
- If through pressure of work or for any other reason employees are unable to take the number of days leave for which they are eligible in any leave year, they will not be entitled to compensation.
- An employee may, if permission is sought before 15 March, be allowed to carry forward up to nine days unexpended leave to the next leave year. In exceptional circumstances the Chief Executive may allow the carry-over to be more than nine days or may allow an employee to anticipate up to seven days during the last month of the leave year.

- Any leave that has been taken in excess of entitlement will be deducted from outstanding salary on termination of employment.

2.8 Maternity Leave

2.8.1 Introduction

These paragraphs are set out according to whether they are:

- Contractual: i.e. arrangements which are specific to the Strategic Investment Board Limited – see section 2.8.3 on page 9; or
- Statutory: i.e. the result of legislation – see section 2.8.4 on page 10.

A “Glossary of Terms” used throughout this section can be found at Annex B on page 35.

2.8.2 General Requirements for Maternity Leave

To take advantage of the right to maternity leave an employee must:

- Notify the Company no later than the 15th week before the expected week of childbirth (EWC), or as soon as is reasonably practicable, of:
 - i. The fact that she is pregnant (to be confirmed by the production of a Maternity Certificate, “Mat B1”);
 - ii. The week her baby is expected to be born;
 - iii. When she wants her maternity leave to start (the earliest possible date for this is 11 weeks before the Expected Week of Childbirth); and
- Still be pregnant at the start of the 16th week before her Expected Week of Childbirth, or have given birth to a living child before that date.

The application form contained in (Annex A) can be used to provide the Strategic Investment Board Limited with the information required.

After notification, the Strategic Investment Board Limited will respond within 28 days, stating the date of expected return to work following the full period of maternity leave to which the employee is entitled.

If an employee wishes to change the start date of her maternity leave, she must advise the HR Manager at least 28 days in advance (unless this is not reasonably practicable).

The Strategic Investment Board Limited will not seek confirmation of either the date of the child’s birth or the intended date of return from maternity leave. If, however, the employee wishes to return to work before the end of her full entitlement to maternity leave, she must give the Company eight weeks notice of the date she wishes to return.

During paid maternity leave (the first 26 weeks) the Strategic Investment Board Limited will credit the employee with the same pension benefits that she would have received had she been working normally (i.e. 10% of salary).

2.8.3 Contractual Maternity Arrangements

In order to benefit from the contractual maternity arrangements an employee who satisfies the general requirements set out under section 2.8.2 above must also:

- State that she intends to return to work in the Strategic Investment Board Limited after the birth of her child, and that she agrees to repay any payment made during that period if she fails to return and complete at least one calendar month's service on her return; such repayment will exclude any statutory maternity pay (SMP) to which she is entitled (the application form in Annex A on page 33 must be used for this purpose);
- Be in paid service with the Company at the time her maternity leave begins and have rendered at least one year's paid service with the Strategic Investment Board Limited, which need not be continuous;
- Not be employed on a temporary or a fixed-term contract, the unexpired period of which will not permit her to return to the Strategic Investment Board Limited after her maternity leave for at least one calendar month.

An employee who does not satisfy the qualifying conditions above must rely on the statutory maternity arrangements set out at section 2.8.4 on page 10.

2.8.3.1 Contractual Maternity Leave

An employee who meets the qualifying conditions for the contractual maternity arrangements will be entitled to 52 weeks' maternity leave.

2.8.3.2 Contractual Maternity Pay

An employee who meets the qualifying conditions for the contractual maternity arrangements will be paid full contractual rate of pay for the first 18 weeks of maternity leave. Where the employee qualifies for both contractual and statutory maternity pay, contractual maternity pay will count towards the obligation to pay statutory maternity pay. In such cases, the first six weeks of maternity leave will be paid at whichever is the highest of either 90% of her average weekly earnings or her full contractual rate of pay.

An employee who is entitled to contractual maternity pay (for the first 18 weeks) must rely on the statutory maternity pay arrangements for the remainder of her maternity leave. Further information on statutory maternity pay is set out under section 2.8.4.3. Contractual maternity pay is granted on the condition that an employee intends to return to work and that she completes at least one month's paid service on her return to work. Where an employee has not satisfied this requirement, the Strategic Investment Board Limited should ask her to repay any salary or wages for the period of maternity leave (less any Statutory Maternity Pay to which she is entitled).

The Strategic Investment Board Limited has the discretion to waive repayment where there are good reasons why the employee cannot return or they believe a genuine intention to return cannot be realised because of exceptional circumstances. Repayment should always be waived if the employee provides medical evidence that she will be unable to return within the 52 weeks because her child has a disability and requires continuous attention at home. Supporting

medical evidence should be sent to the HR Manager not later than three weeks before the end of the 52-week period.

2.8.4 Statutory Maternity Arrangements

2.8.4.1 Ordinary Maternity Leave

An employee who meets the general requirements set out under section 2.8.2 above is entitled to 26 weeks maternity leave, known as ordinary maternity leave.

2.8.4.2 Additional Maternity Leave

An employee who meets the general requirements set out under section 2.8.2 above will also qualify for a further 26 weeks' maternity leave, known as additional maternity leave.

2.8.4.3 Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP)

In order to qualify for Statutory Maternity Pay, an employee must, in addition to satisfying the general requirements set out under section 2.8.2 above:

- Have been continuously employed at the Strategic Investment Board Limited for at least 26 weeks continuing into the qualifying week: i.e. the 15th week before the Expected Week of Childbirth; and
- Have average weekly earnings of not less than the lower earnings limit for the payment of National Insurance contributions.

An employee who satisfies these conditions will be paid Statutory Maternity Pay for a maximum of 39 weeks. She will receive payment for the first six weeks at a rate of 90% of her average weekly earnings followed by up to 33 weeks at the standard Statutory Maternity Pay rate (or 90% of earnings for the full 39 weeks if this is less than the standard Statutory Maternity Pay rate).

2.8.5 Maternity Allowance (MA)

An employee who does not qualify for Statutory Maternity Pay may be eligible for Maternity Allowance. Entitlement for Maternity Allowance is based on the woman's employment and earnings in the 66 weeks ending with the week before the Expected Week of Childbirth. Maternity Allowance, which an employee must claim from the Social Security Agency, is payable for a maximum of 39 weeks. An employee in receipt of Maternity Allowance must inform the Strategic Investment Board Limited as soon as possible of the amount of Maternity Allowance paid and where contractual maternity pay is payable, it will be subject to a deduction equivalent to the rate of Maternity Allowance she receives.

Any maternity leave beyond the 39-week maternity period or maternity allowance period is unpaid.

2.8.6 Timing of Maternity Leave

Maternity leave will normally begin on the date that the employee has notified to the Strategic Investment Board Limited. There are, however, a number of exceptions, which are set out below.

2.8.6.1 Absence Due to Childbirth before Intended Start Date

If childbirth occurs before the date that the employee had notified (or before she had notified any date), maternity leave starts automatically on the day after the date of childbirth. In this case, in order to preserve her rights to maternity leave and pay, the employee must, as soon as reasonably practicable, give the Strategic Investment Board Limited notice of the date of childbirth and (if she has not already given it) evidence of the date the child was expected.

2.8.6.2 Absence for Pregnancy-related Reason before the Intended Start Date

If an employee specifies that she wishes to begin her maternity leave anytime after the beginning of the 4th week before her Expected Week of Childbirth, the following restrictions apply. If she is on a pregnancy-related sick absence immediately before her specified date, or childbirth occurs during the period of sick absence, the start of maternity leave will be brought forward to whichever is the later of:

- The beginning of the period of sick absence, or
- The 4th week before the expected week of childbirth.

Maternity leave cannot begin earlier than the beginning of the 11th week before the Expected Week of Childbirth unless childbirth has taken place before that date.

The Strategic Investment Board Limited will assume that an employee is taking her full maternity leave entitlement unless notice is given in accordance with section 2.8.13 on page 14.

2.8.7 Compulsory Maternity Leave

The Maternity (Compulsory Leave) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1994, which came into effect on 1 November 1994, state that an employee who is entitled to statutory maternity leave shall not work, or be permitted by her employer to work, during the two week period commencing with the date of childbirth. An employee should not therefore give the Company a return date from maternity leave that is within two weeks of her expected date of childbirth. In addition, where an employee entitlement to statutory maternity leave ends shortly after childbirth, it will be extended so as to allow the employee two weeks leave commencing with the date of childbirth.

2.8.8 Antenatal Care

An employee who is pregnant and who has, on medical advice, made an appointment to receive antenatal care will normally be given time off to keep the appointment. Except for the first appointment, she may be asked to produce a certificate of pregnancy and proof that the appointment has been made. She will be paid for the period of absence at the normal rate of pay (including any shift disturbance allowance).

2.8.9 Contact During Maternity Leave

The Strategic Investment Board may make reasonable contact with an employee from time to time while she is on maternity leave in order, for

example, to keep her informed of developments at the workplace or to discuss arrangements for her return to work.

What constitutes “reasonable” contact will vary according to the circumstances. Some employees may prefer to keep such contact to a minimum, while others may not mind frequent contact. Therefore, before maternity leave begins, the employee and her line manager should discuss arrangements for staying in touch. This should include agreement on the reasons for making contact, who will initiate contact, the way(s) in which contact will be made and how often, and the process for agreeing to work “Keeping in Touch days” (KIT days) – see section 2.8.10 below.

2.8.10 Keeping In Touch Days (KIT Days)

Under the Maternity and Parental Leave etc. (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006, a woman whose Expected Week of Childbirth (EWC) begins on or after 1 April 2007 may agree with her employer to work for up to ten Keeping in Touch days during her maternity leave without losing Statutory Maternity Pay or Maternity Allowance, or bringing her maternity leave to an end as a result. This provision is intended to help to ease the woman’s return to work. Keeping in Touch days differ from the reasonable contact mentioned in Section 2.8.9 above as during keeping in Touch days the woman can actually carry out work for her employer. Working Keeping in Touch days has no effect on the end date of a woman’s maternity leave.

For the purposes of this arrangement, “work” means any work done for the employer and may include training or any activity undertaken by the woman for the purposes of keeping in touch with the workplace. For example, they could be particularly useful in enabling a woman to attend a conference or attend for a team meeting. Any Keeping in Touch days worked under this provision must be by agreement between the woman, who is on maternity leave, and her Department. The Department has no right to demand that any such Keeping in Touch day is worked, nor has the employee any right to work a Keeping in Touch day. The type of work that the employee undertakes on Keeping in Touch days is a matter for agreement between her and her line manager.

2.8.11 When Keeping In Touch Days May Be Worked

Keeping in Touch days may be worked at any stage during the maternity leave period except during the two weeks of compulsory maternity leave (see Section 2.8.7 on page 11). Although an employee may work a maximum of 10 keeping in Touch days these need not be worked on consecutive days and working for part of a day will count as one of the 10 days.

Keeping in Touch days may only be worked by agreement. If an employee wishes to take advantage of working a Keeping in Touch day, she must contact her line manager who will consider the request.

If a line manager wishes to offer an employee who is on maternity leave the opportunity to work a Keeping in Touch day, for example, to attend a training activity, contact will be made with the employee through the agreed contact arrangements. As Keeping in Touch days may only be worked by agreement, the employee is entitled to turn the offer down without suffering any consequences as a result.

2.8.12 Payment for Keeping in Touch days worked

The payment of contractual maternity pay or Statutory Maternity Pay is not affected by working any of the ten permitted Keeping in Touch days. Therefore, if an employee works a Keeping in Touch day, she will continue to receive any contractual maternity pay or Statutory Maternity Pay (or maternity allowance) that is due for that day. Where the employee is entitled to an additional payment it will be paid as basic pay. Although working for part of a day will count as one of the ten Keeping in Touch days, any entitlement to payment will be calculated using the net hours actually worked.

The total of maternity pay and any additional payment due for working a Keeping in Touch day will not exceed the employee's contractual daily rate of pay. In practice, this means that:

- a. An employee who works a Keeping in Touch day while receiving SIB contractual maternity pay will receive no extra payment,
 - b. An employee who works a Keeping in Touch day while receiving only Statutory Maternity Pay* will receive payment for the net hours actually worked at her normal contractual rate of pay, in addition to Statutory Maternity Pay, within the overall limit of her contractual daily rate of pay, and
 - c. An employee who works a Keeping in Touch day while on unpaid maternity leave will receive her contractual rate of pay for the net hours she works.
- For the purposes of Keeping in Touch days, Maternity Allowance will be treated the same as Statutory Maternity Pay and when calculating payment for working a Keeping in Touch day, a notional daily rate of Statutory Maternity Pay or Maternity Allowance, equivalent to one seventh of the appropriate weekly rate, will be used.

Example

An employee's contractual daily rate of pay is £66. She works half a Keeping in Touch day for which she would earn £33. The level of additional payment (if any) to which she is entitled will depend on the maternity pay she is receiving for that day.

If the half Keeping in Touch day is worked while:

- a. The employee is receiving SIB contractual maternity pay – i.e. usually during the first 18 weeks of maternity leave – she will receive no extra payment.
- b. The employee is receiving Statutory Maternity Pay only, she will be paid £49.11, which is made up of the £33 that she earned plus the notional daily amount of Statutory Maternity Pay* (£16.11), and
- c. An employee who works a KIT day while on unpaid maternity leave will receive her contractual rate of pay for the net hours she works.

* For the purposes of Keeping in Touch days Maternity Allowance will be treated the same as Statutory Maternity Pay and, when calculating payment for working a Keeping in Touch day, a notional daily rate of Statutory Maternity Pay

or Maternity Allowance, equivalent to one seventh of the appropriate weekly rate, will be used.

2.8.13 Return to Work

An employee returning to work after maternity leave will return to the same job on the same terms and conditions as if she had not been absent.

An employee who wishes to return to work earlier than the end of her maternity leave entitlement must give at least eight weeks' notice of the date on which she intends to return. Failure to do so may result in the return being delayed by up to eight weeks, but not to a date after the end of the maternity leave period.

If, after notifying her line manager that she intends to return to work before the expiry of her full maternity leave entitlement, an employee decides to return on an earlier date, she must give her line manager at least eight weeks notice of the date on which she now intends to return. If the employee intends to return later, she must give her Department at least eight weeks notice ending with the original return date

An employee who resigns because she does not intend to return to work after maternity leave, but later wishes to return by the date on which she would otherwise have been due to return following her full entitlement to maternity leave because of a radical change in circumstances such as the child's still birth, has no absolute right to return but may be allowed to do so and, if at all possible, in accordance with section 2.8.13 above. In these circumstances, her resignation will be cancelled and the period of absence will be counted as maternity leave.

2.8.14 Health and Safety

Any employee who is pregnant, breastfeeding or has recently given birth, and feels that there is a health and safety risk from her post or workplace to herself or her baby should bring her concerns to the attention of the HR Manager. The HR Manager must arrange for a risk assessment of the employee's work activities to be undertaken and protect the employee from having to work in areas that might be detrimental to her health.

2.8.15 Sick Absence Before or After Maternity Leave

If an employee is unfit for work during pregnancy (before maternity leave begins) or following maternity leave, the normal provisions for occupational sick pay will apply.

If an employee is on a pregnancy-related sick absence immediately prior to the notified start date of her maternity leave, the actual start date will be brought forward in accordance with section 2.8.6.2 above.

2.8.16 Resignation during Maternity Leave

If an employee has commenced maternity leave and then finds that she will be unable to honour her undertaking to return to duty she should forward her resignation to the HR Manager without delay.

2.8.17 Starting Work for another Employer

If the employee starts work for another employer after her child is born and during the maternity pay period (i.e. the period during which Statutory Maternity Pay is payable), she must advise the HR Manager within seven days, as the Strategic Investment Board Limited's liability to pay Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP) ceases for the remainder of the maternity pay period.

2.8.18 Untaken Maternity Leave

Maternity leave is completed once an employee returns to work irrespective of how much of her entitlement to maternity leave she has not taken. The amount left untaken in these circumstances may however be taken into account in the event of a later application for unpaid leave to look after one or more children. Similarly, where both parents work for the Company, if the father applies for unpaid leave, account may be taken of how much maternity leave entitlement the mother has left untaken.

2.8.19 Career Break Immediately Following a Period of Maternity Leave

Where an employee applies to take a career break immediately following a period of maternity leave there is no need for her to return to work for one month in order to avoid having to repay contractual maternity pay (less any statutory maternity pay paid to her). If, however, she resigns during the course of the career break or fails to return at the end, she will be expected to repay the difference between the contractual maternity pay and statutory maternity pay already paid to her.

2.8.20 Overlapping Periods of Maternity Leave

Where an employee, who satisfies the qualifying conditions for contractual maternity pay, wishes to start a second period of maternity leave before the first period has finished or, within one month of a completed period of maternity leave, she will only be entitled to contractual maternity pay provided she signs a new undertaking to repay contractual maternity pay (less any statutory maternity pay paid) if she fails to return to work for at least one month at the end of the second period of maternity leave. The Company may waive the requirement to return to work for at least a month in order to retain contractual maternity pay for the first period of maternity leave.

2.9 Paternity Leave and Pay

2.9.1 Statutory Paternity Leave and Pay Entitlements

The following paragraphs detail the Strategic Investment Board Limited's arrangements for paternity leave and pay and paternity leave and pay for adoption. The rules are set out according to whether they are:

- Statutory: i.e. the result of legislation, or
- Contractual: i.e. arrangements which are specific to the Strategic Investment Board Limited.

Throughout these paragraphs, the term "partner" is used to define someone (male or female) living with the mother / adopter in an enduring family relationship but who is not an immediate relative.

2.9.2 Eligibility

Statutory entitlement to paternity leave, under the Paternity and Adoption Leave Regulations (NI) 2002, took effect on 6 April 2003 and is available to employees:

- Whose children are born on or after 6 April 2003.
- Who expect to have responsibility for the child's upbringing
- Who are the biological father of the child, or the mother's husband or partner, and
- Have worked continuously for the Company for at least 26 weeks at the beginning of the 14th week before the baby is due.

2.9.3 Leave Entitlement

Staff who are eligible for statutory paternity leave will be entitled to take either one week or two consecutive weeks within 56 days of either:

- The actual date of birth, or
- The expected week of birth if the child is born early.

Please note that under the statutory provisions, paternity leave must be taken in blocks of one or two weeks. Should an employee wish to take less time off, contractual arrangements will apply (see paragraph 2.9.8).

Only one period of paternity leave is available irrespective of whether one child is born, or it is a multiple birth.

2.9.4 Pay Entitlement

Statutory paid paternity leave is paid at the same rate as the standard rate of statutory maternity pay. The first two days of paid paternity leave will, under contractual paternity arrangements, be at the full contractual rate of pay, as this is more beneficial to staff.

2.9.5 Annual Leave

An employee continues to accrue annual leave while on paternity leave.

2.9.6 Notification

An employee wishing to take Statutory Paternity Leave should notify the Company, no later than the 15th week before the expected week of childbirth of:

- The week the baby is expected to be born
- The amount of leave they wish to take (one week or two weeks) and
- When they wish their leave to start

This information should be provided using a self-certified form, a copy of which is attached at Annex C on page 37.

If an employee wishes to change the start date of their paternity leave, they must advise the HR Manager at least 28 days in advance (unless this is not reasonably practicable).

2.9.7 Return to Work

An employee is entitled to return to the same job on the same terms and conditions following paternity leave.

2.9.8 Contractual Paternity Leave and Pay Entitlements

A member of staff who:

- a. Has or expects to have responsibility for the child's upbringing, and
- b. Is the biological father of the child or the mother's husband or partner,

Will be granted two days paternity leave at the full contractual rate of pay, irrespective of the hours they work or the length of time that they have served with the Strategic Investment Board Limited. Annual leave continues to accrue and the leave is reckonable for pension purposes.

The leave is not restricted to the time of birth but can be taken within 56 days of either the actual date of birth, or the expected week of childbirth if the child is born early.

2.9.9 Statutory Paternity Leave and Pay (Adoption) Entitlements

The statutory entitlement to paternity leave and pay is also available in cases of adoption where the child is newly matched to the adopter by an approved adoption agency.

2.9.10 Eligibility

To be eligible for paternity leave (adoption) an employee must:

- Have or expect to have responsibility for the child's upbringing
- Be the adopters husband or partner, and
- Have worked continuously for the Strategic Investment Board Limited for at least 26 weeks ending with the week in which the adopter is notified of being matched with a child.

2.9.11 Leave Entitlement

Staff who are eligible for statutory paternity leave (adoption) will be entitled to take either one week or two consecutive weeks within 56 days of the date of the child's placement (whether this is earlier or later than expected).

Only one period of paternity leave (adoption) is available on the occasion of each adoption irrespective of the number of children adopted at the same time.

2.9.12 Pay Entitlement

Statutory paid paternity leave (adoption) is paid at the same rate as the standard rate of statutory maternity pay. The first two days of paid paternity leave (adoption) will, under contractual paternity arrangements, be at the full contractual rate of pay.

2.9.13 Annual Leave and Pension

An employee continues to accrue annual leave while on paternity leave (adoption).

2.9.14 Notification

Within seven days of being notified by the adoption agency that they have been matched with a child for adoption (unless this is not reasonably practicable) a member of staff must inform the Company:

- That they have been notified by the adoption agency,
- When the child is expected to be placed with them, and
- When they want their paternity leave to start

This information should be provided using a self-certified form, a copy of which is attached at (Annex D). If an employee wishes to change the start date of their paternity leave (adoption), they must advise the HR Manager at least 28 days in advance (unless this is not reasonably practicable).

2.9.15 Return to Work

An employee is entitled to return to the same job on the same terms and conditions.

2.10 Contractual Paternity Leave and Pay (Adoption) Entitlements

2.10.1 Eligibility

From April 2003, a member of staff who:

- Has or expects to have responsibility for the child's upbringing, and
- Is the adopter's husband or partner,

Will be granted two days paternity leave (adoption), at the full contractual rate of pay, irrespective of the hours they work or the length of time they have served with the Company. Annual leave continues to accrue and the leave is reckonable for pension purposes. The leave is not restricted to the time of placement, but must be taken within 56 days of placement.

2.11 Parental Leave

2.11.1 Introduction

These paragraphs set out the arrangements for parental leave in the Strategic Investment Board Limited. Parental leave, which is unpaid, is the right to time off work to look after a child or make arrangements for a child's welfare which was introduced by the Maternity and Paternity Leave Regulations (NI) 1999. The entitlement was subsequently extended to parents of children born or adopted on or after 15 December 1994.

2.11.2 Reasons for Parental Leave

Parents can use parental leave to spend more time with their children and strike a better balance between their work and family commitments. The reasons for the leave need not be connected with the child's health. Examples of how parental leave might be used include:

- To spend more time with young children;

- To accompany a child during a stay in hospital;
- To check out new schools;
- To settle a child into new childcare arrangements;
- To enable the family to spend more time together: e.g. taking the child to stay with grandparents.

2.11.3 Eligibility Criteria

An employee has the right to be absent from work on parental leave if he or she has at least one year's continuous service with the Company and,

- Is the parent of a child under five years of age; or
- Has adopted, within the last five years, a child under the age of 18; or
- Has parental responsibility, under the terms of Article 6 of the children (NI) Order 1995, of a child who is under five years old; or
- Is the parent, or has parental responsibility for a child with a disability who is under the age of 18 (for the purposes of parental leave, a disabled child is one for whom Disability Living Allowance (DLA) has been awarded); and
- He/she has not already exhausted his/her entitlement to parental leave, in respect the qualifying child, with the Strategic Investment Board Limited or another employer.

Parents of children born or placed for adoption after 14 December 1994, but before 15 December 1999, can also qualify for parental leave by having been employed by a previous employer for one year or more in the period between 15 December 1998 and 20 April 2002.

2.11.4 Evidence of Eligibility

Before granting parental leave the Strategic Investment Board Limited may require the employee to produce evidence of:

- The responsibility, or expected responsibility, for the child in respect of whom they propose to take parental leave;
- The child's date of birth, or in the case of adoption, the date on which the placement began;
- The child's entitlement to DLA where the employee's entitlement to take leave depends upon whether the child is entitled to that allowance;
- The relevant period of service with a previous employer, where the employee's entitlement to parental leave arises out of a period of employment by a person other than the person who was his/her employer on 21 April 2002 (see section 2.11.3 above).

Evidence may take the form of information contained in the child's birth certificate, papers confirming the child's adoption, or in the case of a disabled child the award of DLA for the child.

2.11.5 Previous Applications

When an individual joins the Strategic Investment Board Limited or makes an application for parental leave, the Strategic Investment Board Limited is free to make enquiries of their previous employer or seek a declaration from the employee themselves, about how much parental leave they have taken in relation to a particular child.

2.11.6 Extent of Entitlement

Eligible employees may take up to 13 weeks unpaid leave in respect of each child who meets the qualifying conditions. The entitlement is 18 weeks in respect of a child who is entitled to DLA. Both mothers and fathers can take the full entitlement to parental leave for each child.

Where, under their contract of employment, the period for which an employee is normally required to work in the course of a week does not vary, one week's parental leave is equal to the period they are normally required to work. This means that a week's leave for an employee who usually works Monday to Friday is equal to five days, while for an employee who works Monday and Tuesday only, a week's leave is equal to two days.

Where, under their contract of employment, the period for which an employee is normally required to work in the course of a week varies from week to week or over a longer period, or where they are normally required to work some weeks, but not in others, a week's leave is calculated by dividing the total of the periods for which they are normally required to work in a year by 52 (rounded up to the nearest half day).

2.11.7 When Parental Leave May be Taken

Eligible employees may take parental leave at any time:

- Up until the child's 5th birthday; or
- In adoption cases, up to the 5th anniversary of the date on which the placement began or until the child's 18th birthday, if earlier; or
- In the case of a child who is entitled to DLA, up until the child's 18th birthday.

Those employees eligible as described in section 2.11.3 above, who are parents of children born or adopted between 15 December 1994 and 14 December 1999, can take parental leave any time up to 20 July 2005, or up until the child's 18th birthday in the case of a child entitled to DLA.

The Regulations entitle employees to take leave in blocks of one week or more (one day or more for parents of disabled children), subject to a maximum of four weeks in respect of any individual child in any one year. At the Strategic Investment Board Limited's discretion and taking account of operational needs, leave may be taken in multiples of one day. A day refers to the hours that would normally be worked on the day concerned. Parental leave entitlement may be calculated in hours where an individual's working pattern is so variable that it is not practicable to calculate the entitlement in days.

At the Strategic Investment Board Limited's discretion more than four weeks leave may be taken in any year for each child.

2.11.8 Notification

The Regulations stipulate that at least 21 days notice should be given (where reasonably practicable) before parental leave may be taken. Where not reasonably practicable, the Strategic Investment Board Limited may, nevertheless, grant parental leave, subject to the Company's discretion and to operational needs.

Where an employee who is the father of a child in respect of which leave is to be taken, wishes the leave to begin on the date on which the child is born, notification must specify the Expected Week of Childbirth and the duration of the period of leave and must be given to the HR Manager at least 21 days before the Expected Week of Childbirth.

Prospective adoptive parents wishing to take leave beginning on the date of placement for adoption must give notice 21 days before the beginning of that week which specifies the duration of the period of leave and the week in which the placement is expected to occur or if that is not reasonably practicable as soon as is reasonably practicable.

2.11.9 Postponement of Leave

Applications for parental leave will be treated sympathetically to help staff balance their work and home lives. There may however be occasions when it is necessary to postpone parental leave. With the exception of prospective fathers and prospective adoptive parents, leave may be postponed for up to 6 months from the date on which the period of leave originally requested by the employee would have commenced, if the Strategic Investment Board Limited considers that the operation of business would be unduly disrupted if the leave were to be taken at the time requested. The HR Manager will discuss the postponement with the employee concerned and give notice of the postponement in writing no later than seven days after the employee's notice to take leave was given. The notice will state the reason for the postponement and specify the dates, agreed by both parties, on which the postponed period of leave will begin and end.

Parental leave will not be lost if, solely as a result of postponement, the child reaches the age thresholds or deadline set out in section 2.11.7 above. Leave will not be postponed when an employee has given notice to take it immediately after a child is born or placed with the family for adoption.

2.11.10 Termination of Parental Leave

Parental leave is granted to enable working parents to care for their children. If the Strategic Investment Board Limited has reasonable grounds for believing that an employee is not using the leave for this purpose, the leave may be terminated following the expiry of seven days notice and the employee concerned may be required to return to work. Before any notice of termination is given, the employee will be invited to make representations on the matter within seven days. Any employee who is found to have claimed or taken leave dishonestly may be liable to disciplinary action.

2.11.11 Annual Leave

Annual Leave does not accrue during unpaid parental leave. A proportionate deduction will be made from the annual leave allowance, rounded down to the nearest half day.

2.12 Jury Service

If summoned for jury service, an immediate notification to the HR Manager is required. Special leave with pay is allowed for any period during which an employee must attend court for jury service. The employee may retain any travelling or subsistence allowance received from the Court but should not claim from the court or accept any compensation for loss of earnings that have not in fact been lost.

2.13 Performance Appraisal

The Company operates a system of performance appraisal. This is carried out on the basis of agreed objectives, including personal development and is kept under review throughout the reporting period. The annual report form is written by the individual's line manager. This is reviewed with the employee who has the opportunity to add his / her comments to the report. The report is signed by the employee to confirm that the review has taken place and that the objectives had been agreed. The reporting employee and countersigning employee also sign the report. All reports are reviewed and approved by the Chief Executive, in order to ensure consistency of treatment and appraisal markings. The system of appraisal used may vary and staff will be informed of any changes.

The "appraisal" year is the Financial Year running from 1 April to 31 March with the objective of reporting normally being complete by the end of June, subject to holiday periods or other special circumstances.

0. In-year informal performance reviews to evaluate progress take place regularly in line with the normal business monitoring and review processes.
1. At the end-year performance review in March April the individual and line manager review performance over the whole year and lay the foundations for the next year's performance agreement. The emphasis is on honest face-to-face discussion of performance rather than form filling. In the light of this discussion the manager:
 - Records on, or attaches to, the performance review record the overall purpose of the job and agreed personal business objectives or targets;
 - Summarises assessments of achievement against all personal objectives or targets and the staff member's overall contribution throughout the year. The assessment of achievement covers how personal targets were achieved and reflects evidence from the jobholder and other sources.
2. Individuals and line managers need to prepare for reviews with care:
 - The individual should come prepared to discuss in detail what has been delivered and how;

- The manager should prepare by informally but deliberately gathering feedback from multiple sources: up/down, peers and customers etc. This can be complemented with relevant information from any staff and stakeholder surveys.

2.14 Training and Further Education

The Company aims to foster a culture which encourages every member of staff to develop his or her potential by offering appropriate training and development opportunities identified predominantly through the performance appraisal system – see Annex G “*Assistance to Study – Adult Further Education*”.

2.15 Time Off and Special Leave for Training

Staff will be allowed any necessary time off from work to reach the venue of their evening classes.

One half-day’s special leave with pay should be given for study for each examination lasting up to and including one and a half hours. One day’s special leave with pay should be given for study for each examination lasting over one and a half hours. Where student assessment is carried out through projects and not by examination, one day’s special leave with pay should be given for each project.

Special leave with pay should be given for attendance at Summer Schools which form an integral part of a course. In addition, special leave with pay should be given to allow the student to take examinations which are held during normal working hours.

Days taken as special leave and time off for study should be selected to cause the minimum possible interference to work in consultation with the applicant’s line manager.

Part time or job-sharing staff will be awarded special leave on a pro-rata basis but at least one half-day’s special leave with pay should be given for study for each examination.

2.16 Subscriptions to Professional Bodies

The Company will pay the subscription of an individual employee for professional or similar societies where the membership of the organisation is required as part of the job description. (See relevant section in Financial Procedures for details on eligibility and how to claim reimbursement of membership forms).

2.17 Redundancy

The Company recognises the importance that staff attach to security of employment. In furtherance of this, the Company will take all reasonable steps to prevent the occurrence of redundancy.

Nevertheless, the possibility of redundancy cannot be eliminated though this will only be adopted when all other feasible measures have been fully explored. In devising redundancy arrangements the Company will pay due regard to the Equal Opportunities Policy (see Appendix 1).

2.18 Termination of Employment

An employee leaving the service of the Company on a voluntary basis will give notice in writing in accordance with the stated requirements of their Terms and Conditions of Employment.

Similarly, where employment is being terminated by the Company, notice will be given in accordance with the employee's Terms and Conditions of Employment. It may be necessary to obtain the consent of the Company before taking up, an appointment with a company or other organisation with which there has been an involvement during the course of duty. This will apply if the said appointment occurs within two years of leaving the Company. Advice should be sought from the HR Manager.

2.19 Pension

The Strategic Investment Board Limited operates a Group Personal Pension Plan with the Standard Life Assurance Company.

A Group Personal Pension Plan is a string of policies owned by the individual members but which benefit from corporate terms and conditions.

Contributions made by both the Strategic Investment Board Limited and the individual members immediately "vest" into the contract for the sole benefit of the individual member and consequently can be totally flexible with regards to portability, contribution levels, fund choice and, ultimately, the basis upon which benefits are taken.

Personal pensions operate on a two-stage basis. Stage 1 is the investment stage during which contributions and the associated growth create a pot of money at normal retirement date. At this point, Stage 2, the monies are converted into an income for retirement. However, up to 25% of the accumulated fund can be taken as Tax Free Cash.

In addition, all personal contributions to these plans, subject to Inland Revenue limits, receive Income Tax Relief at the member's highest marginal rate.

Under personal pension legislation, it is necessary for a normal retirement date to be selected at the outset. The normal retirement date has been set at age 65. However, as the plan has personal ownership, members can elect to take benefits at any time from age 50 through to age 75.

As one would expect, pension plans of this nature do carry charges by which the insurance company covers their expenses both for running the plans and investing the personal and corporate contributions. Under this facility, there is a single charge of 0.40%. If a member elects to have their contributions invested with one of Standard Life's external partner investment managers there will be a surcharge.

Similarly, although the policy allows for complete personal choice in respect of invested funds if a member does not make an election, contributions will automatically default into a default form as outlined in the pension application form.

As these policies carry complete freedom of choice for individual members, it is possible for individuals to elect to contract out of the State Earnings Related

Pension Scheme (SERPS). This is an individual decision and can be revisited each year.

When an employee starts, Heath Lambert will provide details of the policy, including Inland Revenue limits, contribution levels, fund choices and individual elections. We strongly recommend that members retain both Gallagher Employee Benefits and Standard Life's documentation for reference purposes and that these are read thoroughly.

Gallagher Employee Benefits will provide a full review of your scheme on an annual basis. However, if any one does have any questions, please call Graham Poulteney (email Graham.Poulteney@ajg.com, tel: +44 7741 241 821) you can also visit the Standard Life website on www.standardlife.co.uk.

2.20 Retirement

2.20.1 Retirement Age

There is no statutory retirement age

2.20.2 Preparation for Retirement

It is the policy of the Company to encourage its employees to prepare for retirement. Where an approved course / seminar is identified locally, time off and financial assistance towards the cost of participation will be provided during the period of six months prior to the normal date of retirement.

3 General Conduct, Rules and Regulations

3.1 General

If an employee is in doubt at any time how he / she should behave either inside or outside the office, he / she should consult the HR Manager.

3.2 Use of Corporation Equipment/Supplies

3.2.1 Private Telephone Calls

Private local telephone calls, starting with "028" may be made from the office telephone so long as these calls are less than two minutes in duration. The Company expects private calls of this nature to be kept to a minimum. Employees should ask relatives and friends to refrain from telephoning them during office working hours, except in an emergency.

3.2.2 Business Telephone Calls

The Company expects its staff to have regard to the economic use of its telephone system. In general, this means that length of calls should be kept to a minimum and as far as possible calls should be made at off-peak times.

3.2.3 Use of Mobile Phones and Blackberries

Mobile phones are supplied to a limited number of people within the Company whose job requires them to be available when away from the office or for safety reasons.

It is a condition of the provision of a mobile phone that the cost of all private use is to be reimbursed to the Company. For this purpose "Private Use" means any use to make calls, or accept reverse charges calls, other than those made wholly, exclusively and necessarily in the performance of any employee's duties: e.g. a call home by an individual to say that they had been delayed at work would be private use unless the delay was an unexpected one occasioned by the specific request of the Company.

It is the responsibility of the individual to keep a record of personal calls and to reimburse the Company on the basis of Call Charges plus VAT.

When away from the office on a business trip it is acceptable to use Mobile phones for calls home when an alternative method would be reclaimable from the Company and would be a more expensive option.

- Every month, the Finance Officer will distribute to all staff members their mobile phone bill and taxi invoice. The staff member must highlight all personal phone calls and personal journeys and return the bill / invoice to the Finance Officer. They will complete the repayment return and seek the staff member's signature as approval of the amount due to SIB.
- The invoice duly completed and signed is to be returned together with the Declaration of Personal Use to the Finance Manager with the payment.

3.2.4 Email

The Company's e-mail facilities are provided for business use only and must not be used for any other purpose, including the electronic distribution of any material that could be considered offensive or illegal or which may carry a computer virus. Where such misuse of the electronic mail system is suspected it will be investigated thoroughly and staff are reminded that details of the use of the electronic mail system are logged. That log will be examined if misuse is suspected.

3.2.5 Internet Access

The individual is responsible for any Internet access made from his or her account. This means that the individual will be held responsible for any browsing, which is carried out from his or her account, and e-mail sent from the same account. The individual will not be held responsible for unwanted e-mail received. All staff should note that the details of all Internet accesses are logged. The log can be examined in cases where Internet misuse is detected or suspected.

Proven Internet misuse will be regarded as a disciplinary offence.

Software must not be downloaded from the Internet onto Departmental IT equipment without prior approval from the Chief Executive.

Disciplinary action will be taken against staff whose use of the Internet could either embarrass the Company or could be considered improper, illegal or offensive. Such activities include use of the Internet for accessing, downloading or distributing material which may be regarded as offensive, for example offensive jokes or cartoons or material of a pornographic or racist nature, or the participation in chain letters.

3.3 Travel

3.3.1 Staff Expenses and Payment System

Please refer to the relevant section in the "*SIB Financial Policies & Procedures*" manual.¹

3.3.2 Travel and Subsistence Claim form

Please refer to the relevant section in the "*SIB Financial Policies & Procedures*" manual.²

3.4 Outside Working

Employees are expected to devote their full energies to their employment responsibilities with the Company.

Staff are not permitted to undertake paid work or assignments outside of the Company without first seeking the permission of the Chief Executive. Permission will be granted where there is no conflict of interest and where such work would not affect the performance of their Company duties.

¹ See DF1/11/239920 "*SIB Financial Policies & Procedures Manual*".

² See footnote 1 above.

3.5 Hospitality/Gifts

3.5.1 Acceptance of Gifts and Hospitality

Board members and staff should exercise caution when accepting hospitality or gifts as this could compromise them. Hospitality may be readily accepted providing it is normal, and reasonable in the circumstances.

The policy is outlined in DF1/11/239920 “*SIB Financial Policies & Procedures Manual*”.

3.6 Complaints Against the Company or its Staff

If a member of staff receives any complaint against the Company or its staff, the provisions of the “Complaints Procedure” in Appendix 8 on page 97 must be applied. When a person believes that they have been directly affected by a failure of the Company to comply with the Equality Scheme, they should in the first instance, bring their complaint to the attention of the HR Manager.

3.7 Food / Catering

There are no official refreshment breaks. Tea and coffee is available in the kitchen for staff.

3.8 Loss of Public Money

An employee through whose negligence loss of public money has been incurred may be required to make good the loss either in whole or in part.

3.9 Personal Property

Any loss of personal property should be reported to the HR Manager. The finder of any lost property should hand it over to the HR Manager with information on where and when it was found. In most circumstances, the Company cannot accept responsibility for personal property lost or damaged during the course of employment. It is the responsibility of the individual to safeguard personal belongings. Staff should not leave personal property in the office overnight or unattended during office hours.

3.10 Politics

Although employees may belong to a political party and may record their vote, staff are not permitted to take an active part in non-local district politics but may apply to the Chief Executive for permission to take part in local district politics if they wish to do so. Subject to prior approval of the Chief Executive, certain staff may be allowed up to six weeks special leave without pay to serve as a political agent to a candidate or bona fide prospective candidate in a Parliamentary election. A member of staff who wishes to stand for Parliament may be granted one month’s special leave with pay at the period of an election but special leave must not continue beyond the date on which resignation takes effect.

3.11 Private Financial Affairs

Employees are expected to conduct their financial affairs in a judicious manner. An employee who gets into serious financial difficulties must at once inform the

Chief Executive. Serious financial embarrassment is regarded as likely to impair the efficiency of an employee.

3.12 Shareholdings

There is no objection to employees holding private investments. Where, however, a shareholding might raise a question of possible conflict with the interests of the Company, the employee should consult the Chief Executive about the desirability of acquiring or retaining it.

3.13 Personal Arrest / Conviction

All employees must report to the HR Manager immediately if they are arrested or convicted of any offence (except minor motoring offences not leading to disqualification or imprisonment) or become bankrupt or insolvent.

3.14 Specific Prohibitions

3.14.1 Gambling

Gambling is prohibited on the Company's premises or IT systems.

3.14.2 Canvassing

All canvassing for political parties, organisations or other groups is strictly forbidden.

3.14.3 Flags, Emblems, Posters

All such material, including those of a political or sectarian nature, is **absolutely** forbidden in **all** circumstances on the Company's premises.

3.14.4 Unauthorised Business

Staff must not, during working hours, be engaged in any business nor do any work other than work authorised by the Company.

3.14.5 Confidentiality

Staff must not directly or indirectly disclose any information to any person(s) not authorised to be in possession of it. The provisions of the Appendix 7 "Code of Conduct for Staff".

3.15 Data Protection

The Company, being a data user, subscribes to the principles laid down by the Data Protection Act 1998.

Employees who process personal data concerning individuals are required to:

- Obtain such data fairly and lawfully; maintain such information accurately and ensure that it is up to date;
- Protect such information from misuse or unauthorised disclosure

3.16 Record Keeping

All staff are required to keep accurate and up to date records. Further information can be obtained from the Information Manager.

Annex A Application for Maternity Leave

(One completed copy should be retained by the employee)

A-1 Personal Details

Name:

National Insurance Number:

I wish to apply for maternity leave beginning on:

I expect my child to be born during the week beginning:

I have enclosed my maternity certificate MAT B1/have not enclosed my MAT B1, but will forward as soon as possible. (*Delete as appropriate*).

I intend to*/do not intend to return to work in SIB following my maternity leave. (*Delete as appropriate*)

*If you have indicated that you intend to return to work in the Strategic Investment Board Limited, you should note the declaration below.

A-2 Declarations

- I understand that the Strategic Investment Board Limited will advise me of the date I am expected to return to work following my maternity leave and that, if I decide to end my maternity leave and return to work earlier than my scheduled return date, I must give the Company at least 28 days' notice of the date on which I intend to return.
- I undertake to repay, if asked to do so, any salary or wages paid to me in respect of the period of maternity leave, less the amount of any Statutory Maternity Pay to which I am entitled, if I do not return to work and complete a further calendar months paid service to the Strategic Investment Board Limited following my maternity leave.
- I understand that if I wish to change the notified start date of my maternity leave I must give the company at least 28 days notice (where possible).

Signed..... Date.....

The original should now be given to the HR Manager while you should keep a copy for your personal records.

A-3 Notes:

3. Repayment will be waived if an employee provides medical evidence that she will be unable to return to work by 52 weeks after the start of her maternity leave because her child is disabled and requires continuous attention at home. Medical evidence should be sent to the HR Manager not later than 26 weeks after childbirth.
4. Where an employee is required to repay salary or wages received during her period of maternity leave, refunds of National Insurance Contributions may be made on that part of the contractual maternity pay repaid as follows:
 - To both the Strategic Investment Board Limited and the employee where contractual maternity pay has been repaid; or
 - Where the employee has not repaid contractual maternity pay but the Strategic Investment Board Limited has taken all reasonable steps to recover it, to the Strategic Investment Board Limited only.

There will be some instances where, as a result of paying Class 1 National Insurance Contributions on contractual maternity pay originally, an employee may qualify for and receive contributory benefit. Where she repays contractual maternity pay and then becomes entitled to a refund of National Insurance Contributions, this may affect her entitlement to a contributory benefit already paid. Therefore, where benefit has been paid on the strength of any National Insurance Contributions now due for refund, but which would not have been paid had the National Insurance Contributions not been paid in the first instance, the benefit must be recovered from the employee's refund before a refund is made. The Strategic Investment Board Limited's refund is not affected.

Where a refund is appropriate, the Strategic Investment Board Limited is asked to make the normal arrangements that apply for closed and current tax years.

Annex B Glossary of Terms

B-1 Average Weekly Earnings

A calculated figure used to assess the amount and eligibility for Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP). To calculate the average weekly earnings for monthly paid staff, take the gross payment for the last normal pay day falling before the end of the qualifying week and add it to any other payments made after (but not including) the last pay day which fell at least eight weeks before that date. This number is divided by the number of calendar months involved, multiplied by 12 and divided by 52. For weekly paid employees' average weekly earnings are the gross earnings for the last eight normal pay days falling on or before the end of the qualifying week divided by eight.

B-2 Additional Maternity Leave

The 26-week period of unpaid maternity leave available to an employee who has taken ordinary maternity leave and has been continuously employed for a period of not less than 26 weeks at the beginning of the 14th week before her Expected Week of Childbirth (EWC).

B-3 Childbirth

Defined as the birth of a living child or the birth of a child whether living or not after 24 weeks of pregnancy; so in the event of a stillbirth after this time, the normal maternity arrangements will apply.

B-4 Compulsory Maternity Leave

This is the two-week period, commencing with the date of childbirth, during which an employee is prohibited from working for her employer.

B-5 Contractual Maternity Arrangements

The Company's contractual maternity arrangements, which offer qualifying employees maternity leave of 52 weeks with full pay for the first 18 weeks.

B-6 Contractual Maternity Leave

An employee who satisfies the Company's qualifying conditions will be entitled to 52 weeks maternity leave known as contractual maternity leave.

B-7 Contractual Maternity Pay

An employee who satisfies the qualifying conditions for the Company's contractual maternity arrangements will be entitled to her full contractual rate of pay during the first 18 weeks of her maternity leave known as contractual maternity pay.

B-8 Expected Week of Childbirth (EWC)

The week (beginning with midnight between Saturday and Sunday) in which a general practitioner or midwife expect the employee's baby to be born.

B-9 Job

Defined as the nature of the work that the employee is employed to do, and the capacity and place in which she is so employed.

B-10 Maternity Allowance (MA)

An employee who is not entitled to Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP), but meets qualifying conditions based on her present National Insurance record, may be eligible to claim Maternity Allowance. This allowance is paid by the Social Security Agency independently of her employer, but an employee in receipt of Maternity Allowance must provide details to the HR Manager.

B-11 Maternity Leave

This is time off allowed to employees for the reason of childbirth. The length of maternity leave is dependent upon the employee meeting conditions for either contractual and/or statutory maternity arrangements. The Company will always assume that an employee is taking all of her maternity leave entitlement unless she advises otherwise.

B-12 Ordinary Maternity Leave

The minimum period of 26 weeks' maternity leave to which all pregnant workers are entitled, regardless of length of service.

B-13 Qualifying Week

The 15th week before the expected week of childbirth. It is used in determining eligibility for Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP) and in identifying the period used to calculate the amount of Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP) to be paid.

B-14 Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP)

Paid by employers to qualifying employees for up to 26 weeks, whether or not they intend to return to work after their baby is born. It has minimum earnings and continuous employment conditions.

Annex C Application for Paternity Leave and Pay

Surname:

First name(s):

Staff number:

National Insurance Number:

Dates for pay and leave:

The baby is due on (date):

If the baby has been born please enter the actual date of birth:

I would like my paternity leave to start on:

I wish to apply for two days*/one week*/two weeks* paternity leave and pay (*delete as appropriate). If applying for one/two weeks, please also complete declaration below).

It should be noted that if choosing one or two weeks leave, only the first two days of leave will attract full pay, but staff who qualify will have the balance paid at the standard rate of Statutory Paternity Pay or 90% of average, whichever is the lesser. All payments are subject to normal statutory and voluntary deductions.

C-1 Declaration (For those applying for statutory entitlement)

Please note that you must be able to say yes to all four declarations to be entitled to Statutory Paternity Pay and Leave.

I declare that:

- I am the baby's biological father, or married to the mother, or living with the mother in an enduring family relationship, but am not an immediate relative. YES/NO
- I have, or expect to have, responsibility for the child's upbringing. YES/NO
- I am taking leave to care for my child or to support the mother, or both. YES/NO
- I have worked continuously for SIB for at least 26 weeks at the beginning of the 14th week before the baby is due. YES/NO

I am aware that my salary, where appropriate, will be adjusted as soon as possible following notification.

Signed..... Date.....

Annex D Application for Paternity Leave and Pay (Adoption)

Surname:

First name(s):

Staff number:

National Insurance Number:

Dates for pay and leave:

Date of notification by adoption agency of a match with a child:

The child is expected to be placed on (date):

If the child has been placed, please enter the date they were placed:

I would like my paternity (adoption) leave to start on:

I wish to for two days paternity (adoption) leave only*/one week*/two weeks* (*delete as appropriate).

If applying for one/two weeks, please also complete declaration below. It should be noted that if choosing one or two weeks leave, only the first two days of leave will attract full pay, but staff who qualify will have the balance paid at the standard rate of Statutory Paternity Pay or 90% of average, whichever is the lesser. All payments are subject to normal statutory and voluntary deductions.

D-1 Declaration (for those applying for statutory entitlement)

Please note that you must be able to say yes to all five declarations to be entitled to Statutory Paternity Pay and Leave.

I declare that:

- I am jointly adopting the child with my partner and I want to receive Statutory Paternity Leave and Pay (Adoption), NOT Statutory Adoption Leave and Pay. YES/NO
- I am married to the person adopting the child, or living with the person adopting the child in an enduring family relationship, but am not an immediate relative. YES/NO
- I have, or expect to have, responsibility for the child's upbringing. YES/NO
- I am taking leave to care for my child or to support the mother, or both. YES/NO

- I have worked continuously for SIB for at least 26 weeks ending with the week in which the adopter is notified of being matched to a child. YES/NO

I am aware that my salary, where appropriate, will be adjusted as soon as possible following notification.

Signed..... Date.....

Annex E Occupational Sick Pay

The maximum period of full pay, half pay, or Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) is as follows.

E-1 Permanent Staff

- SSP as appropriate within the limit of full pay
- Not more than six months (183 days) full pay during any period of 12 months. Thereafter on half pay, (subject to a maximum of 12 months (365 days) paid sick absence in any period of four years or less).

E-2 Temporary employees

- Not more than one week on full pay for every completed 4 weeks of effective service.

(Each period of casual employment will be treated separately and a previous period may not be aggregated with a current period for determining sick absence allowable. The 52 week maternity leave period will count as service for the purpose of calculating entitlement to paid sick absence).

Annex F Self Certified Sick Leave

(Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms) Name:

1. I wish the period of absence given below to be treated as self-certified sick leave.

From:..... (first complete day of illness* – including Saturday and Sunday)

To:..... (last day of illness if less than seven days or seventh calendar day if absence is continuing – including Saturday and Sunday)

*It is important to state the actual day that the illness commenced and ended (including Saturday and Sunday) in order that the rules in relation to Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) are properly applied. If an employee wishes such days to be treated as sick absence for Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) purposes they will also be counted towards sick absence period calculations and for monitoring purposes.

I understand that I must produce a doctor's statement from the eighth calendar day of a continuous period of sick absence.

Nature of illness:

2. To be completed ONLY if you have had an injury at work.

I wish the absence:

From: To:

Inclusive to be treated as an injury at work (or an industrial disease contracted at work).

The injury occurred on: At:

NB Staff injured or contracting a disease at work should seek legal advice from either their Trade Union Representative or a solicitor.

I *am/am not in other employment, which would attract payment of Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) or benefit from the Social Security Agency. (*delete as appropriate).

3. I certify that the information supplied above is true.

Signed..... Date.....
(Employee)

4. I confirm that the employee was absent as stated above.

Signed..... Date.....
(HR Manager)

The completed form should be returned to the HR Manager

Annex G Assistance to Study – Adult Further Education

G–1 Policy Statement

Further Education has an important part to play in developing the knowledge and skills of staff

G–2 Aim

SIB will, subject to resources, and in accordance with the selection criteria and underpinning procedures, assist staff who wish, in their own time, to undertake formal courses of academic / vocational study related to their work and leading to recognised academic/vocational qualifications.

G–3 Selection Criteria for Assistance

In determining the available budget, account will be taken of prior commitments. For new applications the following criteria will be applied in priority order:

1. The course of study will make a contribution to an employee's performance as outlined in the objectives in their Appraisal.
2. The course of study will make a contribution to the achievement of SIB's business objectives.
3. The course of study will contribute to the personal development of the individual and have some potential relevance to performance.

G–4 Procedures

Staff wishing to apply for assistance should first seek the approval of their Line Manager. An application form should be completed (see Section G–7 on page 55). It is the responsibility of the applicant to demonstrate how they meet the criteria. The application should then be passed to the HR team, as detailed in the application form.

On receipt of applications, consideration will be given to Line Manager's comments on the applicant's ability to complete the course of study without detriment to his/her job performance.

Applications will be processed in line with the criteria in Section G–3 in priority order as follows:

- Applications made under criterion 5 above will receive first consideration, followed by those made under criterion 6 above.
- Applications made under criterion 7 above will only be considered if funding is available. In the case of demand exceeding available funding, the date of receipt of the application will be taken into account (on a first come first served basis within the criterion).
- In the event of funding remaining available after initial allocation, this will be allocated after the closing date on a first come first served basis.

An application for assistance is no guarantee that it will be successful. Applicants are therefore responsible for meeting the costs of those courses of study which have not had funding approved by SIB.

Should an application be refused, the applicant will be informed in writing of the decision and reason. If the applicant is dissatisfied with the decision, he or she must put the reasons in writing, within two weeks of the notification date.

If as a result of the information provided, the decision can be overturned at this stage, the applicant will be informed in writing.

Otherwise a face-to-face meeting will be arranged between the Manager who made the decision and the applicant to discuss the issues raised. The applicant has the right to be accompanied to the meeting by a colleague or Trade Union Representative. The applicant's case will be considered and the applicant will be informed of the decision in writing within two weeks after the meeting. Where the original decision is upheld, the applicant will be informed of the right to appeal.

An applicant wishing to appeal must inform the HR Manager in writing, within two weeks of the date of response to the face-to-face meeting, detailing reasons on which the appeal is being made. The applicant will be invited to a second meeting to discuss the appeal with the Chief Executive, who should not have been involved in the original decision. The applicant has the right to be accompanied to the meeting by a colleague or Trade Union Representative. The applicant should be informed of the decision of their appeal in writing two weeks after the meeting.

These procedures are designed to ensure that appeals by individuals who are unsuccessful in their application are handled fairly and effectively and without unreasonable delay. They have been drawn up in line with the new dispute resolution regulations SI 2004 No. 521, [Employment \(Northern Ireland\) Order 2003 \(Dispute Resolution\) Regulations \(Northern Ireland\) 2004](#), which came into effect on 3 April 2005.

SIB will make every effort to honour any prior commitment made to staff that transfer from another Department or Agency during the period of study. However, consideration will be given to other competing priorities and budget pressures.

Staff with an unsatisfactory attendance record at the date of Line Manager endorsement (i.e. those who are in receipt of a current written warning and serving a trial period or in receipt of a current final written warning) will not be considered for support under the assistance to study scheme.

At the end of the course of study applicants must forward evidence of successful completion. This will be used in assessing the benefits of the scheme.

Failure to complete a course of study will result in SIB recouping fees on a pro rata basis, except in exceptional circumstances. Each case will be considered on its merits.

G-5 Line Manager Responsibilities

Line managers have responsibility for ensuring that:

- a. They agree the training needs of their staff and their associated training objectives;

- b. They make decisions on all applications for assistance under the Assistance to Study scheme and inform applicants of their decision to support or refuse applications;
- c. Staff are fully aware of the personal commitment and the extra time required for study in order to successfully complete their course;
- d. The HR Manager is informed of all requests.
- e. They monitor attendance and progress of their staff at regular intervals;
- f. They monitor their staff's adherence to the conditions of the Assistance to Study Scheme;
- g. They monitor and recommend the payment of claims for reimbursement of approved expenses in line with SIB's procedures;
- h. They provide the necessary support so that staff gain the maximum benefits from their course of study e.g. work based opportunity to apply and consolidate knowledge and skills gained from a course through specific work based assignments;

G-6 Package of Assistance

The following assistance is applicable for approved studies under the Assistance to Study Scheme:

4. **Fees (including examination fees)** – SIB will pay 80% of course fees for the most economical method for the course of study up to a maximum of £1,000 per academic year. The maximum limit will be subject to an annual review, taking account of increases in courses fees. SIB may identify an alternative viable option to meet the identified need.
5. **Books** – SIB will pay 50% of essential books, up to a maximum of £50 per academic year on provision of evidence from Educational Establishments: e.g. signed letter from course tutor. Applicants must source the most economical means: e.g. Departmental/public libraries, etc.
6. **Special Leave and Time Off** – SIB will grant time off to take examinations, if held during normal working hours. There is no provision for day release under the Assistance to Study scheme, except in exceptional circumstances where there is no alternative option. A maximum of five days special leave with pay may be granted per academic year of course, broken down as follows:
 - Half-day study leave for each examination lasting up to and including one and a half hours;
 - One day study-leave for each examination lasting over one and a half hours.
7. **Project Leave / Assignments** – Where assessment is carried out through projects or assignments and not by examination, applicants must provide evidence from their educational establishment to demonstrate the project or assignment is necessary and counts towards

the final examination or successful completion of qualification. In such circumstances special leave will be granted as follows:

- Half day leave for 3000 -5000 words (or equivalent).¹
 - One day leave for over 5000 words (or equivalent).²
 - Where a Project or Assignment does not count towards the final examination or successful completion of qualification, no special leave will be awarded.
8. **Part-time and Job-Sharing** – Part-time and job-sharing staff will be awarded special leave on a pro-rata basis but at least one half-day special leave with pay should be given for study for each examination.
 9. **Timing** – Days taken as special leave and time off for study should be selected to cause the minimum possible interference to work in consultation with the applicant’s line manager.
 10. **Examination Results** –
 - First Re-sit – no study leave entitlement. Payment of fees plus time off to sit the examination.
 - Subsequent Attempts no assistance.
 11. **Graduation** – Up to a maximum of ½ day special leave. All costs associated with graduation are the responsibility of applicants.
 12. **Residential** (e.g. Summer Schools) – Assistance will be given to staff for fees (80%) and time off to attend residential courses that are a compulsory course requirement.³ A maximum of three days per academic year will be approved for this purpose, in addition to special leave.
 13. **Leavers** If you leave employment prior to the completion of your course you will be expected to repay all costs of the course. In the case of redundancy this cost may be waived.

If you leave within 6 months of completion of your course 75% of fees will be repayable (if you are on a temporary contract different arrangements may arise)

If you leave within 1 year 50% of fees will be repayable.

If you leave within 2 years 25% of fees will be repayable.

If you leave after 2 years no fees will be repayable.

Staff on temporary contracts should agree repayment terms prior to commencing any course.

¹ In the case of specialist disciplines, advice will be sought.

² See Footnote 1 on page 59.

³ Evidence from Educational Establishments will be required: i.e. a signed letter from the course tutor.

G-7 Application Form for Assistance to Study

Applications must be submitted by the following date.

Closing Date: "[Before issuing the form, click here and type the closing date]"

Where information is not available by the closing date, please submit your application and provide the outstanding information as soon as possible

Part 1 – Personal Details

Full Name <i>(Include title Mr / Mrs / Miss / Ms...)</i>	.....
Home Address	...............
Postcode	.....
Office Address	...............
Postcode	.....
Office Telephone No.	..... Ext:
Employment Status <i>(Permanent / Temporary / Full Time / Part Time)</i>	.....
If Part-time please state: • Total number of Hours Worked. • Working Pattern (e.g. 9am – 2pm)	..... ..... .....

Part 2 – Details of Previous Assistance

Have you applied for any assistance with a course(s) of study within the last five years? (Yes / No).
---	-------

If Yes, please provide the following information for each course.

Course Title	Date Completed	Result(s)
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

This application cannot be finally approved until exam results from your previous course of study are received. We will request these if not already held on your personal file.

Part 3 – Details of Proposed Course Of Study

Only formal courses of academic/vocational study leading to recognised academic/vocational qualifications, linked to appropriate external standards will be considered.

Under which criterion (see Section G–3) are you making your application?
(Type “Y” in the appropriate box).

5 – The course of study will make a contribution to an employee’s performance as outlined in the objectives in their Appraisal.	.....
6 – The course of study will make a contribution to the achievement of SIB’s business objectives.	.....
7 – The course of study will contribute to the personal development of the individual and have some potential relevance to performance.	.....

Please provide full details of why you consider your application meets your selected criterion.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Your application will not be considered unless the sections below are fully completed.

What course do you intend to study?
(Please state the title of the course as specified in the college prospectus)

.....

.....

What is the qualification at the end of the course?	..... .....
Full name and address of school, college or university.	..... ..... ..... ..... .....
Date on which course begins. (approx)	.....
Date on which course ends. (approx)	.....
Duration of complete course (in years and months)	.....
Current year of study (e.g. 1 st , 2 nd , 3 rd , etc.)	.....
Days and hours of attendance each week. (e.g. "Mon 13th :- 21:30")	..... .....
<p>Note: There is no provision for day release under the Assistance to Study Scheme.¹</p> <p>Any courses which impact on working hours will require the agreement of Line Managers: e.g. Use of Annual Leave/Flexi Leave/Special Unpaid Leave.</p>	
Approximate date of examination (Month/Year)	.....
Where applicable, does your project contribute to Final Assessment (Y / N)?	.....
<p>It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure all relevant costs are identified. All costs for the current academic year must be detailed on this application form.</p> <p>Additional claims will not be accepted.</p> <p>Expected costs of the course for this academic year. (Only costs identified below will be considered).</p>	

¹ See Section G-6 "Package of Assistance" on page 53 for exceptional circumstances.

COSTS		AMOUNT
Course / Tuition Fees	
Registration / Membership Fees	
Essential Textbooks ¹ (Please note that staff are expected to use the most economical means e.g. Resource Libraries)	
Exam Fees	
Workshops / Residential / Summer School ²	
Others (Please specify) ³
Details of assistance from any other source
Total:	
How do you propose to study? (e.g. open learning correspondence course, evening class, other, (please specify))	
Expected cost of complete course (including year 1).		
COSTS		AMOUNT
Course / Tuition Fees	
Registration / Membership Fees	
Essential Textbooks ⁴ (Please note that staff are expected to use the most economical means e.g. Resource Libraries)	

¹ Evidence from Educational Establishments required i.e. a signed letter from course tutor.
² See Footnote 1 above.
³ See Footnote 1 above.
⁴ See Footnote 1 above.

Exam Fees	.....
Workshops / Residential / Summer School ¹	.....
Others (Please specify) ²...............	...............
Details of assistance from any other source...............	...............
Total:	.....
<p>Declaration</p> <p>I am making this application with full intention of completing the course of study. If I should fail to complete any part of it, or withdraw completely from the course I shall inform HR in writing immediately stating the reasons.</p> <p>I understand that if I leave employment I may have to repay the fees for the course.</p> <p>I am not in receipt of funding from any other source.</p> <p>I believe the details I have given are true and correct.</p>	
Signature:	Date:
<p>If this application is approved you will be sent further details on entitlement and the necessary forms on which to claim a refund of course costs and apply for special leave, when required. If this application is not approved you will be provided with an explanation.</p> <p>Late applications will only be accepted in exceptional circumstances, subject to available funding.</p>	
<p>Have you answered all relevant questions fully? Have you enclosed all supporting documents? Now pass this form to your line manager for completion of Part 4.</p>	

Part 4 – Line Manager/Head of Branch Endorsement	
<p>Do you endorse the Criteria of Assistance under which this application is being made (see Section G–3 on page 45)? Yes / No</p> <p>If No, please indicate the Criteria you consider appropriate, and give reasons.</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>	<p>.....</p>
<p>In order to maximise the investment of resources, where a project forms part of the course, have you considered a potential work-related project? Yes / No</p> <p>Please provide details.</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>	<p>.....</p>
<p>Are you satisfied that the applicant can complete the course of study without detriment to job performance? Yes / No</p> <p>If No, please provide reasons.</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>	<p>.....</p>
<p>Do you agree to grant time off under the Assistance to Study guidelines and meet the associated costs from your budget? Yes / No</p>	<p>.....</p>

Declaration

In approving this application I can confirm that the details contained in the application are correct, and that the employee is not in receipt of a current written warning or serving a probationary period or in receipt of a current final written warning.

Endorsed by
(print name):

Tel:.....

Signature:

Date:

Please return completed form to Julie Monahan, HR Manager.

Appendix 1 Equal Opportunities Policy

The Company is committed to providing equality of opportunity. All employees and job applicants will be treated fairly. Selection for employment, promotion and training will be on the basis of aptitude and ability and will exclude any consideration of an employee's/applicant's religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status, sexual orientation, gender, disability or dependents. All applicants for employment will have the opportunity to state any special adjustments required to attend interview or take up appointment.

The Company's Equal Opportunities Statement is as follows:

"The Strategic Investment Board Limited is an Equal Opportunities Employer. All applications for employment will be considered on the basis of merit."

A1.1 Introduction

The aim of this policy is to communicate the commitment of the Chief Executive, Board of Directors and senior management team to the promotion of equality of opportunity in Strategic Investment Board Limited.

It is our policy to provide employment equality to all, irrespective of:

- Gender, including gender reassignment.
- Marital or civil partnership status.
- Having or not having dependants.
- Religious or political opinion.
- Race (including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins, or being an Irish Traveller).
- Disability.
- Sexual orientation.
- Age.

We are opposed to all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination. All job applicants, employees and others who work for us will be treated fairly and will not be discriminated against on any of the above grounds.

Decisions about recruitment and selection, promotion, training or any other benefit will be made objectively and without unlawful discrimination.

We recognise that the provision of equal opportunities in the workplace is not only good management practice; it also makes sound business sense. Our equal opportunities policy will help all those who work for us to develop their full potential and the talents and resources of the workforce will be utilised fully to maximise the efficiency of the organisation.

A1.2 Scope

The Equal Opportunities policy applies to all those who work for (or apply to work for) the Strategic Investment Board Limited.

A1.3 Responsibilities

A1.3.1 Employees

All employees irrespective of status have a responsibility to:

- Ensure that a working environment exists in which the dignity and diversity of all employees is respected;
- Be aware of the serious and genuine problems which discrimination or bullying can cause and ensure that their behaviour is beyond question and could not be considered in any way to be discriminatory;
- Alert management to any incident of discrimination or bullying immediately to enable it to be dealt with in line with the procedures; and
- Provide support to colleagues who may be the subject of discrimination or bullying by encouraging them to follow the steps laid down in this complaints procedure.

Staff should be aware that they may be individually responsible in law if in the course of employment, they:

- Commit an act of unlawful discrimination;
- Induce or attempt to induce another person to commit an act of unlawful; discrimination;
- Help someone else to commit an act of unlawful discrimination; and
- Victimise a person for asserting or seeking to assert their statutory rights.

Staff are also reminded that they should treat everyone with whom they come into contact in the course of their employment fairly e.g. members of the public irrespective of sex, marital status, religious belief, political opinion, disability, race, age, sexual orientation, transsexualism, real or suspected infection with Aids/HIV and membership/non membership of a trade union.

A1.3.2 Managers

Managers have a responsibility to:

- Explain the Strategic Investment Board Limited's Equal Opportunities policy and procedures to their staff and take steps to positively promote them;
- Seek to ensure that discrimination does not occur, particularly in work areas for which they are responsible;
- Promote and seek to maintain a neutral working environment where no member of staff is made to feel uncomfortable because of their sex, marital status, religious belief, political opinion, disability, race, age, sexual orientation, transsexualism, real or suspected infection with Aids/HIV and membership/non membership of a trade union.

- Seek to ensure that any material of a sexual or divisive nature e.g. written material, jokes, songs, posters, flags etc, which is potentially offensive or may cause apprehension is not displayed or circulated;
- Be alert to any indications of discrimination and take the initiative to deal with them (e.g. by taking steps to prevent any behaviour which could give offence to another member of staff) rather than waiting for matters to develop to a stage where a member of staff makes a complaint;
- Ensure that their own conduct is beyond reproach so that members of staff can have confidence in them should they need to raise issues;
- Take whatever action is appropriate in order to help ensure that allegations of discrimination are investigated quickly, sensitively and in confidence; and
- Be responsive and supportive to any member of staff who complains about discrimination, provide full and clear advice on the procedure to be adopted, maintain confidentiality in all cases and take action to ensure that victimisation does not occur.

A1.3.3 The Strategic Investment Board Limited

The Strategic Investment Board Limited has a responsibility to:

- Promote equality of opportunity for all persons
- Promote a good and harmonious working environment in which all persons are treated with respect.
- Prevent occurrences of unlawful direct discrimination, indirect discrimination, harassment and victimisation.
- Fulfil all our legal obligations under the equality legislation and associated codes of practice.
- Comply with our own equal opportunities policy and associated policies.
- Take lawful affirmative or positive action, where appropriate.
- Regard all breaches of the equal opportunities policy as misconduct which could lead to disciplinary proceedings.

This policy is fully supported by the Board of Directors.

A1.4 Implementation

The Chief Executive has specific responsibility for the effective implementation of this policy. Each manager also has responsibilities and it expects all its employees to abide by the policy and help create the equality environment.

In order to implement this policy it will:

- Ensure that adequate resources are made available to promote respect and dignity in the workplace and to deal effectively with complaints of discrimination and harassment. This policy applies to all employees and

the Company will ensure that all managers and staff are aware of their responsibilities.

- Provide equality training and guidance as appropriate.
- Incorporate specific and appropriate duties in respect of implementing the equal opportunities policy into job descriptions of all staff.
- Ensure that those involved in assessing candidates for recruitment will be trained in non-discriminatory selection techniques.
- Obtain commitments from other persons or organisations such as subcontractors or agencies that they too will comply with the policy in their dealings with our organisation and our workforce.
- Ensure that adequate resources are made available to fulfil the objectives of the policy.

A1.5 Monitoring and Review

The Strategic Investment Board Limited will establish appropriate information and monitoring systems to assist the effective implementation of its equal opportunities policy.

The effectiveness of its equal opportunities policy will be reviewed annually and action taken as necessary.

A1.6 Complaints

Employees who believe that they have suffered any form of discrimination, harassment or victimisation are entitled to raise the matter through the “Grievance Procedure” – see (Appendix 3). All complaints of discrimination will be dealt with seriously, promptly and confidentially.

In addition to the Strategic Investment Board Limited’s internal procedures, employees have the right to pursue complaints of discrimination under the anti-discrimination legislation.

However an employee wishing to make a complaint to a tribunal will normally be required first to raise their complaint under the Strategic Investment Board Limited’s internal grievance procedures.

Every effort will be made to ensure that employees who make complaints will not be victimised. Any complaint of victimisation will be dealt with seriously, promptly and confidentially. Victimisation will result in disciplinary action against the victimiser and may warrant their dismissal.

Appendix 2 Disciplinary Procedure

A2.1 Objective

The Strategic Investment Board Limited staff are expected, at all times, to meet high standards for work performance and business conduct. Where difficulties exist in meeting such standards, the Strategic Investment Board Limited staff will be consulted and given the opportunity to improve, except where gross misconduct has occurred.

A2.2 General Principles

The Company expects all its employees to abide by the terms and conditions of their employment as well as the rules, regulations and standards established by the Company.

Before taking any form of disciplinary action there will be a thorough investigation into any allegation of misconduct or poor performance.

In such cases of alleged misconduct or poor performance, the Company recognises that employees have the right to:

- a. A fair hearing with the opportunity to state their case.
- b. Be accompanied by another employee or Trade Union Representative of their choice, if desired, before disciplinary action is taken.

The Company further acknowledges the right of individuals to appeal against what might appear to them to be an unjust/unfair penalty.

The HR Manager will be present at all disciplinary/appeal meetings in an advisory capacity.

The Company is responsible for ensuring that the disciplinary rules and procedure are applied consistently.

A2.3 Disciplinary Rules

The Company recognises three types of misconduct:

1. "Minor Misconduct" – see A2.3.1
2. "Major Misconduct" – see A2.3.2
3. "Gross Misconduct" – see A2.3.3

The following listed examples are not exhaustive and the Company reserves the right to decide how any other instance of misconduct shall be categorised.

A2.3.1 Minor Misconduct

- Absenteeism
- Lateness
- Careless work and poor effort at work
- Ignoring safety, hygiene and/or security rules
- Taking unauthorised breaks

- Failing to maintain a safe and tidy work environment
- Misuse of telephone
- Excessive time away from job
- Failure to comply with the absence notification procedure

A2.3.2 Major Misconduct

- Dangerous physical horseplay
- Neglect causing damage or loss of official and/or staff property
- Serious neglect of safety, hygiene and/or security rules
- Consuming intoxicants during working hours or bringing same into the premises without permission
- Wilful or excessive wastage of materials
- Aggressive behaviour
- Use of foul and abusive language
- Gambling on the premises
- Insubordination
- Non-observance of instructions relating to the receiving and/or giving of gifts and/or hospitality

A2.3.3 Gross Misconduct

- Theft
- Physically violent behaviour
- Unauthorised absence e.g. leaving without permission
- Refusal to carry out a reasonable work instruction
- Deliberately ignoring safety, hygiene, and/or security rules and thereby endangering one's own or another's physical well being or safety.
- Smoking in prohibited areas
- Obscene behaviour
- Intoxication induced by alcohol or drugs
- Fraud
- Wilful damage to or neglect of Company's, customer's or other employee's property or equipment
- Undertaking work in competition with own employer
- Falsification of records
- Unauthorised use of Company property

- Discrimination or harassment on the basis of gender, marital status, religion, political beliefs, community background, ethnic origin or disability either overtly or by insinuation
- Corruptly receiving or giving gifts and/or hospitality

A2.4 Procedure for Minor Misconduct

A2.4.1 Verbal Warning

Committing minor misconduct will lead to an interview with the Chief Executive. At this interview the employee will have the opportunity to state his/her case. If it is decided that an offence has occurred, a verbal warning will be given. It will be recorded and placed on the employee's file for a period of six months.

A2.4.2 First Written Warning

Committing the same or similar misconduct within the period that the verbal warning is in force will lead to a further interview with the Chief Executive. At this interview the employee will have the opportunity to state his/her case. If it is decided that an offence has occurred, a first written warning will be given. It will be recorded and placed on the employee's file for a period of 12 months.

A2.4.3 Final Written Warning

The same or similar misconduct committed within 12 months will lead to a further interview with the Chief Executive. At this interview the employee will have the opportunity to state his/her case. If it is decided that an offence has occurred a final written warning, which will be recorded and placed on the employee's file, will be issued containing clear notice that a repeat of the misconduct within the next twelve months will result in dismissal.

A2.4.4 Dismissal

If the same or similar misconduct is committed within 12 months from the final warning this will lead to a further interview with the Chief Executive and at this interview the employee will have the opportunity to state his/her case. If it is decided that an offence has occurred, the employee will be dismissed.

A2.5 Procedure for Major Misconduct

A2.5.1 Final Written Warning

Committing major misconduct will lead to an interview with the Chief Executive during which the employee will have the opportunity to state his/her case. If it is decided that an offence has occurred a final written warning, which will be recorded, will be given containing clear notice that a repeat of the misconduct within the next 12 months will result in dismissal.

A2.5.2 Dismissal

If the same or similar misconduct is committed within 12 months from the final written warning this will lead to an interview with the Chief Executive during which the employee will have the opportunity to state his/her case. If it is decided that an offence has occurred, the employee will be dismissed.

A2.6 Procedure for Gross Misconduct

Committing gross misconduct will lead to an interview with the Chief Executive during which, the employee will be given the opportunity to state his/her case. If it is decided that gross misconduct has been committed the employee will be summarily dismissed: i.e. without notice and without pay in lieu of notice.

A2.7 Precautionary Suspension

In certain situations, where major or gross misconduct is suspected, senior management may need time to carry out an investigation. In such circumstances the Company reserves the right to suspend an employee pending a decision. In these circumstances the suspension would be with pay.

A2.8 Disciplinary Interviews

The Chief Executive when conducting disciplinary interviews shall be entitled to be accompanied or deputised at such interviews by another Manager if so desired. The employee also has the right to be accompanied by a fellow employee or Trade Union Representative or his/her own choice, at any stage, if so desired.

A2.9 Appeals Procedure

Where an employee feels that action taken against him/her under this procedure is unjustifiable or unfair he/she shall have the right to appeal. All appeals must be made within three working days to the Chief Executive stating the basis of the appeal which will be heard by an Appeal Panel appointed by the Chairman. The Appeal Panel shall not include anyone who was involved in the original decision. The appeal hearing shall be held within three working days of receipt of appeal.

The employee concerned shall have the right to be accompanied by a fellow employee or Trade Union Representative of his/her own choice if desired.

The result of the appeal hearing shall be notified to the employee within three working days in writing.

Appendix 3 Grievance Procedure

The following procedure is to be followed when pursuing and dealing with a grievance from a member of staff. In general, grievances affecting employment will be dealt with on an individual basis and ought to be alleviated at the earliest practicable moment.

Allegations of discrimination and/or harassment will normally be dealt with through the grievance procedure.

The procedure aims to help you resolve any grievance you may have, where it has not been possible for the matter to be resolved informally. Examples of the types of grievance that may be considered under this procedure include:

- Terms and conditions of employment.
- Working relationships with colleagues or managers.
- New working practices.
- Breaches of rules.
- Health and safety.
- Equal opportunities.

Any grievances that you may have about your colleagues should be raised with the colleague concerned and where possible resolved early, informally and amicably.

A3.1 Verbal – Stage 1

Grievances must not be left to fester and where you feel unable to raise a grievance with the colleague concerned, or the grievance is of a general nature, you should raise it verbally with your line manager. Grievances against your manager should be raised with your line manager where possible and if not possible with the next level of manager. You should give your manager as much information as possible to assist in resolving your grievance and you should also indicate your preferred outcome. Your manager must report back to you within five working days of you raising the grievance. A brief note of the grievance and the outcome should be produced by the manager and kept by you both.

A3.2 Written – Stage 2

If you are not satisfied with the outcome, you should raise your grievance in writing with the next level of manager. You should make it clear why you are not satisfied with the outcome of the verbal hearing. You must identify your reasons for pursuing the grievance. You should also indicate your preferred outcome.

The manager will meet with you and your Trade Union Representative or workplace colleague within five working days of the written receipt of your grievance. The HR Manager will also be present.

It may be necessary for a hearing to be adjourned in order that the manager can investigate the grievance fully.

The manager will inform you of the outcome of their investigations and considerations of your grievance, together with any proposed resolutions, in writing within 5 days of the conclusion of the hearing.

If you are not satisfied with the outcome, you can appeal in writing to the Chairman of the Board within 5 days. You will need to make it clear why you are not satisfied with the outcome of the formal stage and you must identify your reasons for pursuing the grievance. You should also indicate your preferred outcome.

A3.3 Stage 3

The Chairman or nominee will meet with you and your Trade Union Representative or workplace colleague within five days of the receipt of your grievance. The HR Manager will also be present. The purpose of this initial meeting will be to explain to you the way in which your grievance will be investigated and considered.

The Chairman will appoint a trained Investigating Employee (IE) to conduct a thorough and impartial investigation of the complaint to establish the facts. The investigator will not be connected in any way with the allegations.

Throughout the process both parties will have the same rights. Both parties may be accompanied by a Trade Union Representative or fellow employee to meetings in connection with the complaint.

The “defendant” will be required to provide a written response to the complaint.

The Chairman will give each party a summary account of the relevant issues raised by the other party and give them the opportunity to comment on it.

The Chairman will pass the accounts of both the complainant and the defendant to the Investigating Employee who will interview both parties in order to gather additional information, clarify events and establish the facts.

If required, the Investigating Employee will conduct formal interviews with individuals who can provide evidence or information about the complaint. The Investigating Employee will take a written record of such interviews.

At each stage of the process, confidentiality will be maintained as far as possible and the investigation will be conducted as thoroughly, as fairly and as quickly as possible. It will be stressed to each individual interviewed as part of the investigation that it is vital that they do not talk to anyone about the matters being investigated.

On completion of the investigation the Investigating Employee will present, to the Chairman, a report of his or her findings and setting out the facts. The report will not recommend disciplinary action, nor will any penalty be suggested.

The Chairman will make a decision based on the facts as presented in the report. This decision, and reasons for reaching the decision, will be communicated in writing to both parties and to the Investigating Employee.

If the complaint is upheld, the Chairman may decide that disciplinary action is appropriate. If the complaint is not upheld, the complainant and the defendant will be informed in writing and no further action will be taken.

If the complaint is against the Chief Executive then either party may appeal against the Chairman's decision. Such an appeal must be lodged, in writing and within ten days, with the Chair of the Board's Audit Committee who will convene a sub-committee of the Board comprising all the non-executive directors, less the Board Chairman. This sub-committee will consider the written appeal and issue a written determination.

This decision will be final.

A3.4 Conduct of Hearing for Written Grievances

The manager hearing the grievance is responsible for the conduct of the hearing. They will ensure that:

- You and your union representative or workplace colleague have full opportunity to present your grievance.
- The relevant person responds to your grievance.
- Any witnesses attending on your behalf or that of the manager are treated with dignity, respect and courtesy at all times, especially when responding to questions.
- All questions shall be put through the manager hearing the grievance.

A3.5 Malicious Grievances

Grievances made, especially against others employees, which upon investigation are found to be malicious will be considered further under the Disciplinary Procedure.

Appendix 4 Complaints against the Chief Executive

Strategic Investment Board Limited (SIB): Extension of Grievance Procedure

A4.1 Purpose

This appendix defines the procedures SIB will follow in dealing with grievances raised by staff against the company's Chief Executive.

A4.2 Background

SIB is a company limited by guarantee; wholly owned by the Office of the First and Deputy First Minister. Its business is concerned with the delivery of infrastructure programmes in Northern Ireland.

SIB has a defined grievance procedure for handling complaints raised by members of its staff. However, this procedure did not envisage that a complaint would be raised against the Chief Executive. As a result, when a complaint was recently raised against the Chief Executive by a member of SIB staff, the defined procedure proved inadequate.

It is therefore necessary to extend SIB's grievance procedure in a way that enables a complaint against the Chief Executive to be dealt with objectively and expeditiously. This procedure will be used to deal with the current grievance and will be available for use if other complaints are raised in the future.

A4.3 Procedure

This is an extension to the existing SIB grievance procedure that will be followed in circumstances where a complaint is made against the Chief Executive.

A4.3.1 Scope

These procedures are an extension to the existing SIB grievance procedures. The scope of the procedures is limited to the handling of complaints made against SIB's Chief Executive.

A4.3.2 Invocation

These procedures will be invoked immediately when an informal or formal complaint is raised against the Chief Executive.

A4.3.3 Types of Complaint

These procedures provide both informal and formal mechanisms for dealing with complaints.

The decision on which procedure to follow is for the complainant. SIB's HR Manager will provide confidential advice to the complainant, should he or she seek it. The complainant is also entitled to seek advice from his/her Trade Union Representative or other third party.

A4.3.4 Informal Complaints Procedure

The informal procedure is designed to offer a swift and effective resolution to issues that are amenable to conciliation. It does not detract from the statutory right of staff to seek redress through the formal procedure.

The informal procedure is based on the use of mediation. This is a way of solving problems by reaching a workable agreement between the parties. A trained mediator will help the complainant and the Chief Executive work through their concerns. The mediator will not take sides or make judgements and will not impose a resolution. The mediator's role is to help those involved come to an agreement.

The main aim of the mediation process is to look forward to a future settlement rather than be concerned with the retrospective apportionment of blame.

The principles of mediation are:

- Any agreements have to be to the satisfaction of both the complainant and the Chief Executive;
- Both parties agree a resolution is needed;
- The content of the mediation is confidential;
- The mediator is neutral and impartial and has to be seen as such throughout the proceedings.

Staff wishing to use the informal procedure to resolve a complaint against the Chief Executive should contact the HR Manager who will:

- Explain the process to the complainant;
- Confirm with the Chief Executive that he/she is willing to use mediation;
- Identify a suitable mediator; and
- Make the arrangements necessary for the parties to meet.

Figure 1 shows how informal complaints against the Chief Executive will proceed.

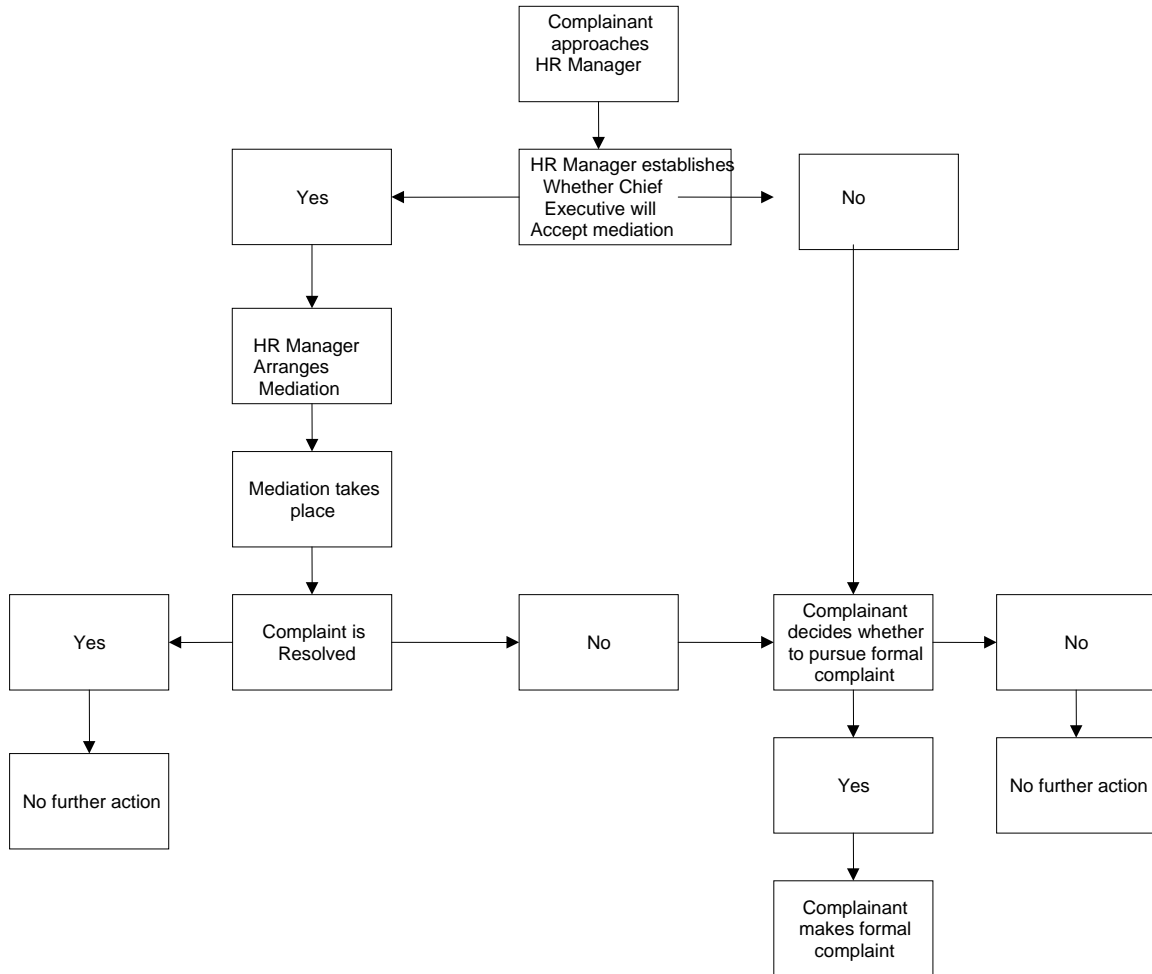


Figure 1: Informal Complaints Procedure Flow Chart

A4.3.5 Formal Complaints Procedure

If informal attempts to resolve a complaint are unsuccessful, or if the complaint is too serious to be dealt with using informal procedures, or if the complainant prefers, he/she may immediately lodge a formal complaint.

The procedure is initiated when the complainant submits a grievance form to the SIB Board Chairman.

The Chairman will decide whether an investigation is required. An investigation is required where the facts surrounding the complaint are disputed by the Chief Executive.

The Chairman will appoint a trained Investigating Officer (IO) to conduct a thorough and impartial investigation of the complaint to establish the facts. The investigator will not be connected in any way with the allegations.¹

Throughout the process both parties will have the same rights. The complainant and Chief Executive may both be accompanied by a third party to meetings in connection with the complaint.

¹ Note that this is an Investigating Officer in contrast with the Investigating Employee referred to in Appendix 3.

The Chief Executive will be required to provide a written response to the complaint.

The Chairman will give each party a summary account of the relevant issues raised by the other party and give them the opportunity to comment on it.

The Chairman will pass the accounts of both the complainant and the Chief Executive to the Investigating Officer who will interview both parties in order to gather additional information, clarify events and establish the facts.

If required, the Investigating Officer will conduct formal interviews with individuals who can provide evidence or information about the complaint. The Investigating Officer will take a written record of such interviews.

At each stage of the process, confidentiality will be maintained as far as possible and the investigation will be conducted as thoroughly, as fairly and as quickly as possible. It will be stressed to each individual interviewed as part of the investigation that it is vital that they do not talk to anyone about the matters being investigated.

On completion of the investigation the Investigating Officer will present, to the Chairman, a report of his or her findings and setting out the facts. The report will not recommend disciplinary action, nor will any penalty be suggested.

The Chairman will make a decision based on the facts as presented in the report. This decision, and reasons for reaching the decision, will be communicated in writing to both parties and to the Investigating Officer.

If the complaint is upheld, the Chairman may decide that disciplinary action is appropriate. If the complaint is not upheld, the complainant and the Chief Executive will be informed in writing and no further action will be taken.

Either party may appeal against the Chairman's decision. Such an appeal must be lodged, in writing and within 21 days, with the Chair of the Board's Audit Committee who will convene a sub-committee of the Board comprising all the non-executive directors, less the Board Chairman. This sub-committee will consider the written appeal and issue a written determination.

The following flow chart shows how informal complaints against the Chief Executive will proceed:

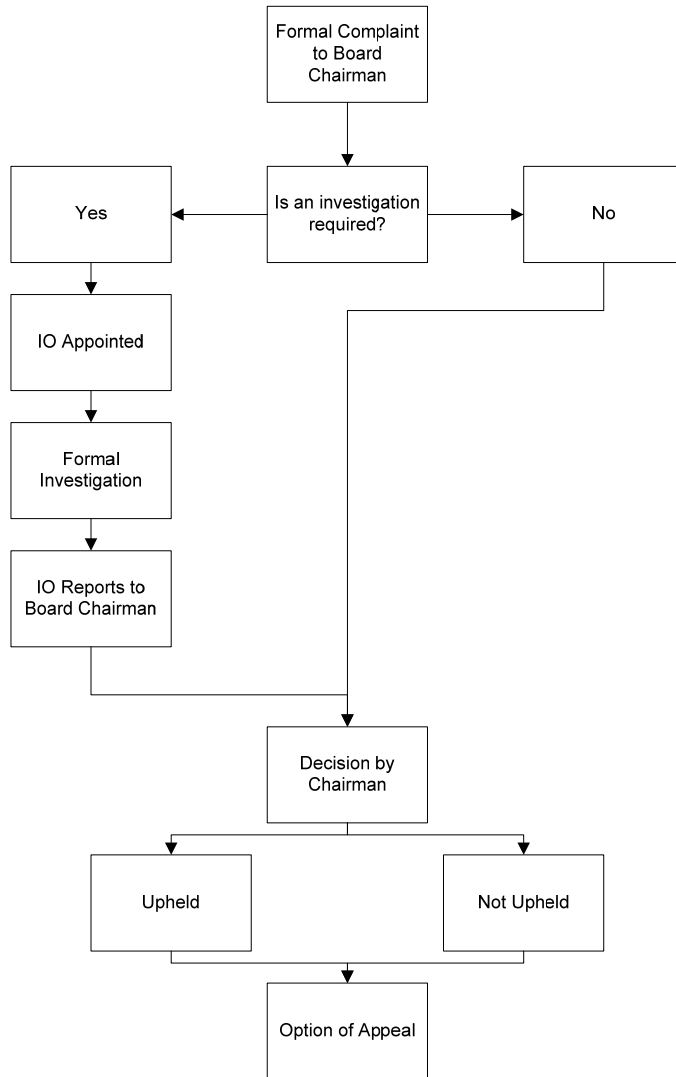


Figure 2: Formal Complaints Procedure Flow Chart

Appendix 5 Policy on Bullying

Bullying at work can take many forms. The following are just some of the most common ways:

- Bullies may use open aggression, threats, shouting, abuse or obscenities towards their target;
- Bullies may subject their target to constant humiliation or ridicule, belittling his or her efforts, often in front of others;
- Bullies may subject their target to unwarranted excessive supervision, monitoring everything he/she does and being excessively critical about minor things;
- Bullies may constantly overrule their targets authority;
- Bullies may remove whole areas of work responsibility from their target, reducing his/her job to routine tasks which are well below his/her skills and capabilities;
- Bullies may impose deliberately unrealistic targets and deadlines without reasonable discussion and, where possible, agreement or may constantly change the work remit without telling him/her.

Bullying may also take more subtle, insidious forms which gradually wear a person down over a period of time for example by fault finding, undermining, twisting everything their target says or does, isolating or ignoring in work, excluding from social activities. Bullying behaviour may occur in front of other employees who are often too afraid of becoming the next target to do anything to support the person being bullied. Very often, however, bullying takes place where there are no witnesses and the victim is afraid to make a complaint through fear of not being believed or of the bullying getting worse.

Bullying can be done by a manager to a subordinate or a subordinate to a manager, by one member of staff to another of equivalent grade or by one group of staff to another individual member of staff.

Workplace bullying is not always covered by Equal Opportunities legislation; it is only bullying as a result of religion, political opinion, sex, race, disability or membership non membership of a Trade Union Representative that is unlawful. If staff consider that they are being bullied for any of these reasons, the procedures for making a complaint, either formally or informally are detailed in this Appendix.

The procedures for dealing with all other types of non specific acts of bullying are outlined in the following paragraphs.

A5.1 Raising a Complaint of Non Specific Bullying

A5.1.1 Stage 1

Complaints should in the first instance be raised with the complainant's immediate line manager who will try to resolve the matter. The line manager should record the details of the complaint, including details of anyone who may have witnessed the behaviour or incidents being complained of, and have the

written record signed by the complainant as this will form the basis of the allegation which will be put to the alleged offender.

Where the immediate line manager is causing or contributing to the problem, the complaint should be raised with the grade above the line manager.

The line manager should contact the alleged offender to arrange a meeting within the next two days if possible. The alleged offender should be advised:

- a. That a complaint of bullying has been made.
- b. How the complainant feels about the alleged treatment they have received: e.g. isolated or undermined.
- c. That the complaint is being handled under Appendix 5 “Policy on Bullying” and that this is a three stage process.
- d. Of his/her right to be accompanied by a colleague or Trade Union Representative during interview.
- e. That the matter is confidential and should not be disclosed to or discussed with others, including the complainant.
- f. That they should obtain a copy of these procedures and read them prior to interview.

At the subsequent interview the alleged offender should be asked to respond to the allegations. If they accept that their conduct has been unacceptable agreement should be sought as to how their behaviour should be modified. They should also be advised that the working environment will be monitored as a result of the complaint to ensure that a good working environment is maintained.

If, however, the alleged offender denies either the alleged behaviour or provides an explanation as to why they consider the behaviour to be reasonable, it may be necessary to proceed to interviewing witnesses.

A written account should be made of all interviews; these should be signed by both the interviewer and the interviewee.

Having gathered all available evidence the line manager should then make a decision as to whether or not the complaint of bullying can be upheld. This decision should be notified in writing to both parties, explaining where possible the reasons for the decision. If the complaint has not been upheld the letter to the complainant should advise that if they wish to proceed to the next stage of the process they must do so within two weeks of the decision being notified.

If the complaint of bullying has been upheld the Chief Executive should decide if any subsequent action is required to ensure that a good and harmonious working environment can be restored/maintained. If disciplinary action is appropriate this should be considered under Appendix 2, “Disciplinary Procedure”.

The written records of the complaint, interviews and the action taken should be held confidentially and securely by the HR Manager. All written records should be held centrally and should not be placed in either the complainant’s or the

alleged offender's personal file. Details of complaints of bullying which have been handled locally should be included in the quarterly update to the board.

A5.1.2 Stage 2

If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of Stage 1 of the procedure they can make a written request, to the HR Manager or the Chief Executive, as appropriate, to have their complaint looked at again.

The HR Manager /Chief Executive will look at all evidence gathered at Stage 1 of the procedure and decide whether any further information is required by way of documentation or further interviews. Again, if interviews are conducted a written record signed by both parties should be kept.

The HR Manager /Chief Executive will decide whether or not the line manager's original decision can be upheld or should be overturned. Notifying the decision and subsequent action as detailed in Stage 1 above should then be taken.

A5.1.3 Stage 3 – Final Stage

If the complainant is still not satisfied with the outcome they can write to the Chief Executive / Chairman, as appropriate, asking that their complaint be reconsidered. The request, which should be made within two weeks of the date of the Stage 2 decision letter, should detail the complaint and include the reasons why they remain dissatisfied with the outcome of the previous two stages.

The Chief Executive / Chairman will request all previous papers and will decide, taking account of the action taken previously, whether there is sufficient information available to allow the decision to be reconsidered or whether further investigation is necessary.

Any further investigations will be conducted, and subsequent action will be taken, in line with the formal complaint procedures as outlined in section "Formal Procedures" on page 82. However only those interviews considered necessary will be conducted to obtain any relevant additional information which had not been obtained during the first two stages.

Follow up action as contained in section "Action Following Outcome of Investigation" and section "Preventing Victimisation".

A5.2 Where to Seek Advice

Any member of staff or line manager may approach the HR Manager for advice on how problem situations may be resolved. The HR Manager is fully aware of Equal Opportunities Complaints Procedures and has been trained to offer guidance and support to staff who:

- Consider they are being harassed or discriminated against;
- Have been accused of harassment or discrimination; or
- Have any query on discrimination/harassment issues.

The HR Manager will assume that a complaint has been made in good faith and will listen to and treat all complaints seriously. Individuals will be able to discuss the various options for resolving their complaint ("Raising a Complaint of

Discrimination/Harassment”)below. The HR Manager will not, however, tell an individual what particular course of action to follow. All initial discussions will be treated as confidential and there will be no pressure to make a formal complaint if it is felt that the matter can be resolved informally. A note will be taken of what is discussed and this will be held securely. There may be exceptional instances where, due to the seriousness of the allegations being made, a formal investigation may be instigated, even though the complainant would wish to take no further action or deal with the matter informally.

Advice on dealing with complaints may also be sought from local management or a Trade Union Representative.

A5.3 Raising a Complaint of Discrimination/Harassment

This procedure outlines the steps to be taken and the options open to any member of staff who feels they have been harassed or discriminated against on the grounds of their sex, marital status, religious belief, political opinion, disability, race, age, sexual orientation, transsexualism, real or suspected infection with Aids/HIV and membership/non membership of a trade union. The procedure for dealing with complaints of non-specific bullying is covered in section “Raising a Complaint of Non Specific Bullying” of this guidance.

A person who considers they are being harassed or discriminated against should act promptly. Where possible, a record of incidents should be kept including dates, times and the names of any witnesses. Having said this however a person should not be deterred from complaining nor delay making a complaint simply because he/she has no written records. A complaint can still be raised even without such evidence.

Complaints of discrimination/harassment involving people from outside the company (Civil Service departmental staff, contractors’ staff, members of the public, etc) will also be handled under the procedures outlined in this circular in consultation with the relevant body.

There are three options for dealing with complaints of discrimination/harassment, namely:

- a. The internal, informal option whereby the complainant deals with the issue themselves or a colleague, the Director of Finance and Corporate Affairs or line manager deals with it on their behalf (“Informal Procedures”);
- b. The internal, formal option whereby an investigation is carried out (“Formal Procedures”);
- c. The external option whereby a complaint is lodged with the Fair Employment/Industrial Tribunal (“Fair Employment/Industrial Tribunals”).

As soon as an individual considers they are the subject of discrimination/harassment they must decide how they want the matter dealt with. The decision as to which of the above methods is chosen rests with the complainant although there may be instances where due to the seriousness of the allegations being made a formal investigation may be instigated, even though the complainant would wish to deal with the matter informally.

If the person is reluctant to deal with the situation themselves or to bring the matter to the attention of their line manager or more senior employee, they may in the first instance discuss the problem with the HR Manager. Individuals may also approach their Trade Union Representative .

The HR Manager will offer support, discuss the options open to the employee and to help him/her decide how the matter should be dealt with. They will, on the individual's behalf, raise the matter with management, should the complainant wish it.

It will always be assumed that complaints have been made in good faith unless there is evidence to the contrary. If the evidence supports the conclusion that an allegation was deliberately false and was not due to a misunderstanding or to a genuine mistake, then this will be treated as a serious matter and may lead to disciplinary action against the complainant.

Under the Data Protection Act employees have the right to access information held on them and this may, in certain circumstances, apply to information provided in connection with Equal Opportunities complaints. On request, the Strategic Investment Board Limited will consider supplying any information held about the individual making the request. The consent of the person who supplied the information will be sought before any disclosure is made. However, if consent is not given to disclose information provided by one individual about another and the company considers it necessary to comply with the request for information, anything which would identify the supplier of the information as the source, will be deleted. Further information on the Data Protection Act is contained in separate Company guidance.

A5.4 Informal Procedures

The Informal Procedures have been introduced as an alternative to the Formal Procedures where the complainant wishes the matter to be resolved quickly whilst minimising embarrassment and the risk of a breach of confidentiality. They may be appropriate where the complainant simply wants the behaviour to stop; however, they are not appropriate for:

- An act of discrimination/harassment which is deemed to be serious either by the complainant, or by management, if the complaint has been brought to their attention; or
- Repeated acts of discrimination/harassment which have not ceased following informal procedures being invoked previously.

Although the Informal Procedures may be attractive for the reasons outlined above, staff should not feel discouraged from using Formal Procedures where they prefer that option. When a person raises a complaint and seeks to resolve it by a particular method, management, provided they have been made aware of the incident, should ensure that the complainant has considered all the options (both informal and formal processes). It is not sufficient to simply give the complainant a copy of the guidance. Management should discuss the options available.

Under the Informal Procedures the person who is allegedly creating the problem may be approached in one of the following three ways:

- a. The complainant may approach the alleged offender directly; pointing out that their behaviour is unwelcome, offensive, interfering with work, etc. and request that it should stop. It is up to the complainant whether or not they keep a record of the allegation and their discussions with the alleged offender, although any such record may be beneficial to the complainant should it become necessary to pursue the matter formally.
- b. Many people may find the approach outlined at “a” above difficult and may wish to seek the help of a work colleague or Trade Union Representative in their attempt to stop the discrimination or harassment. They can either:
 - i. Accompany the complainant; or
 - ii. Put the allegation to the alleged offender on the complainant’s behalf. Again it is up to the complainant whether or not a record of the meeting is kept.
- c. If neither of these options is considered suitable by the complainant, they may involve their line manager at the outset in an attempt to resolve the matter informally – (“Handling an Informal Complaint – The Line Manager”). Where the line manager is causing or contributing to the problem the complainant, colleague, HR Manager or Trade Union Representative may wish to consider raising the matter with the grade above the line manager.

During this process, the complainant and the alleged offender should be afforded the same rights: e.g. the right to be accompanied. However, it should be noted that as the purpose of these procedures is to reach a satisfactory and speedy conclusion through an informal route, it is hoped ideally that neither side will feel the need to have Trade Union Representative.

Once the alleged offender is approached in any of the above ways it may be sufficient to stop the offending behaviour happening again.

It should be noted that the informal procedures do not involve disciplinary action and where the alleged offender accepts that their conduct has been or could be construed as offensive, and provided the complainant is satisfied with the outcome, the matter will usually end there and no further action is required.

If, however, the alleged offender denies any offence or is not prepared to modify their behaviour, the complainant has the option of pursuing the matter formally (“Formal Procedures”).

A5.4.1 Handling an Informal Complaint – The Line Manager

When a member of staff approaches a line manager stating that they wish to make a complaint and that they wish to have it handled by the line manager under the informal procedures, the line manager should ensure that the member of staff is fully aware of what exactly this means: i.e.:

- That the complainant is seeking nothing more than for the behaviour to stop;
- That the informal procedures do not involve disciplinary action;

- That if the alleged offender denies the allegation, whilst the line manager may speak to any person who allegedly witnessed the incident for confirmation, they will not obtain written witness statements; and
- That no record will be placed on the alleged offender's file.

Having established that it is the clear wish of the complainant to invoke the informal procedures the line manager should then advise the complainant of his/her statutory rights and the formal procedures.

When a line manager receives details of a complaint they should, providing they have the consent of the complainant, discuss the matter with the Manager.

In order to minimise the distress to all involved, all action in relation to the complaint should be carried out where possible within five working days of the complaint being made.

The line manager should take a written statement from the complainant recording as much detail as possible about the incidents/actions complained of. This should be signed by the complainant and the line manager.

The line manager should contact the alleged offender to arrange a meeting within two days where possible. The alleged offender should be advised: -

- a. That a complaint of (e.g.) sexual harassment has been made;
- b. How the complainant feels about the treatment they have received: e.g. isolated or uncomfortable;
- c. That the complainant has requested that the complaint be handled informally which means that they simply want the behaviour to stop, and provided that the complainant does not take the matter further, no disciplinary action will be taken and no record will be placed on the alleged offender's file;
- d. Of his/her right to be accompanied by a colleague or Trade Union Representative during interview;
- e. That the matter is confidential and must not be disclosed or discussed with others;
- f. That no approach, either directly or through a third party, should be made to the complainant or any witness to the incident as this could amount to victimisation, which is itself contrary to Equal Opportunities legislation; and
- g. If the matter is not resolved through the informal route the complainant may invoke the formal procedures.

The alleged offender should then be advised of the details of the allegations and who has made them. A copy of these procedures should be given to the alleged offender and a further interview should be arranged within two days.

At the subsequent interview the alleged offender should be asked to respond to the allegations. If they accept that their conduct has been or could be construed as offensive, they should be asked if they are willing to modify their behaviour and the risks of indulging in such behaviour should be pointed out to them. They should also be advised that the working environment will be monitored as a

result of the complaint to ensure that a harmonious working environment is maintained.

If the alleged offender, however, denies any offence or is not prepared to modify their behaviour, they should be advised that the complainant may pursue the matter formally.

A written account of the interview should be recorded and signed by both the interviewer and the alleged offender.

Following the interview with the alleged offender, the line manager must advise the complainant of the outcome. If the alleged offender has denied the offence or is not prepared to modify their behaviour the complainant should be advised of this and given the option of pursuing the matter formally. If they do not wish to pursue the matter formally a note should be taken to this effect which should be signed by the complainant.

To assist with any formal proceedings which may subsequently arise, a written record of the complaint and the action taken should be held confidentially and securely by the HR Manager. Records should not be placed in either the complainant's or the alleged offender's personal file.

A5.5 Formal Procedures

Formal procedures may be appropriate:

- Where the informal route has proved ineffective;
- For more serious instances of discrimination or for repeated acts of discrimination ("Informal Procedures");
- Where the person does not wish to use the informal route from the outset; or
- Where the person remains dissatisfied following the first two stages of the bullying complaints procedures ("Stage 3 – Final Stage").

Staff who have been named in the complaint must never be involved in carrying out the investigation or deciding on the outcome.

Although all complaints which fall under these procedures will be investigated, not all complaints (usually those against the application of procedures etc.) will require interviews to be carried out. It should be noted that an investigation, whether by interview or otherwise, will always be carried out on the receipt of a Fair Employment/Industrial Tribunal Application even if the complainant has not made a complaint under the internal procedures ("Fair Employment/Industrial Tribunals").

The HR Manager will ensure that a complaint is acknowledged and an indication given as to the likely commencement date of the investigation. If further details are required from the complainant these will also be requested.

Anyone who is to be interviewed in connection with the complaint will be given five working days notice of the interview so that they may seek the help and support of a work based colleague, work based friend or Trade Union Representative. They will also be advised to obtain and read a copy of this guidance prior to their interview.

The Chief Executive will be advised that a complaint has been made and he/she will advise the Chairman of the Board. The Chief Executive will also be notified of the outcome of the investigation and advised of any remedial action that may be necessary.

The HR Manager should emphasise to all parties, including witnesses, that the investigation is confidential and must not be discussed outside the interview unless there is a legitimate reason for doing so. They should also be advised that failure to comply with this requirement may, depending on the circumstances, be treated as a disciplinary offence.

All parties should also be advised that information provided by them may have to be put to others interviewed in connection with the investigation, though to maintain the principle of confidentiality the source of the information will not be disclosed. However, all material, including copies of statements, may have to be made available to the complainant/alleged offender should the matter go to a Fair Employment or Industrial Tribunal. See also section "Raising a Complaint of Discrimination/Harassment" in relation to the Data Protection Act.

Prior to an investigation action may need to be taken to avoid contact between the complainant and the alleged offender. The wishes of the complainant should be taken into account, specifically whether they wish to be temporarily removed from the location during the investigation. This should be resolved before action is taken to inform the alleged offender of the complaint.

If the complainant wishes to be temporarily relocated during the course of the investigation and in order that the complainant does not suffer a detriment because of this, the move should be at the expense of the Company for the duration of the investigation only.

Where a case of serious harassment or bullying has been alleged, consideration may be given to a precautionary suspension, on full pay, of the alleged offender before the investigation can proceed. This can only be done in consultation with the Chief Executive and Chairman.

The Investigating Manager will first of all interview the complainant to obtain full details, including names of witnesses. Following this interview the HR Manager will identify the allegations which will be put to the alleged offender. The alleged offender will receive details of the allegations in writing and will be given ten working days to respond to these allegations in writing, if he/she so wishes. A copy of these allegations will also be forwarded to the complainant.

Before being interviewed, an alleged offender will be advised that he/she must not speak to the complainant (or any witnesses) with regard to the complaint as this could amount to victimisation, which is itself illegal under the Sex Discrimination Order, the Fair Employment and Treatment Order, the Disability Discrimination Act and the Race Relations Order.

The alleged offender will then be interviewed, and if the allegations are admitted there will be no need to involve witnesses.

If, however the alleged offender denies the offence either from the outset or at a later stage the Investigating Manager will proceed to interview the appropriate witnesses and depending on the outcome of these interviews may need to re-interview the complainant and/or alleged offender.

The investigation should, where possible, be completed within four months of the commencement of the investigation although on occasions the complexity of it may make it difficult or impossible to adhere to this deadline.

The Investigating Manager will ensure that the complainant, the alleged offender and Chief Executive are periodically advised of the up to date position and/or provided with an explanation for any delay.

The Chief Executive will decide whether the allegations have/have not been substantiated. In reaching a conclusion the Chief Executive must decide whether or not the evidence supports belief that the allegation(s) took place.

When the investigation is complete, the complainant and alleged offender will be advised of the outcome in writing. The letter will remind the alleged offender that there must be no victimisation of the person(s) involved in making the complaint or supporting the complainant. Witnesses will also be informed in writing that the investigation has been completed.

In those cases where the complaint is upheld the Chief Executive will decide what disciplinary action is appropriate. A written copy of the disciplinary action taken and the Chief Executive decision will be retained in the personal file of the alleged offender.

If they are dissatisfied with the Chief Executive decision the complainant or the alleged offender may write to the Chairman stating their grounds of appeal but only in the following circumstances:

- a. Where new evidence has come to light; and/or
- b. If they feel the investigation was not conducted in line with the correct procedures.

The appeal must be made within ten working days of the date of the letter notifying the decision.

A complaint of discrimination or harassment should never be ignored; otherwise an implied message that the problem/behaviour can continue may be given. Furthermore, if it is not investigated or not investigated properly, the Company will have little defence if the complaint is taken to and Industrial or Fair Employment Tribunal. Where line management deliberately ignores a complaint or behaviour which may lead to a complaint, disciplinary action may be taken against the manager concerned.

For more detailed information on individual responsibilities in this area see Appendix 2 "Disciplinary Procedure" on page 61, Appendix 3 "Grievance Procedure", Appendix 5 "Policy on Bullying", Appendix 6 "Redundancy Procedure", and Appendix 7 "Code of Conduct for Staff".

A5.6 Advice for Staff Accused of Discrimination/Harassment

It is recognised that those accused of harassment or discrimination can find this accusation very stressful and upsetting. The line management or the HR Manager can be contacted for advice and/or guidance in relation to a complaint made against you.

A5.6.1 Informal Complaints

If someone wishes to make an informal complaint against you, you may be approached by that person, by a Trade Union Representative, by the person's line manager or by the HR Manager. The person making the approach will not be judgmental of your alleged behaviour, rather he/she will make you aware of the effect your alleged behaviour is having on the complainant.

You should listen to what is said and look at your behaviour to see how it might have given rise to the complaint and how it might be modified. You should not try to convince the complainant that his/her complaint is invalid or that he/she should withdraw the complaint. You may of course offer an explanation for your behaviour or deny any allegations which you feel are false.

An informal meeting often presents the opportunity to clarify actions or behaviour and an apology, for example, if your behaviour has been misinterpreted, often remedies the situation. If, however, you cannot, or do not feel that it is necessary to, modify your behaviour the complainant may choose to raise the complaint formally.

A5.6.2 Formal Complaints

If a complaint is raised formally, a full investigation of the alleged harassment will be undertaken by the Investigating Manager. Where a serious case of harassment has been alleged, consideration may be given to a precautionary suspension, on full pay, of the alleged offender before any investigation proceeds. In such circumstances you will be advised by the HR Manager or Chief Executive, if appropriate. You have the right to be accompanied by a Trade Union Representative or work based friend or colleague at any such meeting.

The HR Manager will initially interview the complainant to obtain fuller details of his/her complaint. She will then contact you to advise you of the nature of the complaint and will provide a written copy of the allegations against you. You will be given ten working days to provide a written response to these allegations if you so wish. You should consider contacting a Trade Union Representative early if you wish to be represented by them. The HR Manager will then contact you to arrange a formal interview and will give five working days notice so that you may make arrangements to be accompanied by a Trade Union Representative or work based friend or colleague. You may of course attend this interview unaccompanied.

Following the interview you will be provided with a typed copy of the interview note, which should be signed and returned to the HR Manager.

On completion of the formal investigation, the Investigating Manager will prepare a written report which will summarise the evidence gathered and make a recommendation as to whether or not the complaint should be upheld. The Chief Executive will then examine the report and will decide on the basis of the evidence available, whether to endorse the Investigating Manager's recommendation. Both you and the complainant will then be advised in writing whether or not the complaint has been upheld. If you are dissatisfied with the decision you have the right of appeal in the circumstances and within the timescales detailed in section A5.5 "Formal Procedures".

If the complaint is upheld, appropriate disciplinary action in accordance with Appendix 2 “Disciplinary Procedure” on page 61 may be appropriate. This could include dismissal in cases of serious or persistent acts of harassment. You have the right to appeal against the disciplinary action imposed.

When a complaint has been received it will always be assumed that it has been made in good faith and therefore all complaints which are relevant to these procedures will be investigated. However, if the complaint is found to have been made maliciously, appropriate disciplinary action may be taken against the person making the complaint.

The action required by those named as a Respondent on an Industrial or Fair Employment Tribunal Application is detailed in section “Fair Employment/Industrial Tribunals” below.

A5.7 Fair Employment/Industrial Tribunals

Staff have a statutory right to lodge a complaint directly with the Fair Employment Tribunal or the Industrial Tribunal without exhausting the Strategic Investment Board Limited’s own internal procedures first.

Any member of staff who feels they have been discriminated against on the grounds of religious belief and/or political opinion may make a complaint to the Fair Employment Tribunal and/or seek advice from the Equality Commission.

It is important to note that complaints should be made to the Fair Employment Tribunal before whichever is the earlier of:

- a. The end of the period of three months beginning with the day on which the complainant first had knowledge, or might reasonably be expected to first have had knowledge, of the act complained of; or
- b. The end of the period of six months beginning with the day on which the act was committed;

The Tribunal may consider an application outside the period if, in all the circumstances, it considers it just and equitable to do so.

Similarly, staff who think they have been discriminated against on grounds of sex, marital status, disability or race may take their complaint to an Industrial Tribunal and/or seek advice from the Equality Commission.

Again staff should note that there are time limits for lodging complaints with the Industrial Tribunal: i.e. three months in respect of complaints on the grounds of sex, race and disability and six months in respect of equal pay complaints.

Staff also have a statutory right to involve the Labour Relations Agency before or after making a complaint to a Tribunal.

When the Strategic Investment Board Limited is made aware that a complaint has been lodged with the Tribunal an investigation will be carried out.

A5.8 Action Following Outcome of Investigation

In those cases where a complaint is upheld, appropriate disciplinary action in accordance with Appendix 2 “Disciplinary Procedure” may be considered appropriate. This could involve discipline such as demotion, loss of performance

pay, a written warning copied to the personal file or a combination of these. Serious or persistent harassment will be considered gross misconduct and may result in dismissal.

Whether or not a complaint has been upheld, reasonable steps should be taken to encourage the parties to work together harmoniously.

Regardless of the outcome of the investigation it is important to ensure that the reputation of both parties is not unduly affected. Where a complaint has been upheld or where an individual accepts that their behaviour could be construed as offensive they should be made fully aware of the Strategic Investment Board Limited's policies on equal opportunities and harassment and of the law relating to these matters.

Complaints will be assumed to have been made in good faith. However, where it has been proven that an accusation was deliberately false or malicious, then this will be treated as a serious matter and may lead to disciplinary action for the complainant.

A5.9 Preventing Victimisation

It is important that the company carefully monitors the situation to ensure that discrimination has stopped and that no form of victimisation is occurring. This will include speaking at periodic intervals to those at risk from victimisation until management is satisfied that any risk has passed.

Victimisation may cover a wide range of actions from unpleasantness from colleagues, to an adverse impact on working conditions. Victimisation itself can also lead to formalised procedures being invoked as it is contrary to Fair Employment, Sex Discrimination, Disability and Race legislation. Disciplinary action may be taken against any person victimising either a complainant or anyone who supported the complainant.

Appendix 6 Redundancy Procedure

A6.1 Policy

The Company recognises the importance that staff attaches to security of employment. In furtherance to this, the Company will take all reasonable steps to prevent the occurrence of redundancy.

Nevertheless, given the terms of the 2003 Order, the possibility of redundancy cannot be eliminated though this will only be adopted when all feasible measures have been fully explored. In devising redundancy arrangements the Company will pay due regard to the equal opportunities policy.

A6.2 Scope

This Procedure applies to all permanent employees of the Company.

A6.3 Redundancy Agreement

Whilst it is recognised that different situations may require different methods, these procedure have been established as a basic/minimum framework for settling any future redundancy problems. The Company accepts that consultation with staff should be started at the earliest possible time, and not later than that laid down by Statute, and should be a continuing feature for resolution by agreement of a situation of staff surplus or redundancy. Staff will accept that any arrangements to settle future redundancy should take account of the efficiency of the Company.

A6.4 Action Required Before Redundancy is Declared

When a position is reached where it is anticipated that the number of staff employed will be surplus to requirements, a redundancy situation will not be declared until the following have been considered in full consultation with the staff:

- a. A review of present and future work patterns to ensure that a surplus of staff is unavoidable.
- b. A review of work sub-contracted with a view to completing it in-house.
- c. Reduction or suspension of recruitment, sideways transfers and/or promotion within the Company unless it is agreed that this does not offer an effective way of reducing or resolving the redundancy situation.
- d. Transfer of staff to a more junior position; staff may retain their existing status even though they may temporarily be operating in a more junior capacity. This will only be done when it is certain that within a short period of time a vacancy will exist at the appropriate level.
- e. Employees who are prepared to volunteer for retirement will be considered for premature retirement in place of those who would otherwise be redundant. It is important to note that any request for voluntary redundancy does not guarantee acceptance by the Company. All such requests will be considered in the light of the continuing requirements and the efficiency of the Company.

- f. Retraining where feasible of staff for other jobs within the Company.

A6.5 Unit of Redundancy

If after all the measures set out above have been explored, a redundancy situation still exists, units of redundancy will operate as follows.

The unit of redundancy will cover all members of the grade concerned. Opportunity should be made however for volunteers to transfer to vacancies if they so desire. A payment is only due if the reason for the dismissal is redundancy; in other words the dismissal is caused by the Company's need to reduce the work force.

A member of staff will be declared redundant only if there is no suitable post available. A member of staff may well not be entitled to redundancy if a new post is offered before the old employment contract expires, and starts within four weeks. In such cases the member of staff can put off the decision whether to accept the new job for a four-week trial period or the trial period may be extended beyond four weeks by written agreement between the parties where retraining is necessary. If at the end of the trial period the member of staff is still in the job he or she will be regarded as having accepted it.

If the member of staff rejects the new job before the end of the trial period because it turns out not to be a suitable alternative to the old job, or for good personal reasons, he or she will be considered to be redundant from the date the original employment ended but if a redundant member of staff unreasonably refuses a suitable offer of alternative employment, no redundancy payment will be due.

A6.6 Selection for Redundancy

Selection of employees for redundancy will normally take place on the basis of:

- a. Staff who are accepted as volunteers for redundancy.
- b. Disciplinary record.
- c. Job performance.

In the event of it being found necessary to select individual employees for redundancy, it may be found that the criteria set out in the paragraphs above will make it self-evident who should be selected. If this is not so, and some further process of selection is necessary, likely candidates identified in accordance with these criteria will be considered by the Chief Executive.

Those selected for redundancy will be notified as soon as the choice has been made and will at the same time be given a memorandum setting out the reasons for the redundancy and the criteria used in selecting staff and indicating the extent to which these criteria have been agreed with the staff. The memorandum will also inform them of their entitlement to appeal to the Board of the Company.

A6.7 Minimum Period of Notice

The minimum period of notice to be given in the case of redundancy will be as follows.

All staff will be given at least the notice required by the contracts of employment legislation.

Depending on the needs of the Company at the time, an employee who has been declared redundant may be offered salary in lieu and may not be required to work part or all of his/her notice period.

A6.8 Time Off

During the period of notice, reasonable time off on full pay will be allowed to attend interviews for other posts or to arrange training. The period of notice will be extended beyond that shown above whenever possible, particularly when long-service staff is involved in the redundancy.

A6.9 Appeals Procedure

Employees who believe that:

- a. They have been selected unfairly for redundancy; or
- b. Their treatment has been unfair on the grounds of notice or compensation shall have the right to appeal to the Company. Such an appeal must be made in writing giving the grounds under which the employee concerned wishes to appeal and should be submitted in the first instance to the Chief Executive within five working days of being informed of impending redundancy.

A6.10 Assistance to Staff Declared Redundant

The fullest notice will be given of all likely and actual redundancy programmes, and the existence of residual work in the winding-up period will be used to spread the programme over as long a period as possible compatible with efficient management. This should maximise the extent to which normal wastage can be used to solve redundancy problems.

Appendix 7 Code of Conduct for Staff

A7.1 Duties and Responsibilities

Staff should at all times act in the public interest. They have a responsibility to act fairly, objectively and in good faith. They should familiarise themselves with the Strategic Investment Board Limited's corporate strategy, including the main aims and objectives and the internal management and control systems as set out in the Corporate Plan. They should also familiarise themselves with the provisions of this code and with the provisions of the SIB Staff Handbook and should act in accordance with the principles set out in these documents.

Staff have a duty:

- To discharge public functions reasonably and according to the law; and
- To recognise ethical standards governing particular professions.

The Chief Executive, as Accounting Employee, has overall responsibility, working under the Board, for propriety in a broad sense, including conduct and discipline.

A7.2 Accountability

Staff should serve the Company in accordance with the principles set out in this Code and recognising:

- Their accountability to the Board of the Company;
- The respective roles of the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister and the Strategic Investment Board Limited;
- That the Minister responsible for the Strategic Investment Board Limited is ultimately accountable to Parliament for its independence, effectiveness and efficiency.

Staff should conduct themselves with integrity, impartiality and honesty. They should not deceive or knowingly mislead the Board, the Department, Ministers, Parliament or the Public.

A7.3 Conflicts of Interest

Staff should abide by the rules set out in the SIB Staff Handbook in relation to private interest and possible conflict with public duty; the disclosure of official information; and political activities. They should not misuse their official position or information acquired in their official duties to further their private interests or those of others. All staff should ensure that any possible conflicts of interest are identified at an early stage and that appropriate action is taken to resolve them. Conflict of interest forms must be completed annually by all staff.

A7.4 Integrity

Staff should not use their official position to receive, agree to accept or attempt to obtain any payment or other consideration for doing, or not doing, anything or showing favour, or disfavour, to any person. They should not receive benefits of any kind from a third party which might reasonably be seen to compromise their

personal judgment and integrity. Under legislation, staff of public bodies, including the Strategic Investment Board Limited, may be required to prove that the receipt of payment or other consideration from someone seeking to obtain a contract is not corrupt. The approval of the Chief Executive should be obtained prior to accepting any offer of hospitality. A Register of Hospitality will be maintained by the PA to the Chief Executive.

A7.5 Relations with the Public

When dealing with members of the public, staff are required do so sympathetically, efficiently, promptly and without bias or maladministration. Staff should offer the public the highest standards of conduct and service.

A7.6 Use of Resources

Staff should endeavour to ensure the proper, economical, effective and efficient use of resources.

A7.7 Official Information

Staff of public bodies, including the Strategic Investment Board Limited, owe a general duty of confidentiality to their employer at common law. They are therefore required to protect official information held in confidence. Nothing in this Code should be taken as overriding existing statutory or common law obligations to keep confidential or, in appropriate cases, to disclose certain information. Subject to this proviso, staff should act in accordance with the Code of Practice on Access to Government Information.

A7.8 Staff Concerns About Improper Conduct

If any member of staff believes that he or she is being required to act in a way which:

- Is illegal, improper, or unethical;
- Is in breach of a professional code;
- May involve possible maladministration, fraud or misuse of public funds;
or
- Is otherwise inconsistent with this Code;

He/she should raise the matter with the Chief Executive This also applies to any information relating to malpractice by the Company or its employees: i.e. cases where there is evidence of criminal or unlawful activity by others or where they believe there is evidence of irregular or improper behaviour elsewhere in the organisation but where they have not been personally involved, or if they are required to act in a way which, for them, raises a fundamental issue of conscience.

Alternatively, if for any reason the above reporting route is considered inappropriate the matter may be raised with the Chairman of the Board, who has been entrusted by the Board with the duty of investigating staff concerns about propriety raised confidentially.

In all these cases such reports will be treated confidentially and the employee is protected from dismissal or other sanction as specified in the Public Interest Disclosure (Northern Ireland) order 1998.

Where a member of staff has reported a matter covered in section A7.8 and believes that the responses do not represent a reasonable response to the grounds of his or her concern, he or she may report the matter in writing to the Department for Social Development.

A7.9 After Leaving Employment

Staff should continue to observe their duties of confidentiality (see section A7.7 above) after they have left the employment of the Strategic Investment Board Limited. The attention of staff is also drawn to section 2.18 “Termination of Employment”, which states that it may be necessary to get the consent of the Company before taking up, within two years of leaving the Company, an appointment with a company or organisation with which there has been involvement during the course of employment with SIB.

Appendix 8 Complaints Procedure

A8.1 Complaints Policy

The Company seeks a positive public perception of its aims and activities. It is open and responsive to suggestions about and criticism of the ways it conducts its business. To this end, any complaint received will be treated

- Courteously, promptly and effectively,
- On a confidential basis and
- In accordance with the complaints procedure set out below

The Company has published its complaints procedure in its Annual Report and will continue to do so.

A8.2 Definition of a Complaint

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction:

- By any person or body external to the Company, including public sector organisations.
- With or against any action by or on behalf of the Strategic Investment Board Limited

Complaints will be accepted in writing, by fax or email, or verbally, whether face to face or by telephone, by any member of staff of the Company.

A8.3 Interpretations

Legal action initiated against the Company, while clearly a complaint in the normal sense of the term, is quite distinct in procedural terms and does not come within the scope of this document. Similarly, staff grievance and disciplinary procedures are also distinct form of complaints.

While it will usually be clear that dissatisfaction with the Company's actions constitute a complaint, it is more difficult to distinguish between differing views on Company policy and complaints about it. Criticism of Company proposals which have been circulated for consultation will not usually amount to a complaint as such, but where, for example, it is claimed that a Company policy will have an adverse effect on an individual business or group of businesses, this should be treated as a complaint.

A complaint against the Company may involve a third party, for example, a contractor employed by the Company, or one of its land owning partners, and redress may be outside the Company's control. This should be pointed out to the complainant in informal discussion, but once a complaint has been made, it should be processed within these procedures and the outcome recorded. In such cases it will often suffice simply to refer the complainant to the appropriate body; however, action in each case should be decided on its merits and on the capacity of the Company to help resolve the issue.

A8.4 Expressed Dissatisfaction — Informal Stage

Many verbal and some written expressions of dissatisfaction can be resolved easily and simply in discussion and this is obviously to be preferred; often an explanation and rectification will be sufficient to content the dissatisfied person. If the Company has been at fault — for example, a routine request for information has been overlooked or has not been dealt with quickly enough — a simple apology should be given.

Such complaints can be dealt with by any member of staff; - junior staff should however seek advice from their line manager. However, any member of staff receiving a complaint against his or her self must immediately refer the matter to their line manager.

In all cases, it is essential to obtain from the dissatisfied person ALL the information needed for a thorough and speedy investigation.

If it becomes clear at any stage of the informal process that the complainant is unlikely to be satisfied, the “Initiated Complaints – Formal Stage 1” procedure should be initiated – see section A8.5 below. Where a complainant seeks financial or other redress beyond rectification of the error, the Director of Finance and Corporate Affairs should be consulted. Similarly, if it is suspected that the complainant is considering legal action, the Director of Finance and Corporate Affairs should be consulted and may decide to seek legal advice.

A8.5 Initiated Complaints – Formal Stage 1

A complaint will not affect the complainant's continuing right to fair and equitable treatment by the Company.

Written complaints should be passed to the Board Secretary on receipt. These include faxes and hard copies of emails. Verbal – including telephoned – complaints should be recorded and passed to the Board Secretary in the same way. Verbal complainants should not be asked to put complaints in writing.

The Board Secretary will respond to all complaints. A separate acknowledgement is not needed where a substantive reply can be made within five working days (including the day of receipt). In all other cases, the complaint will be acknowledged at once and an intended response date given. Where the complaint has been made verbally, the acknowledgement will also set out the Company's understanding of the grounds of dissatisfaction, to allow the complainant an opportunity to clarify any misunderstanding. A copy of the Company's complaints procedure will be enclosed with each acknowledgement and the Board Secretary will offer to assist the complainant.

All complaints will be investigated thoroughly by the section concerned. If additional information is needed, the Board Secretary will arrange for it to be requested from the complainant. Investigations should be completed as quickly as possible, normally within five working days (including the day of receipt). Where this cannot be achieved, the Board Secretary will initially acknowledge, as above, and thereafter issue holding replies at intervals of not more than ten working days, giving any revised date for the intended response. Each holding reply must be authorised by the Chief Executive, who must be satisfied that no more substantive response is possible.

Substantive replies will:

- a. Give a full explanation of the outcome of the Company's investigations.
- b. Give an apology where the Company has made a mistake, and
- c. Indicate what has been done to put matters right.

Substantive replies must be authorised by and will usually be signed by the Chief Executive. The replies will indicate that, where there is continuing dissatisfaction, the complainant may contact the Chairman of the Company. The Chairman should be made aware of the circumstances of each complaint but because of his role in "Continued Complaints – Formal Stage 2" – he will become involved only where a complaint is judged to be of the most serious nature.

A8.6 Continued Complaints – Formal Stage 2

If a further complaint is made, whether or not directly to the Chief Executive it should be regarded as a "Continued Complaints – Formal Stage 2" complaint nevertheless and passed immediately to the Chief Executive. Where a substantive response cannot be given within five working days for example, if further investigations are deemed to be necessary – acknowledgement and holding reply action will be authorised by the Chief Executive to the same timescales as set out in section A8.5 "Initiated Complaints – Formal Stage 1".

Substantive responses as "Continued Complaints – Formal Stage 2" may be issued only by the Chief Executive, or in his unavoidable absence, by the Legal Director in consultation with the Chairman. Those responses will refer to the right to complain to the Commissioner for Complaints.

A8.7 Performance and Review

The Board Secretary will establish and maintain systems to capture and record all complaints, whether formal or informal, written or verbal. These will form the basis of an annual presentation to the Board. The Company will publish in its Annual Report performance against target information and list complaints and the action taken to improve services.

The Company will also ask its internal auditors to review performance in complaints handling and will take note of any findings. It will also conduct an annual internal review of its procedures and relay the conclusions to the Board in the annual presentation.

A8.8 Commissioner for Complaints

Our complaints procedure is not a substitute for your right to complain to the Northern Ireland Ombudsman. You should note however that the Commissioner will generally expect you to have used our procedure before accepting your complaint.

You may contact the Ombudsman by

Email: ombudsman@ni-ombudsman.org.uk

OR

Via Post

The Ombudsman
Freepost BEL 1478
Belfast
BT1 6BR

OR

The Ombudsman
33 Wellington Place
Belfast
BT1 6HN

OR

By calling between the hours 9.30am & 4.30pm at the above address

FREEPHONE

0800 34 34 24

Appendix 9 Health and Safety Policy

A9.1 Health and Safety at Work

It is the Strategic Investment Board Limited Company Policy to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of all its employees and of all others who may be affected by the Company's undertakings. This includes maintaining a working environment which is safe and without risks to health.

The Company is committed to achieving a high level of Health and Safety performance, treating legal requirements as the minimum standard and to continuing cost-effective improvement in performance.

The Strategic Investment Board Limited recognises Health and Safety as an integral part of its business performance. This being the case, the key to achieving our Health and Safety policy objectives rests with every member of staff. Respective roles are detailed in "Organisation and Arrangements" in the Health and Safety Policy section of the SIB Staff Handbook, and address such matters as responsibilities, co-operation, risk assessment and the provision of Health and Safety assistance.

There is also a further range of Health and Safety Guidance available within the Company which you will be made aware of during your induction. These include:

- Policy Statement
- Work Equipment
- Risk Assessment
- Fire Precautions
- Asbestos
- First Aid

Brett Hannam
Chief Executive
Strategic Investment Board Limited

A9.2 Health and Safety at Work – Organisation

Duties of Management and Staff

A9.3 Duties of the Chief Executive

Within the context of the Strategic Investment Board Limited's overall responsibilities, the Chief Executive is responsible to the Board of the Strategic Investment Board Limited for all matters relating to the health, safety and welfare of all the staff employed by the Company. These responsibilities include the preparation of the Health and Safety Policy of the Company and monitoring its implementation.

The HR Manager will assist the Chief Executive in the managerial fulfilment of these responsibilities in relation to the development and implementation of a programme for risk assessments, safety inspections and safety training.

A9.4 Duties of the HR Manager

The HR Manager is responsible to the Chief Executive for all matters relating to the health, safety and welfare of staff under their control. This includes the implementation of the Company's health and safety policy and the organisation, arrangements, safe systems of work, risk assessment and preventative and protective measures which accompany it and any statutory provisions, codes of practice or guidance which are or may become available. They have the following particular duties:

- a. To give Health and Safety matters equal priority with other management functions.
- b. To inform staff of their Health and Safety responsibilities and ensure they are understood. New staff should be provided with induction training.
- c. To monitor the application of any safe system of work.
- d. To carry out an annual review of safety training needs
- e. To ensure that all accidents and incidents are thoroughly investigated in order to prevent recurrence and minimise loss.
- f. To provide protective clothing and equipment as identified by the risk assessments.
- g. To participate in the monitoring of the implementation of the Company's Health and Safety Policy and to inform the Chief Executive of difficulties which, may be identified during any review.
- h. To monitor staff in carrying out their duties so that they do not adversely affect the health, safety or welfare of others.
- i. To make staff aware of their responsibility to report unsafe working conditions/practices to the appropriate person.

- j. To consider the instigation of disciplinary action against any employee who intentionally or negligently breaches any safety rules or requirements.
- k. To undertake the reporting of all injuries, diseases and dangerous occurrences.
- l. To make all administrative arrangements for health and safety training.

A9.5 Duties of the Premises Employees

The Premises Employee function will be undertaken by the HR Assistant.

- a. To undertake joint monthly safety inspections of the premises and associated equipment.
- b. To ensure that others using the premises: e.g., visitors, contractors etc., are made aware of the Strategic Investment Board Limited's health and safety policy insofar as it affects them.
- c. To take reasonable steps to ensure the maintenance of a safe way to enter and leave all the Company's premises.
- d. To take immediate action to control or eliminate any identified hazard which could lead to a serious accident.
- e. To ensure that there are adequate first-aid facilities for staff and that staff are aware of these facilities,
- f. To ensure that staff are aware of the procedures for the reporting of fires and emergency evacuation procedures.
- g. To arrange fire drills as stipulated within the Fire Certificate (Premises Officer – DVLANI Responsibility).
- h. To ensure that all safety signs comply with regulations (DVLANI Responsibility).

A9.6 Duties of the Risk Assessors

- a. Risk assessments will only be carried out by staff that have undergone competency based training.

A9.7 General duties of all staff

- a. All staff are required to take reasonable care of their own Health and Safety at work.
- b. All staff are required, under the terms of the Health and Safety at Work Order, to co-operate with their employer's arrangements for health and safety and to take reasonable care of themselves and others.
- c. To be familiar with and follow the Strategic Investment Board Limited's Health and Safety Policy including the organisation, arrangements, safe systems of work and risk assessments.
- d. To make full and proper use of protective clothing and equipment and not misuse or interfere with it or with anything else provided in the interests of Health and Safety.

- e. To report any defect or problem arising from the use of any substance, machinery, equipment, or unsafe practices.
- f. To report to their line manager all accidents or incidents which have or which may have resulted in personal injury or damage to property.
- g. To ensure that any staff under their control are properly supervised, instructed and trained in their work activities.
- h. To encourage a positive attitude to health and safety matters and set a good example to others.

Arrangements

A9.8 Arrangement 1 – Review of Policy, Organisation, Arrangements, etc

The Chief Executive will arrange for a Health and Safety Audit, on an annual basis at least, of the health and safety policy, organisation and arrangements to ensure their continuing effectiveness and applicability.

The Chief Executive shall report to the Board, on an annual basis at least, on the outcome of such review.

A9.9 Arrangement 2 – Training

Health and Safety training needs will be agreed between Chief Executive and the HR Manager. As a minimum requirement all new staff will receive induction training, which will include:

- An overview of Health and Safety Legislation
- the Strategic Investment Board Limited's Health and Safety Policy
- Fire and Emergency arrangements
- First Aid arrangements
- Accident reporting

A9.10 Arrangement 3 – Risk Assessment

The purpose of risk assessment is to help management determine any necessary action to ensure compliance with legislative requirements.

The Chief Executive shall confirm risk assessments are carried out and recorded, preventative and protective measures are taken and safe systems of work are devised, implemented and monitored:

The HR Manager will ensure that the necessary number and calibre of staff are trained as risk assessors and undertake risk assessments in their work area as required, reporting to him/her.

The HR Manager will advise on training of risk assessors and provide advice to the assessors.

Assessments will be carried out bi-annually as well as in response to change of risk: e.g. use of new equipment.

Assessments will be reviewed by the HR Manager.

Records of amendments involving actions required should be kept by the assessor and copied, through the Chief Executive, to the safety advisor who will maintain a central record.

Results of assessments will be communicated to staff by the appropriate line manager.

A9.11 Arrangement 4 – Immediate Action Following Personal Injury

- Arrange treatment for injured party (first-aid and/or emergency service call)
- If possible, and as necessary, remove/reduce further hazard to the injured party or others.
- Ensure injured party remains attended.
- If necessary, ensure security of accident site.
- Notify the HR Manager

A9.12 Arrangement 5 – Accident Reporting Procedures

All accidents must be entered in the Accident Book held by reception.

All injuries, diseases and dangerous occurrences, which are reportable, will be notified to the Health and Safety Executive by the HR Manager.

The entry in the accident book should, if possible, be made by the injured party or someone on their behalf.

Examples of accidents requiring to be reported to the Health and Safety Inspectorate are:

- An accident resulting in death.
- Fracture (break, fracture or chip) other than to fingers, thumbs or toes.
- Amputation.
- Dislocation of the shoulder, hip, knee or spine.
- Loss of sight (temporary or permanent).
- Chemical or hot metal burn to the eye or any penetrating injury to the eye.
- Injury resulting from an electric shock or electrical burn leading to unconsciousness or requiring resuscitation or admittance to hospital for more than 24 hours.
- Unconsciousness caused by asphyxia or exposure to harmful substances or biological agents.
- Acute illness requiring medical treatment, or loss of consciousness arising from absorption of any substance by inhalation, ingestion or through the skin.

- Acute illness requiring medical treatment where there is reason to believe that this resulted from exposure to a biological agent or its toxins or infected materials.
- Any other injury:
 - i. Leading to hypothermia, heat induced illness or to unconsciousness;
 - ii. Requiring resuscitation or
 - iii. Requiring admittance to hospital for more than 24 hours.

Any of the above must be reported to Health and Safety Executive (NI) immediately – telephone 028 9024 3249.

Within ten days of an incident, or any accident requiring more than three consecutive days off work, form N12508 must be completed and returned to Health and Safety Executive (NI).

A9.13 Arrangement 6 – Accident Investigation Procedures

As soon as possible after an accident or dangerous occurrence, the HR Manager will initiate an investigation of the circumstances. The aim of the investigation will be to establish the cause of the incident and thus, hopefully, to prevent recurrence.

After ensuring that any injured party has received the necessary treatment/attention, it should first be determined if the incident should be reported to the Health and Safety Executive (NI) immediately – telephone 028 9024 3249.

The area should be made safe. If reported to the Health and Safety Executive, it may be necessary to leave the scene undisturbed but safety must be the overriding consideration.

Witness statements should be obtained as soon as possible after the incident.

Safety representatives will be invited to participate in any investigation and will receive copies of any investigation reports on request.

A9.14 Arrangement 7— Health and Safety Executive

Action decided as necessary following any inspection and/or observations by the Health and Safety Executive shall be accorded the highest priority.

A9.15 Arrangement 8 – Emergency Evacuation Procedures

Every Monday morning at 9 a.m. the alarm for the building is tested. If the alarm sounds at any other time you **MUST** assume it is a real alarm and the office must immediately be evacuated to the Assembly Point.

***Please note* - When the fire alarm sounds, shutters close off the main reception area on the ground floor. If you are evacuating by the exit leading to the reception area you will have to leave by the back door and go around the building to the assembly point.**

(A) RAISING THE ALARM

If you discover a fire - shout "Fire" and operate the nearest Fire Alarm Manual Call Point. The fire alarm signal will operate within a few seconds. The fire alarm signal is a continuous sounding alarm bell.

(B) ACTION TO BE TAKEN ON ACTIVATION OF THE FIRE ALARM

When the fire alarm is activated you must leave the building immediately in an orderly manner. Use the **nearest** available exit, closing doors as necessary. Assist visitors if required and report to your assembly point. **The assembly point is at the other side of the roundabout on the pathway to the Radisson Hotel.**

During an evacuation you **must not**: -

- stop to collect personal belongings;
- run within the building; or
- re-enter the building until advised it is safe.

(C) TEMPORARY OR PERMANENT DISABILITIES

Please inform the HR Manager if you have any condition that affects your ability to leave the building, without assistance. A Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) will be developed for your individual needs.

(D) FIRE WARDENS

The Fire Wardens will check to ensure all areas have been vacated; if they ask you to leave you must do so, without question. Having left the building they will report to the Fire Precautions Officer or deputy stationed at the assembly points and provide details of the progress of the evacuation including details of any people who have not responded appropriately. In the event of a fire, the Fire Precautions Officer will report to the Senior Fire and Rescue Service Officer.

(E) TEST PROCEDURES

The fire alarm is tested each week on Monday at approximately **09:00** using a different manual call point. Familiarise yourself with the alarm signal.

Appointed Fire Wardens are: Name Area of Responsibility

Rebecca Russell South Side
Andrew McLean South Side
Helen McNeill West Side
Shona McConville West Side

Fire Wardens must ensure that all staff are evacuated. The main office, meeting rooms and other areas e.g. toilets must be checked.

Fire Precaution Officer: Valerie Rodgers (DVLNI)
Deputy Fire Precautions Officer: Kevin McConville (DVLNI)

A9.16 Arrangement 10 – First Aid

Legislation – The Health and Safety at Work (NI) Order 1978 and subsequent regulations are designed to encourage staff to take proper precautions at work. However, if staff are injured or become ill at work, the Health and Safety (First Aid) Regulations (NI) 1982 together with the approved Code of Practice require the employer to ensure that there is adequate first aid provision.

Definition – First Aid is defined as:

- In circumstances where a person will need help from a medical practitioner or nurse, treatment for the purpose of preserving life or minimising the consequences of injury or illness until such help is obtained; and
- Treatment of minor injuries which would not otherwise receive treatment or which do not need treatment by a medical practitioner or nurse.

First Aider – A first aider is a person who has been trained and who holds a current First Aid certificate issued by an approved organisation.

First Aid Boxes and Kits – First aid boxes and kits shall contain nothing other than a sufficient quantity of first aid materials as specified in the regulations. Medication and germicides are not part of first aid treatment.

First aid boxes and kits shall be checked quarterly by the premises employees who will arrange replenishment. A check list will be displayed in the boxes.

Records – A written record of dates on which first aiders obtained their certificates and refresher training shall be maintained by the safety advisor. A written record of all cases treated shall be maintained in the accident book.

A9.17 Arrangement 11 – Protective Clothing / Safety Equipment

Legal Obligation – Employers have a duty under the Health and Safety at Work (NI) Order 1978 to ensure so far as is reasonably practicable the health, safety and welfare of people at work including, where appropriate, the provision of suitable protective clothing and safety equipment. Employees also have a duty to cooperate with the employer in the use and care of such clothing and equipment.

General Conditions –

- a. Any clothing and equipment provided will remain the property of the Strategic Investment Board Limited.
- b. Clothing and equipment may be required to be returned on cessation of employment.
- c. No employee shall intentionally or recklessly interfere with or misuse any item of protective clothing or safety equipment. Items shall be worn or used only on official business.
- d. The right is reserved to have articles marked as the Strategic Investment Board Limited property.
- e. The replacement of articles lost, stolen or damaged will be considered only on receipt of a written report of the circumstances.

- f. Protective clothing / safety equipment needs will be identified by risk assessment.

Appendix 10 Recruitment and Selection

A10.1 Introduction

This document defines the policy and procedures for recruitment and selection of staff within Strategic Investment Board Limited.

A10.2 Objectives and Scope

The purpose of this Policy and its procedures is to outline the company's approach to recruitment and selection.

A10.3 Policy

A10.3.1 Introduction

It is the policy of the Strategic Investment Board Limited that selection for recruitment and advancement within the company shall be according to merit. Selection procedures will be objective, structured, standardised and comply fully with legislation and relevant Codes of Practice and the Company policy in relation to Equal Opportunities.

Competitive advantage is only secured through our people, therefore, it is vitally important to select the right people for the right jobs. As such the principle of selection on merit is paramount to the Company remaining successful in the global marketplace.

SIB commits itself to ensuring that the talents and resources of employees are utilised to the full and that employees or applicants do not receive less favourable treatment on grounds of perceived religious affiliation, political persuasion, marital status, age, gender, sexual orientation, disability, race or class.

A10.3.2 Identification of Need

The Chief Executive will determine manpower requirements within the Company on an on-going basis, identifying in particular any roles new to the business. Any such identified need will be subject to budgetary restrictions and approval by the Remuneration Committee. SIB may support Departments by the recruitment of temporary members of staff for specific projects. These positions are also subject to Investment Committee approval and the production of a signed Operational Partnership Agreement outlining clearly the reasons for support and the cost implications to SIB.

A10.3.3 Role Analysis

New roles will be carefully analysed to breakdown tasks and responsibilities to enable the company to produce accurate job descriptions. On the basis of the main tasks and responsibilities, relevant managers will determine appropriate essential and desirable criteria, at all times ensuring consistency with other roles in the company. These criteria will combine the qualifications, skills, knowledge and experience required and desirable for the respective roles. The criteria produced as a result, will be examined to ensure that they are accurate,

objective and justifiable in so far as they are genuinely required to carry out the job effectively. The HR Manager will co-ordinate this activity.

For established roles, existing tasks, responsibilities and criteria will be reviewed by the HR Manager to ensure that they remain accurate and reflective of roles.

Selection criteria will be applied fairly and consistently throughout the selection process.

A copy of a job and person specification, which makes clear requirements of the role and the qualities required of the ideal candidate, will be available to all candidates either on-line or in hardcopy format. This will enable applicants to 'self-select out' if they do not meet the criteria and will enable those applicants who do meet criteria to highlight those aspects of their experience, qualifications and competence which are most relevant to the job, in their application and during the selection process

A10.3.4 Advertising

In order to ensure that the widest possible pool of applicants is made aware of vacancies, all vacancies will be widely advertised in either relevant press, on the internet or through specialist recruitment. Vacancies will also be advertised on the company's web site.

Should the company experience under representation of particular sections of the community, appropriate media will be selected to specifically encourage applications from those sections.

A10.3.5 Applications

The company will make use of standard application forms. Applications will be accepted in the format of the Company's standard application form only. Each application submitted will be allocated a unique identification number and applicants will be asked to complete an Equality Monitoring Questionnaire. Applicants who do not complete an Equality Monitoring Questionnaire will not be considered for appointment. The company will only process those applications received in response to advertised vacancies.

It is the individual's responsibility to ensure that their application form is received no later than the time stated on the closing date. The deadline relates to the time the application form was received and not the time it was submitted.

A10.3.6 Short Listing

To ensure consistency, all short listing will be carried out by a panel of at least two people. Short listing is a formal documented process with the relevant criteria being recorded on a short listing matrix and candidates assessed against those criteria. Where further explanation of the way in which the criteria have been applied is required, this will be recorded on the form.

There will, at all times, be one member of the HR team on the short listing panel to provide consistency in short listing decisions and strict adherence to the criteria stated in the advertisement and/or job specification. Personal prejudices and assumptions are not allowed to influence the process.

A10.3.7 Interview

Interviews will be carried out by two or more interviewers in order to reduce the risk of subjectivity and bias. All interviewers will be trained to set personal prejudices and assumptions aside during the interview process and to avoid conclusions based on hunches or stereotyped assumptions. The interview panel will be given interview packs, including applications, interview questions, candidate assessment forms, job description/specification, in advance, any changes that need to be made, regarding the areas to be covered, will be coordinated by HR. In general, standard interview formats and rating forms will be used to assess candidate suitability at interview stage. For new roles, where standardised assessment materials do not exist, the interview panel must meet in advance to agree appropriate areas of questioning and a weighted system of assessment.

Where possible, all candidates will be seen by the same panel. However, this will not generally be possible where large numbers of people are interviewed or when an emergency stops a panel member being able to attend.

As far as is practicable, panels will be composed of one male and one female interviewer and efforts will be made to ensure that panels also contain a mix of community backgrounds. Staff who have been trained in interviewing will reflect both sides of the community.

Candidates will have the same chance to demonstrate their suitability for the post. All candidates will therefore be measured against the same criteria and interviews will follow a structured, systematic and consistent format. Although there will be some supplementary questions where considered necessary by individual qualifications and experience, there will be consistency between core areas of questioning. The interview should thus be as relaxed as possible, allowing for a two way exchange of information, but following a clear structure which ensures that the interviewers collect all the information they need to make a valid and accurate assessment of suitability.

The aim is to make the interviewee feel at ease during the interview and also to ensure that they leave the interview feeling that their knowledge, experience and competence have been fully tested and will be assessed fairly. Candidates will also be afforded the same amount of time at interview as far as is reasonably possible, although interview duration will largely be dictated by the extent of the information a candidate wishes to impart.

Questions at interview will be relevant to the job and designed to assess candidates against selection criteria. The same structured format and core questioning will be rigidly adhered to regardless of a candidate's gender, religious affiliation, sexual orientation, race and disability. Responses will be assessed according to agreed standards.

Questions will not be asked about spouses, children or other personal circumstances which are wholly irrelevant to the selection exercise. Hobbies or other past-times will only be discussed if the candidate has specifically introduced the subject either during the interview or in their application in order to provide an illustration of a particular competency such as teamwork or leadership.

All interviewers will take notes of the interview on standard rating forms that clearly specify the criteria for the individual post.

Evaluation of candidates will take place after the interview and will be linked to a standard scoring system with pre-defined marks. Interviewers will assess each candidate individually and only after all interviews have been completed should assessments be discussed in detail to identify the most suitable candidate(s) for the role in question. Notes of the assessment and the reasoning behind it will also be retained. All notes, including rough notes will be returned to the HR Department where they will be stored for a minimum period of 3 years to enable the company to provide monitoring data required under law and to deal with any subsequent complaints.

A pass mark will be agreed for each recruitment exercise and candidates will be required to have scored above this pass mark to be judged suitable for appointment. Candidates will receive a score against each of the relevant criteria and an overall score. Each panel will rank the candidates they have interviewed in merit order according to their overall score. Scores awarded by different panels will then be collated and candidates will be offered jobs on the basis of their order in the ranking. No positions will be offered until all the candidates have been interviewed.

Where the Executive Team has deemed it appropriate to have a two interview selection process; only candidates successful at first interview will be invited to a second interview. The first interview is therefore a sift to determine which candidates may be suitable for appointment. The panel carrying out the first interview is responsible for making a decision as to whether the candidate meets the particular criteria covered during that interview. The purpose of the second interview is to explore further aspects of the candidate's profile. Notes of the first interview will be made available to the panel conducting the second interview in order to ensure that the same areas are not covered twice and to give the interviewers the opportunity to probe those areas not covered in sufficient detail during the first interview or any areas of concern. The panel carrying out the second interview will be responsible for deciding whether the candidate is considered suitable for appointment.

In order to protect the integrity and objectivity of selection exercises, interviewers must declare if a candidate is known to them. Interviewers will not be permitted to interview blood relatives, friends or ex-colleagues with whom they had a close working relationship.

A10.3.8 Selection Testing

For certain roles, a test to assess ability may be appropriate. Where tests are to be used, every effort will be made to ensure that they simulate the work required as closely as possible. The results of tests will also be monitored to assess whether they have any disproportionate impact on any particular group of applicants.

A10.3.9 Informal Interviews

For some roles individuals may be invited for an informal meeting before their interview. This is to give them a better understanding of the role and SIB and to determine if they wish to proceed with their application. This is not part of the

interview process and will not be marked. It is viewed as a way to have better informed applicants at interview stage.

A10.3.10 References

It is the company's policy to request employer or academic references for all candidates who are being considered for appointment. When requesting references, HR will, where available, issue standard reference questionnaires to individual referees. The content of the questionnaire will contain standard information such as timekeeping, attendance, ability to work within teams, technical/professional ability and the main contribution to work. However, the questionnaire will be further tailored to the role in question and consequently HR will refer to the job specification to identify other areas of competence which may be included in the questionnaire.

The HR Department will endeavour to ensure that references are received prior to offers being made to candidates. This will not, however, always be possible particularly where a reference is required from a candidate's current employer. HR will only contact a referee when permission has been granted by a candidate to do so. All offers of employment issued prior to references being received will stipulate that a candidate's appointment is subject to the receipt of satisfactory references. It will be normal practice for two references to be requested.

A10.3.11 Medical Reports

All prospective employees will be required to complete a Medical Declaration detailing their medical histories. Subject to these declarations, candidates may be required to undergo an independent medical examination at the Company's expense.

A10.3.12 Appointments

An initial offer of employment will be made to candidates in order of merit and according to the number of vacancies available at a particular time. It may be the case that candidates who have been considered suitable for appointment will not receive a job offer because of a limited number of vacancies. The company may, from time to time, make use of reserve lists for appointment. These will only be used when it is anticipated that similar vacancies will arise within a 6 month period. Job offers will not be confirmed until enquiries in relation to references, medical examinations, security questionnaires and qualifications have been satisfactorily completed.

Where selection criteria stipulate particular academic qualifications, candidates will be required to present evidence of those qualifications prior to commencement.

A10.3.13 Disability

In accordance with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 and Disability Discrimination (Employment) Regulations (NI) 1996, where a candidate has indicated a disability which may affect their ability to carry out the job in question, and is judged otherwise suitable for employment within the company, the company will consider the impact of the disability and any

practical adjustments which can be made in the workplace to facilitate the candidate in carrying out the job.

A10.3.14 Canvassing

Canvassing in any form, for or on behalf of any candidate for employment with the company, shall, if proven, disqualify that candidate from further consideration for the vacant role.

Canvassing undertaken by a SIB employee shall, if proven, be deemed to constitute a breach of this policy and related procedures and may result in the initiation of the disciplinary procedures.

Enquiries from candidates seeking information about a vacancy or the company do not constitute canvassing. All such enquiries will, in the first instance, be referred to the HR Manager who may further refer to another employee.

A10.3.15 Breach of Policy

Any unacceptable breaches of this policy and procedures will be regarded as misconduct and addressed through the disciplinary procedures.

A10.3.16 Confidentiality

All records pertaining to recruitment and selection will be treated as strictly confidential. Only those directly involved in the selection process will have access to these records unless access is otherwise required under statute.

A10.3.17 Training

Employees who are involved in recruitment and selection will be trained by HR to ensure full understanding of the policy and procedures and develop the skills and knowledge necessary to participate effectively in the process.

A10.3.18 Review

This policy and its attendant procedures will be reviewed by HR on a three year basis unless legal requirements demand earlier review.

A10.4 Procedures

A10.4.1 Agreeing selection criteria

Selection criteria will be determined by analysing each individual position through discussion with key personnel from the work area in which the vacancy arises. Discussion will focus on:

- The activities contained within the role.
- The skills required to carry out those activities.
- Qualifications which may be essential / desirable.
- Special skills, knowledge or experience which are essential/desirable to effectively carry out the activities associated with the role
- Additional requirements e.g. travel

These details will then be included in the Job Specification under main duties, essential criteria and desirable criteria. Criteria will be clearly worded to enable applicants to match their experience, qualifications and skills to them.

A10.4.2 Advertising

Advertisements will be drafted in consultation with relevant agencies and circulated to interested parties within the company before being finally agreed.

Advertisements will contain the following:

- Company Name and Logo
- Brief description of company
- Role title and where appropriate a brief description of responsibilities
- Job Reference Number
- Essential criteria (or information on how to access criteria)
- Application instructions
- Closing date for receipt of completed applications
- Equal Opportunities Statement.

Before roles are advertised, a database will be created for that particular recruitment exercise which will record the name and contact details of individual applicants and their progress throughout the selection exercise.

A10.4.3 Issuing Application Packs

As candidates request packs, their names and addresses will be noted and entered into a database to record details of requests for forms and record progress. Applications packs will consist of a covering letter to the candidate explaining the content of the pack, an application form, job specification, equality monitoring questionnaire, an envelope for return of same and an extract from the Equal Opportunities Policy. For particular roles, additional information may be included in the pack.

The deadline for return of completed applications will be noted on both the covering letter and on the application form.

Each application form will be coded with a unique identification number to facilitate equality monitoring when it is received by the HR Department. The number will appear on the first page of the form and also on the monitoring questionnaire. An envelope will be enclosed with each application form for the confidential return of the equality monitoring questionnaire.

A10.4.4 Receipt of Application Forms

On receipt, application forms will be date stamped as having been received and a cover sheet will be attached to the front of the form. The applicant details will then be entered on the recruitment database.

There will be a check to ensure that the equality monitoring form has been returned and, if not, this will be noted on the cover sheet and a letter will be sent

to the candidate along with a new form asking that the form be completed. A copy of this letter will be enclosed with the candidate's papers.

The HR Department will enter the monitoring details to a separate database for each recruitment exercise.

A10.4.5 Short Listing

Short listing will be carried out by a panel of two people who will examine all the candidates' papers together. They will consider whether each candidate meets the stated criteria and record their judgements on the short listing record which they will then sign.

A10.4.6 Arranging Interviews

The HR Department will schedule interviews and inform candidates as to whether or not they have been short listed for interview. Application forms will be checked to ensure that letters are sent to the correct address. Rooms will be booked for the appropriate dates and times.

Interviews will be arranged to give candidates as much notice as possible. Where feasible, the same panel should try and see all candidates during first interviews for a particular position. Panels should be composed, where possible, of one male and one female interviewer and panels for second interviews should include the HR Manager.

Before the interviews questions will be prepared. A tailored rating form to record details of the interview will also be prepared. Candidates will confirm interviews with HR who will arrange any variations in timings in consultation with interviewers if possible.

Candidates successful at first interview will be invited to a second interview if considered necessary which will generally be with two different people. The structure of the second interview will differ in that less time will be spent explaining the company history, culture etc, although the candidates should still be given the opportunity to ask questions about the company and their terms and conditions.

A10.4.7 Notification of Outcomes

Once all interviews have been completed, unsuccessful and reserve candidates will be informed in writing of the outcome using standard HR letters. A copy of these letters will be kept with the candidates' papers. The database containing the monitoring information must then be updated to reflect the outcomes. HR will be responsible for all contact and correspondence with candidates and for updating the database. When different panels have been used, HR will receive all the interview notes and in accordance with scores will decide upon an outcome with the relevant section manager.

A10.4.8 Offer of Employment

In certain instances, an initial verbal offer of employment will be made to individuals. This will only be undertaken by HR who will advise successful candidates of the terms of the offer and of any stipulations the company may have such as receipt of references and medical report. A written record of the

discussion should be retained. Where an initial offer of employment has been made using e-mail, a copy of that correspondence will be retained with the candidate's records.

A formal written offer of employment should also be issued using the standard HR letter of offer which may be tailored to individual circumstances and will encompass the contract of employment and a copy of the company handbook. The offer letter will state that one copy must be signed and returned to HR.

A10.4.9 References

References for candidates will be requested following an initial offer of employment.

The content of the reference will be taken into account along with all other information available. This will include disciplinary records for any internal applicants.

The information requested on the reference check form will reflect the job in question.

A10.4.10 Contracts of Employment

Contracts will be formulated by the HR Department only and may only be signed on behalf of the Company by the Chief Executive, or the HR Manager. Successful applicants will be provided with two copies of the contract, one of which should be signed and returned, the other to be retained by the new employee.

As the contract of employment makes reference to the Company Handbook, a copy of the handbook is also issued to provide prospective employees with detailed information about the company and their employment.

Appendix 11 Equality Scheme

Equality Scheme for the Strategic Investment Board Limited

Drawn up in accordance with Section 75 and Schedule 9 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998

**Strategic Investment Board Limited
Carleton House
Floor 1 Gasworks Business Park
1 Cromac Avenue
Belfast
BT7 2JA**

www.sibni.org

Contact details

All comments, requests and queries about anything in this document should be addressed to:

Name	Julie Monahan
Title	HR Manager
Address	Strategic Investment Board Limited Carleton House Floor 1 Gasworks Business Park 1 Cromac Avenue Belfast BT7 2JA
Tel.	028 9090 9459
e mail	Julie.Monahan@sibni.org
Textphone	028 9090 9472
SMS	077 9230 1647

Foreword

Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 (the Act) requires public authorities, in carrying out their functions relating to Northern Ireland, to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity and regard to the desirability of promoting good relations across a range of categories outlined in the Act¹⁴.

In our equality scheme we set out how the Strategic Investment Board Limited (SIB) proposes to fulfil the Section 75 statutory duties.

We will commit the necessary resources in terms of people, time and money to make sure that the Section 75 statutory duties are complied with and that the equality scheme is implemented effectively, and on time.

We commit to having effective internal arrangements in place for ensuring our effective compliance with the Section 75 statutory duties and for monitoring and reviewing our progress.

We will develop and deliver a programme of communication and training with the aim of ensuring that all our staff and board members are made fully aware of our equality scheme and understand the commitments and obligations within it. We will develop a programme of awareness raising for our consultees on the Section 75 statutory duties and our commitments in our equality scheme.

We, the Chairman of the Board and the Interim Chief Executive of SIB, are fully committed to effectively fulfilling our Section 75 statutory duties across all our functions (including service provision, employment and procurement) through the effective implementation of our equality scheme.

We realise the important role that the community and voluntary sector and the general public have to play to ensure the Section 75 statutory duties are effectively implemented. Our equality scheme demonstrates how determined we are to ensure there are opportunities, for people affected by our work, to positively influence how we carry out our functions in line with our Section 75 statutory duties. It also offers the means whereby persons directly affected by what they consider to be a failure, on our part, to comply with our equality scheme, can make complaints.

¹⁴ See section 1.1 of our Equality Scheme.

On behalf of SIB and our staff we are pleased to support and endorse this equality scheme which has been drawn up in accordance with Section 75 and Schedule 9 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and Equality Commission guidelines.

Dr David Dobbin CBE
Chairman

Brett Hannam
Chief Executive

Date

Chapter 1 Introduction

Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998

1.1 Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 (the Act) requires SIB to comply with two statutory duties:

Section 75 (1)

In carrying out our functions relating to Northern Ireland we are required 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
- men and women generally
- persons with a disability and persons without
- persons with dependants and persons without.

Section 75 (2)

In addition, without prejudice to the obligations above, in carrying out our functions in relation to Northern Ireland we are required to have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group.

“Functions” include the “powers and duties” of a public authority¹⁵. This includes our employment and procurement functions.

Please see below under “Who we are and what we do” for a detailed explanation of our functions.

How we propose to fulfil the Section 75 duties in relation to the relevant functions of SIB

1.2 Schedule 9 4. (1) Of the Act requires SIB as a designated public authority to set out in an equality scheme how it proposes to fulfil the duties imposed by Section 75 in relation to its relevant functions. This equality scheme is intended to fulfil that statutory requirement. It is both a statement of our arrangements for fulfilling the Section 75 statutory duties and our plan for their implementation.

1.3 SIB is committed to the discharge of its Section 75 obligations in all parts of our organisation and we will commit the necessary resources in terms of people, time and money to ensure that the Section 75 statutory duties are complied with and that our equality scheme can be implemented effectively.

Who we are and what we do

1.4 SIB is a company limited by guarantee and owned by the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM), financed from within the departmental expenditure limit, with a Board reporting to the First Minister and

¹⁵ Section 98 (1) of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

the Deputy First Minister. (Details of current Board Members are set out in Appendix 1b.) SIB is based at Carleton House in Belfast and works with NI government departments and agencies to help them achieve the delivery of major public infrastructure projects economically and efficiently. In parallel, SIB works with the private sector to inform the market of planned projects, generate confidence and stimulate market interest, thus driving competitive tension and resulting in improved value for the taxpayer.

1.6 SIB has four key responsibilities –

- producing the Investment Strategic for Northern Ireland (ISNI), a 10 year rolling programme for the delivery of public infrastructure that covers all areas of government including education, health, and transport. The Investment Strategy process comprises the delivery of the infrastructure required to meet the government’s priorities, as determined by Ministers;
- assisting the public sector to deliver large infrastructure projects and programmes of investment, by deploying advisers into key project management and advisory roles;
- fostering and promoting reform both in the delivery of major infrastructure and as a prerequisite for such investment, and helping to build delivery capability by encouraging the development of specialist skills and the use of innovative approaches not usually found in the public sector;
- since January 2011, hosting the Asset Management Unit which is charged with realising £100m from surplus assets over the period 2011 – 2015.

1.7 Further information is set out in the SIB Operating Strategy, in Appendix 8.

1.8 In addition SIB acts as an employer for 23 full time equivalent employees, with full responsibility for recruitment, management, welfare and remuneration of staff. An organisational chart setting out the structure of SIB is attached at Appendix 1a. When it was established in 2003, SIB adopted employment policies based on Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) standard policies. In particular, SIB follows the NICS Code of Practice on recruitment and selection which is rigorous in terms of its objectivity regarding the promotion of equality of opportunity. SIB has adopted an Equal Opportunities Policy, which was subjected to EQIA in 2008-09.

1.9 Procurement and contracting procedures, in line with Central Procurement Directorate’s practices, are set out in Appendices A and B of SIB’s Financial Memorandum (which can be accessed on the SIB website www.sibni.org). These purchasing arrangements reflect the need to be openly and demonstrably fair and impartial in awarding public contracts and

should be such as to secure best value for money in terms of quality (i.e. fitness for purpose), delivery, whole-life costs, etc.

1.10 SIB's internal policies are based on Northern Ireland Civil Service NICS standard policies, adapted to suit the particular requirements of the organisation. When it was established in 2003, SIB developed a small number of operational policies including, for example, guidance on the standardisation of PFI contracts and procurement of advisory services for projects (which include appropriate references to Section 75); it has not been necessary to add to the operational policies in subsequent years.

1.11 It is important to note that SIB does not deliver services directly to the public, although the advice and support which we provide clearly have significant indirect benefits to the population of Northern Ireland as a whole. SIB plays a key role in facilitating the development of the Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland (ISNI) which, together with the Programme for Government and the Budget, forms the government's overall strategic approach to carrying out its responsibilities. The promotion of equality of opportunity and good relations is central to this strategic approach.

1.12 SIB does not have primary responsibility for developing and implementing projects, although it provides extensive support to the government departments and agencies which do. Identifying and addressing the equality implications of projects is the responsibility of the government department or agency, not SIB. Similarly the monitoring of impacts of each completed project is undertaken by the responsible department or agency.

1.13 SIB acknowledges the importance of promoting equality of opportunity and good relations through the selection, development and implementation of infrastructure projects. Although SIB is not primarily a source of advice to departments and agencies on Section 75 duties, we have developed an approach to mainstreaming equality as part of project management which ensures that the assessment of potential impacts and stakeholder engagement are addressed at the appropriate stages of each project.

Chapter 2 Our arrangements for assessing our Compliance with the section 75 duties (Schedule 9 4. (2) (a))

2.1 Some of our arrangements for assessing our compliance with the Section 75 statutory duties are outlined in other relevant parts of this equality scheme:

- arrangements for consulting on all aspects of the implementation of our equality duties – see Chapter 3;
- arrangements for assessing the impact of policies – see Chapter 4 paragraphs. 4.1-4.20;
- arrangements for publishing the results of assessments – see Chapter 4 paragraphs. 4.21-4.28;
- arrangements for monitoring the impact of policies – see Chapter 4 paragraphs. 4.29-4.34;
- arrangements for publishing the results of monitoring – see Chapter 4 paragraphs. 4.35-4.38;
- arrangements for ensuring and assessing public access to information and services we provide – see Chapter 6;
- arrangements for dealing with complaints– see Chapter 8.

In addition we have the following arrangements in place for assessing our compliance:

Responsibilities and reporting

2.2 We are committed to the fulfilment of our Section 75 obligations in all parts of our work.

2.3 Responsibility for the effective implementation of our equality scheme lies with the Chairman of the Board and the Chief Executive. The Chief Executive is accountable to the SIB Board for the development, implementation, maintenance and review of the equality scheme in accordance with Section 75 and Schedule 9 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, including any good practice or guidance that has been or may be issued by the Equality Commission.

2.4 If you have any questions or comments regarding our equality scheme, please contact in the first instance the HR Manager at the address given below and we will respond to you as soon as possible:

Name	Julie Monahan
Title	HR Manager
Address	Strategic Investment Board Limited Carleton House Floor 1 Gasworks Business Park 1 Cromac Avenue Belfast BT7 2JA
Tel.	028 9090 9459
e mail	Julie.Monahan@sibni.org
Textphone	028 9090 9472
SMS	077 9230 1647

2.5 Objectives and targets relating to the statutory duties will be integrated into our strategic and operational business plans¹⁶.

2.6 Employees' job descriptions and performance plans reflect their contributions to the discharge of the Section 75 statutory duties and implementation of the equality scheme, where relevant. The personal performance plans are subject to appraisal in the annual performance review.

2.7 SIB prepares an annual report on the progress we have made on implementing the arrangements set out in this equality scheme to discharge our Section 75 statutory duties (Section 75 annual progress report).

The Section 75 annual progress report will be sent to the Equality Commission by 31 August each year and will follow any guidance on annual reporting issued by the Equality Commission.

Progress on the delivery of Section 75 statutory duties will also be included in our (organisational) annual report.

¹⁶ See Appendix 4 'Timetable for measures proposed' and section 2.11 of this equality scheme.

2.8 The latest Section 75 annual progress report is available on our website

www.sibni.org

or by contacting:

Name	Julie Monahan
Title	HR Manager
Address	Strategic Investment Board Limited Carleton House Floor 1 Gasworks Business Park 1 Cromac Avenue Belfast BT7 2JA
Tel.	028 9090 9459
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2.9 SIB liaises closely with the Equality Commission to ensure that progress on the implementation of our equality scheme is maintained.

Action plan/action measures

2.10 SIB has developed an action plan to promote equality of opportunity and good relations. This action plan is set out in Appendix 6 to this equality scheme.

2.11 The action measures that will make up our action plan are relevant to our functions. They have been developed and prioritised on the basis of an audit of inequalities. The audit of inequalities gathered and analysed information across the Section 75 categories¹⁷ to identify the inequalities that exist for our service users and those affected by our policies¹⁸.

2.12 Action measures are specific, measurable, linked to achievable outcomes, realistic and time bound. Action measures include performance indicators and timescales for their achievement.

2.13 We will develop any action plans for a period of between one and five years in order to align them with our corporate and business planning cycles. Implementation of the action measures will be incorporated into our business planning process.

¹⁷ See section 1.1 of this equality scheme for a list of these categories.

¹⁸ See section 4.1 of this equality scheme for a definition of policies.

2.14 We sought input from our stakeholders and consulted on our action plan before we sent it to the Equality Commission and the results are set out in Appendix 7. We will seek input from our stakeholders and consult on our action measures when reviewing them as per 2.15 below.

2.15 We will monitor our progress on the delivery of our action measures annually and update the action plan as necessary to ensure that it remains effective and relevant to our functions and work.

2.16 SIB will inform the Commission of any changes or amendments to our action plan and will also include this information in our Section 75 annual progress report to the Commission. Our Section 75 annual progress report will incorporate information on progress we have made in implementing our action plans/action measures.

2.17 Once finalised, our action plan will be available on our website:

www.sibni.org

or by contacting:

Name	Julie Monahan
Title	HR Manager
Address	Strategic Investment Board Limited Carleton House Floor 1 Gasworks Business Park 1 Cromac Avenue Belfast BT7 2JA
Tel.	028 9090 9459
e mail	Julie.Monahan@sibni.org
Textphone	028 9090 9472
SMS	077 9230 1647

If you require it in an alternative format please contact us on the details provided.

Chapter 3 Our arrangements for consulting

(Schedule 9 4. (2) (a)) - on matters to which a duty (S75 (1) or (2)) is likely to be relevant (including details of the persons to be consulted).

(Schedule 9 4. (2) (b)) on the likely impact of policies adopted or proposed to be adopted by us on the promotion of equality of opportunity.

3.1 We recognise the importance of consultation in all aspects of the implementation of our statutory equality duties. We will consult on our equality scheme, action measures, screening and equality impact assessments and other matters relevant to the Section 75 statutory duties.

3.2 We are committed to carrying out consultation in accordance with the following principles (as contained in the Equality Commission's guidance '*Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 – A Guide for Public Authorities (April 2010)*')

3.2.1 All consultations will seek the views of those directly affected by the matter/policy, the Equality Commission, representative groups of Section 75 categories, other public authorities, voluntary and community groups, our staff and their trades unions and such other groups who have a legitimate interest in the matter, whether or not they have a direct economic or personal interest.

Initially all consulters (see Appendix 3), as a matter of course, will be notified (by email or post) of the matter/policy being consulted upon to ensure they are aware of all consultations. Thereafter, to ensure the most effective use of our and our consulters' resources, we will take a targeted approach to consultation for those consultees that may have a particular interest in the matter/policy being consulted upon and to whom the matter/policy is of particular relevance. This may include for example regional or local consultations, sectoral or thematic consultation etc.

3.2.2 Consultation with all stakeholders will begin as early as possible. We will engage with affected individuals and representative groups to identify how best to consult or engage with them. We will ask our consultees what their preferred consultation methods are and will give consideration to these. Methods of consultation could include:

- Face-to-face meetings
- Focus groups
- Written documents with the opportunity to comment in writing
- Questionnaires
- Information/notification by email with an opportunity to opt in/opt out of the consultation
- Internet discussions or
- Telephone consultations.

This list is not exhaustive and we may develop other additional methods of consultation more appropriate to key stakeholders and the matter being consulted upon.

3.2.3 We will consider the accessibility and format of every method of consultation we use in order to remove barriers to the consultation process. Specific consideration will be given as to how best to communicate with children and young people, people with disabilities (in particular people with learning disabilities) and minority ethnic communities. We take account of existing and developing good practice, including the Equality Commission's guidance *Let's Talk Let's Listen – Guidance for public authorities on consulting and involving children and young people (2008)* and the NI Standards for Children and Young People's participation in Public Decision Making (the Ask First standards). The Ask First standards, developed by the Participation Network established by the OFMDFM in 2007, provide useful guidance for establishing effective direct engagement mechanisms, as well as a benchmark for measuring effectiveness.

Information will be made available, on request, in alternative formats¹⁹, in a timely manner, usually within 4-6 weeks. We will ensure that such consultees have equal time to respond.

3.2.4 Specific training is provided to those facilitating consultations to ensure that they have the necessary skills to communicate effectively with consultees.

3.2.5 To ensure effective consultation with consultees²⁰ on Section 75 matters, we will develop a programme of awareness raising on the Section 75 statutory duties and the commitments in our equality scheme by undertaking the following:

- we will issue our equality scheme to all consultees within one month of approval by the Equality Commission;
- we will keep our consultees informed on our progress in implementing this equality scheme by drawing attention to annual monitoring reports and the annual progress report and to any other documentation we issue as a consequence of the equality scheme;
- we will ensure that consultees are provided with appropriate information on our role, our approach to the Section 75 statutory duties and the commitments in this equality scheme in all consultation documentation and at all consultation meetings.

¹⁹ See Chapter 6 of our equality scheme for further information on alternative formats of information we provide.

²⁰ Please see Appendix 3 for a list of our consultees.

3.2.6 The consultation period lasts for a minimum of twelve weeks to allow adequate time for groups to consult amongst themselves as part of the process of forming a view. However, in exceptional circumstances when this timescale is not feasible (for example implementing EU Directives or UK wide legislation, meeting Health and Safety requirements, addressing urgent public health matters or complying with Court judgements), we may shorten timescales to eight weeks or less before the policy is implemented. We may continue consultation thereafter and will review the policy as part of our monitoring commitments²¹.

Where, under these exceptional circumstances, we must implement a policy immediately, as it is beyond our authority's control, we may consult after implementation of the policy, in order to ensure that any impacts of the policy are considered.

3.2.7 If a consultation exercise is to take place over a period when consultees are less able to respond, for example, over the summer or Christmas break, or if the policy under consideration is particularly complex, we will give consideration to the feasibility of allowing a longer period for the consultation.

3.2.8 We are conscious of the fact that affected individuals and representative groups may have different needs. We will take appropriate measures to ensure full participation in any meetings that are held. We will consider for example the time of day, the appropriateness of the venue, in particular whether it can be accessed by those with disabilities, how the meeting is to be conducted, the use of appropriate language, whether a signer and/or interpreter is necessary, and whether the provision of childcare and support for other carers is required.

3.2.9 We make all relevant information available to consultees in appropriate formats to ensure meaningful consultation. This includes detailed information on the policy proposal being consulted upon and any relevant quantitative and qualitative data. SIB has already established a list of suppliers of translation and associated services who can supply the various accessible formats which may be required in a timely fashion.

3.2.10 In making any decision with respect to a policy adopted or proposed to be adopted, we take into account any assessment and consultation carried out in relation to the policy.

3.2.11 We provide feedback to consultees in a timely manner. A feedback report is prepared which includes summary information on the policy consulted upon, a summary of consultees' comments and a summary of our consideration of and response to consultees' input. The feedback is provided in formats suitable to consultees. (Please see also 6.3)

²¹ Please see Chapter 4 for details on monitoring.

3.3 A list of our consultees is included in this equality scheme at Appendix 3. It can also be obtained from our website at:

www.sibni.org

or by contacting:

Name	Julie Monahan
Title	HR Manager
Address	Strategic Investment Board Limited Carleton House Floor 1 Gasworks Business Park 1 Cromac Avenue Belfast BT7 2JA
Tel.	028 9090 9459
e mail	Julie.Monahan@sibni.org
Textphone	028 9090 9472
SMS	077 9230 1647

3.4 Our consultation list is not exhaustive and is reviewed on an annual basis to ensure it remains relevant to our functions and policies.

We welcome enquiries from any person/s or organisations wishing to be added to the list of consultees. Please contact the HR Manager to provide your contact details and have your areas of interest noted or have your name/details removed or amended. Please also inform us at this stage if you would like information sent to you in a particular format or language.

Chapter 4 Our arrangements for assessing, monitoring and publishing the impact of policies

(Schedule 9 4. (2) (b); Schedule 9 4. (2) (c); Schedule 9 4. (2) (d); Schedule 9 9. (1); Schedule 9 9. (2))

Our arrangements for assessing the likely impact of policies adopted or proposed to be adopted on the promotion of equality of opportunity

(Schedule 9 4. (2) (b))

4.1 In the context of Section 75, 'policy' is very broadly defined and it covers all the ways in which we carry out or propose to carry out our functions in relation to Northern Ireland. In respect of this equality scheme, the term policy is used for any (proposed/amended/existing) strategy, policy initiative or practice and/or decision, whether written or unwritten and irrespective of the label given to it, e.g., 'draft', 'pilot', 'high level' or 'sectoral'.

4.2 In making any decision with respect to a policy adopted or proposed to be adopted, we take into account any assessment and consultation carried out in relation to the policy, as required by Schedule 9 9. (2) of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

4.3 SIB uses the tools of **screening** and **equality impact assessment** to assess the likely impact of a policy on the promotion of equality of opportunity and good relations. In carrying out these assessments we will relate them to the intended outcomes of the policy in question and will also follow Equality Commission guidance:

- the guidance on screening, including the screening template, as detailed in the Commission's guidance '*Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 – A Guide for Public Authorities (April 2010)*' and
- on undertaking an equality impact assessment as detailed in the Commission's guidance '*Practical guidance on equality impact assessment (February 2005)*'.

Screening

4.4 The purpose of screening is to identify those policies that are likely to have an impact on equality of opportunity and/or good relations.

4.5 Screening is completed at the earliest opportunity in the policy development/review process. Policies which we propose to adopt will be subject to screening prior to implementation. For more detailed strategies or policies that are to be put in place through a series of stages, we will screen at various stages during implementation.

4.6 The lead role in the screening of a policy is taken by the policy decision maker who has the authority to make changes to that policy. However, screening will also involve other relevant team members, for example, equality specialists, those who implement the policy and staff members from other relevant work areas. Where possible we will include key stakeholders in the screening process.

4.7 The following questions are applied to all our policies as part of the screening process:

- 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?

4.8 In order to answer the screening questions, we gather all relevant information and data, both qualitative and quantitative. In taking this evidence into account we consider the different needs, experiences and priorities for each of the Section 75 equality categories. Any screening decision will be informed by this evidence.

4.9 Completion of screening, taking into account our consideration of the answers to all four screening questions set out in 4.7 above, will lead to one of the following three outcomes:

1. the policy has been 'screened in' for equality impact assessment
2. the policy has been 'screened out' with mitigation²² or an alternative policy proposed to be adopted
3. the policy has been 'screened out' without mitigation or an alternative policy proposed to be adopted.

4.10 If our screening concludes that the likely impact of a policy is 'minor' in respect of one, or more, of the equality of opportunity and/or good relations categories, we may on occasion decide to proceed with an equality impact

²² Mitigation – Where an assessment (screening in this case) reveals that a particular policy has an adverse impact on equality of opportunity and / or good relations, a public authority must consider ways of delivering the policy outcomes which have a less adverse effect on the relevant Section 75 categories.

assessment, depending on the policy. If an EQIA is not to be conducted we will nonetheless consider measures that might mitigate the policy impact as well as alternative policies that might better achieve the promotion of equality of opportunity and/or good relations.

Where we mitigate we will outline in our screening template the reasons to support this decision together with the proposed changes, amendments or alternative policy.

This screening decision will be 'signed off' by the appropriate policy lead within SIB.

4.11 If our screening concludes that the likely impact of a policy is 'major' in respect of one, or more, of the equality of opportunity and/or good relations categories, we will normally subject the policy to an equality impact assessment. This screening decision will be 'signed off' by the appropriate policy lead within SIB.

4.12 If our screening concludes that the likely impact of a policy is 'none', in respect of all of the equality of opportunity and/or good relations categories, we may decide to screen the policy out. If a policy is 'screened out' as having no relevance to equality of opportunity or good relations, we will give details of the reasons for the decision taken. This screening decision will be 'signed off' by the appropriate policy lead within SIB.

4.13 As soon as possible following the completion of the screening process, the screening template, signed off and approved by the senior manager responsible for the policy, will be made available on our website:

www.sibni.org

and on request by contacting:

Name	Julie Monahan
Title	HR Manager
Address	Strategic Investment Board Limited Carleton House Floor 1 Gasworks Business Park 1 Cromac Avenue Belfast BT7 2JA
Tel.	028 9090 9459
e mail	Julie.Monahan@sibni.org
Textphone	028 9090 9472
SMS	077 9230 1647

4.14 We will inform consultees of the availability of the screening template as soon as it is posted on our website. If a consultee, including the Equality Commission, raises a concern about a screening decision based on supporting evidence, we will review the screening decision.

4.15 Our screening reports are published quarterly [see below at 4.20 - 4.22 and 4.23 for details].

Equality impact assessment

4.16 An equality impact assessment (EQIA) is a thorough and systematic analysis of a policy, whether that policy is formal or informal, and irrespective of the scope of that policy. The primary function of an EQIA is to determine the extent of any impact of a policy upon the Section 75 categories and to determine if the impact is an adverse one. It is also an opportunity to demonstrate the likely positive outcomes of a policy and to seek ways to more effectively promote equality of opportunity and good relations.

4.17 Once a policy is screened and screening has identified that an equality impact assessment is necessary, we will carry out the EQIA in accordance with Equality Commission guidance. The equality impact assessment will be carried out as part of the policy development process, before the policy is implemented.

4.18 Any equality impact assessment will be subject to consultation at the appropriate stage(s). (For details see above Chapter 3 “Our Arrangements for Consulting”).

Our arrangements for publishing the results of the assessments of the likely impact of policies we have adopted or propose to adopt on the promotion of equality of opportunity

(Schedule 9 4. (2) (d); Schedule 9 9. (1))

4.19 We make publicly available the results of our assessments (screening and EQIA) of the likely impact of our policies on the promotion of equality of opportunity and good relations.

What we publish

4.20 Screening reports

These are published quarterly. Screening reports detail:

- All policies screened by SIB over the three month period;
- A statement of the aim(s) of the policy/policies to which the assessment relates;
- Consideration given to measures which might mitigate any adverse impact;
- Consideration given to alternative policies which might better achieve the promotion of equality of opportunity;
- Screening decisions, i.e.:
 - whether the policy has been 'screened in' for equality impact assessment.
 - whether the policy has been 'screened out' with mitigation or an alternative policy proposed to be adopted.
 - whether the policy has been 'screened out' without mitigation or an alternative policy proposed to be adopted.
- Where applicable, a timetable for conducting equality impact assessments;
- A link to the completed screening template(s) on our website.

4.21 Screening templates

For details on the availability of our screening templates please refer to 4.13.

4.22 Equality impact assessments

EQIA reports are published once the impact assessment has been completed. These reports include:

- A statement of the aim of the policy assessed;
- Information and data collected;
- Details of the assessment of impact(s);
- Consideration given to measures which might mitigate any adverse impact;
- Consideration given to alternative policies which might better achieve the promotion of equality of opportunity;
- Consultation responses;
- The decision taken;
- Future monitoring plans.

How we publish the information

4.23 All information we publish is accessible and can be made available in alternative formats on request. Please see 6.3 below.

Where we publish the information

4.24 The results of our assessments (screening reports and completed templates, the results of equality impact assessments) are available on our website:

www.sibni.org

and by contacting:

Name	Julie Monahan
Title	HR Manager
Address	Strategic Investment Board Limited Carleton House Floor 1 Gasworks Business Park 1 Cromac Avenue Belfast BT7 2JA
Tel.	028 9090 9459
e mail	Julie.Monahan@sibni.org
Textphone	028 9090 9472
SMS	077 9230 1647

4.25 In addition to the above, screening reports (electronic link or hard copy on request if more suitable for recipients) which include all policies screened over a 3 month period are also sent directly to all consultees on a quarterly basis.

4.26 We will inform the general public about the availability of this material through communications such as press releases where appropriate.

Our arrangements for monitoring any adverse impact of policies we have adopted on equality of opportunity

(Schedule 9 4. (2) (c))

4.27 Monitoring can assist us to deliver better public services and continuous improvements. Monitoring Section 75 information involves the processing of sensitive personal data (data relating to the racial or ethnic origin of individuals, sexual orientation, political opinion, religious belief, etc). In order to carry out monitoring in a confidential and effective manner, SIB follows guidance from the Office of the Information Commissioner and the Equality Commission.

4.28 We monitor any adverse impact on the promotion of equality of opportunity of policies we have adopted. We are also committed to

monitoring more broadly to identify opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity and good relations in line with Equality Commission guidance.

4.29 The systems we have established to monitor the impact of policies and identify opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity and good relations are:

- The collection, collation and analysis of existing relevant primary quantitative and qualitative data across all nine equality categories on an ongoing basis;
- The collection, collation and analysis of existing relevant secondary sources of quantitative and qualitative data across all nine equality categories on an ongoing basis;
- An audit of existing information systems within one year of approval of this equality scheme, to identify the extent of current monitoring and take action to address any gaps in order to have the necessary information on which to base decisions;
- Undertaking or commissioning new data if necessary.

4.30 If over a two year period monitoring and evaluation show that a policy results in greater adverse impact than predicted, or if opportunities arise which would allow for greater equality of opportunity to be promoted, we will ensure that the policy is revised to achieve better outcomes for relevant equality groups.

4.31 We review our EQIA monitoring information on an annual basis. Other monitoring information is also reviewed on an annual basis.

Our arrangements for publishing the results of our monitoring (Schedule 9 4. (2) (d))

4.32 Schedule 9 4. (2) (d) requires us to publish the results of the monitoring of adverse impacts of policies we have adopted. However, we are committed to monitoring more broadly and the results of our policy monitoring are published as follows:

4.33 EQIA monitoring information is published as part of our Section 75 annual progress report [see 2.7]

4.34 The Section 75 annual progress report is published on the SIB website:

www.sibni.org

Consultees on the list set out at Appendix 3 are notified when a report is available (by electronic link or hard copy on request if more suitable for recipients).

4.35 All information published is accessible and can be made available in alternative formats on request. Please see below at 6.3 for details.

Chapter 5 Staff training

(Schedule 9 4. (2) (e))

Commitment to staff training

5.1 We recognise that awareness raising and training play a crucial role in the effective implementation of our Section 75 duties.

5.2 Our Chief Executive wishes to positively communicate the commitment of SIB to the Section 75 statutory duties, both internally and externally.

To this end we have introduced an effective communication and training programme for all staff and will ensure that our commitment to the Section 75 statutory duties is made clear in all relevant publications.

Training objectives

5.3 SIB has drawn up a detailed training plan for its staff which aims to achieve the following objectives:

- to raise awareness of the provisions of Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, our equality scheme commitments and the particular issues likely to affect people across the range of Section 75 categories, to ensure that our staff fully understand their role in implementing the scheme;
- to provide those staff involved in the assessment of policies (screening and EQIA) with the necessary skills and knowledge to do this work effectively;
- to provide those staff who deal with complaints in relation to compliance with our equality scheme with the necessary skills and knowledge to investigate and monitor complaints effectively;
- to provide those staff involved in consultation processes with the necessary skills and knowledge to do this work effectively;
- to provide those staff involved in the implementation and monitoring of the effective implementation of the SIB equality scheme with the necessary skills and knowledge to do this work effectively.

Awareness raising and training arrangements

5.4 The following arrangements are in place to ensure all our staff and Board Members are aware of and understand our equality obligations.

- We will develop a summary of this equality scheme and make it available to all staff.
- We will provide access to copies of the full equality scheme for all staff; ensure that any queries or questions of clarification from staff are addressed effectively.
- Staff in SIB will receive a briefing on this equality scheme within three months of the approval of the scheme.

- The Section 75 statutory duties form part of induction training for new staff.
- Focused training is provided for key staff within SIB who are directly engaged in taking forward the implementation of our equality scheme commitments (for example those involved in research and data collection, policy development, service design, conducting equality impact assessments, consultation, monitoring and evaluation).
- Where appropriate, training will be provided to ensure staff are aware of the issues experienced by the range of Section 75 groups.
- When appropriate and on an ongoing basis, arrangements will be made to ensure staff are kept up to date with Section 75 developments.

5.5 Training and awareness raising programmes will, where relevant, be developed in association with the appropriate Section 75 groups and our staff.

In order to share resources and expertise, SIB will, where possible, work closely with other bodies and agencies in the development and delivery of training.

Monitoring and evaluation

5.6 Our training programme is subject to the following monitoring and evaluation arrangements:

- We evaluate the extent to which all participants in this training programme have acquired the necessary skills and knowledge to achieve each of the above objectives.
- The extent to which training objectives have been met will be reported on as part of the Section 75 annual progress report, which will be sent to the Equality Commission.

Chapter 6 Our arrangements for ensuring and assessing public access to information and services we provide

(Schedule 9 4. (2) (f))

6.1 SIB is committed to ensuring that the information we disseminate and the services we provide are fully accessible to all parts of the community in Northern Ireland. We keep our arrangements under review to ensure that this remains the case.

6.2 We are aware that some groups will not have the same access to information as others. In particular:

- People with sensory, learning, communication and mobility disabilities may require printed information in other formats.
- Members of ethnic minority groups, whose first language is not English, may have difficulties with information provided only in English.
- Children and young people may not be able to fully access or understand information.

Access to information

6.3 To ensure equality of opportunity in accessing information, we provide information in alternative formats on request, where reasonably practicable. Where the exact request cannot be met we will ensure a reasonable alternative is provided.

Alternative formats may include Easy Read, Braille, audio formats (CD, mp3 or DAISY), large print or minority languages to meet the needs of those for whom English is not their first language.

SIB liaises with representatives of young people and disability and minority ethnic organisations and takes account of existing and developing good practice.

We will respond to requests for information in alternative formats in a timely manner, usually within 4-6 weeks.

SIB liaises with representatives of young people and disability and minority ethnic organisations and takes account of existing and developing good practice. We make use of the OFMDFM *Guide to Making Information Accessible* which advises on providing information to all Section 75 groups, including children and young people, people with a learning difficulty and minority ethnic groups. We also monitor our website content on an ongoing basis to ensure the widest possible access to information online.

6.4 In disseminating information through the media we will seek to advertise in the press where appropriate.

6.5 The main medium for disseminating information about the work of SIB is the website www.sibni.org which includes a link to the Investment Strategy portal. All information posted on the website is designed to be fully accessible to people with disabilities and includes the facility to search for information on specific subjects or specific geographical areas. In addition, SIB often disseminates information to the public on specific projects using a variety of methods, including press and media briefings, newspaper and business paragraphs, news-sheets, information seminars, community conventions, school visits and face-to-face meetings with community groups.

Access to services

6.6 SIB is committed to ensuring that all of our services are fully accessible to everyone in the community across the Section 75 categories.

SIB also adheres to the relevant provisions of current anti-discrimination legislation.

Assessing public access to information and services

6.8 We monitor annually across all our functions, in relation to access to information and services, to ensure equality of opportunity and good relations are promoted.

6.9 Monitoring includes:

- keeping records of requests for information in alternative formats, the cost and length of time taken to respond to such requests;
- requesting feedback from recipients on the quality of the information provided in alternative formats and whether it met their needs;
- where SIB assists in developing a communication or public relations programme in respect of a specific project, appropriate targets are set and performance measures are utilised to assess the effectiveness of the programme.

Chapter 7 Timetable for measures we propose in this equality scheme

(Schedule 9 4. (3) (b))

7.1 Appendix 4 outlines our timetable for all measures proposed within this equality scheme. The measures outlined in this timetable will be incorporated into our business planning processes.

7.2 This timetable is different from and in addition to our commitment to developing action plans/action measures to specifically address inequalities and further promote equality of opportunity and good relations. We have included in our equality scheme a commitment to develop an action plan. Accordingly, this commitment it is listed in the timetable of measures at Appendix 4. For information on these action measures please see above at 2.11 – 2.18.

Chapter 8 Our complaints procedure

(Schedule 9 10.)

8.1 SIB is responsive to the views of members of the public. We will endeavour to resolve all complaints made to us.

8.2 Schedule 9 paragraph 10 of the Act refers to complaints. A person can make a complaint to a public authority if the complainant believes he or she may have been directly affected by an alleged failure of the authority to comply with its approved equality scheme.

If the complaint has not been resolved within a reasonable timescale, the complaint can be brought to the Equality Commission.

8.3 A person wishing to make a complaint that SIB has failed to comply with its approved equality scheme should contact:

Name	Julie Monahan
Title	HR Manager
Address	Strategic Investment Board Limited Carleton House Floor 1 Gasworks Business Park 1 Cromac Avenue Belfast BT7 2JA
Tel.	028 9090 9459
e mail	Julie.Monahan@sibni.org
Textphone	028 9090 9472
SMS	077 9230 1647

8.4 SIB will make every effort to provide any reasonable assistance required to enable a group or individual to submit a complaint (e.g. interpreter support, specialist transport costs, advocacy services).

8.5 We will in the first instance acknowledge receipt of each complaint within 5 working days.

8.6 The HR Manager will carry out an internal investigation of the complaint and will respond substantively to the complainant within one (1) month of the date of receiving the letter of complaint. Under certain circumstances, if the complexity of the matter requires a longer period, the period for response to the complainant may be extended to two (2) months. In those circumstances, the complainant will be advised of the extended period within one month of making the complaint.

8.7 During this process the complainant will be kept fully informed of the progress of the investigation into the complaint and of any outcomes.

8.8 In any subsequent investigation by the Equality Commission, SIB will co-operate fully, providing access in a timely manner to any relevant documentation that the Equality Commission may require.

Similarly, SIB will co-operate fully with any investigation by the Equality Commission under sub-paragraph 11 (1) (b) of Schedule 9 to the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

8.9 The SIB will make all efforts to implement promptly and in full any recommendations arising out of any Commission investigation.

Chapter 9 Publication of our equality scheme

(Schedule 9 4. (3) (c))

9.1 SIB's equality scheme is available free of charge in print form and alternative formats from:

Name	Julie Monahan
Title	HR Manager
Address	Strategic Investment Board Limited Carleton House Floor 1 Gasworks Business Park 1 Cromac Avenue Belfast BT7 2JA
Tel.	028 9090 9459
e mail	Julie.Monahan@sibni.org
Textphone	028 9090 9472
SMS	077 9230 1647

9.2 Our equality scheme is also available on our website at:

www.sibni.org

9.3 The following arrangements are in place for the publication in a timely manner of our equality scheme to ensure equality of access:

- We will make every effort to communicate widely the existence and content of our equality scheme. This may include press releases, prominent advertisements in the press, the internet and direct mail shots to groups representing the various categories in Section 75.
- We will email a link to our approved equality scheme to our consultees on our consultation lists. Other consultees without e-mail will be notified by letter that the scheme is available on request. We will respond to requests for the equality scheme in alternative formats in a timely manner, usually 4-6 weeks.
- Our equality scheme is available on request in alternative formats such as Easy Read, Braille, large print, audio formats (CD, mp3, DAISY) and in minority languages to meet the needs of those not fluent in English.

- A summary of the scheme will be prepared and circulated to Section 75 groups representing children and young people, people with disabilities and minority ethnic communities.

9.4 For a list of our stakeholders and consultees please see Appendix 3 of the equality scheme, visit our website at

www.sibni.org

or contact:

Name	Julie Monahan
Title	HR Manager
Address	Strategic Investment Board Limited Carleton House Floor 1 Gasworks Business Park 1 Cromac Avenue Belfast BT7 2JA
Tel.	028 9090 9459
e mail	Julie.Monahan@sibni.org
Textphone	028 9090 9472
SMS	077 9230 1647

Chapter 10 Review of our equality scheme

(Schedule 9 8. (3))

10.1 As required by Schedule 9 paragraph 8 (3) of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 we will conduct a thorough review of this equality scheme. This review will take place either within five years of submission of this equality scheme to the Equality Commission or within a shorter timescale to allow alignment with the review of other planning cycles.

The review will evaluate the effectiveness of our scheme in relation to the implementation of the Section 75 statutory duties relevant to our functions in Northern Ireland.

10.2 In undertaking this review we will follow any guidance issued by the Equality Commission. A report of this review will be made public and sent to the Equality Commission. The report will be published on the SIB website and we will notify those on our consultee list of its availability.

Appendix 1a: Organisational chart (as at October 2013)

SIB - October 2013

Hannam, Brett Chief Executive Officer		Legal	
Programme Directors/Managers		Hamilton, Gregor	Legal Director
Adam, Mark ▶ 0 §	NIPS Strategic Change Director	Gray, Anna	Legal Counsel
Breen, Irene ▶ 0	E-Cars NI Project Manager	Strategic Advisers	
Burns, Brenda 0	Colin Regeneration Project Manager	Adamson, John §	
Davis, Jonathan ▶ 0	World Police & Fire Games	Gilmour, David	
De Burca, Claran ▶	Rapid Transit Programme Director	Gregory, Bryan	
Emmett, Wesley 0	Strategic Recruitment Adviser	Knox, Kenny	
Gray, Jonathan ▶ 0	NWRWNG Project Manager	McKee, Mary	
Green, John ▶	arc21 Project Manager	McKenna, Leo	
Jones, Hazel 0	Lisanelly Programme Director	Priestly, Paul ◀ 0	
Kane, Fiona §	Strategic Communications Adviser	Stockman, Denise ▶ §	
Derek Kennedy ▶ 0	FSNI Forensic Science Programme Director	Associate Advisers	
McCorry, Conor ▶ 0	Desercreat Procurement Manager	Carins, Stuart 0 §	
McCrossan, Colin ▶	Desercreat Programme Director	Gilchrist, James 0 §	
McIvor, James ▶ 0 §	ABOD Heritage Centre Project Manager	Maxwell, Colin 0 §	
Molloy, Noel ▶ 0	Regional Stadiums Programme Director	Angela Reavey 0 §	
O'Neill, Pat ▶	ESA Implementation Director	Morrow, Stephanie 0 §	
Rossington, Geoff ▶ 0	NIPS Estates Strategy Implementation Manager	Mags Millar 0 §	
Rory Miskely ▶ 0	HMS Caroline Project Manager	James McCombe 0 §	
Turner, Martin ▶ 0	Ilex Venues Project Manager	Susan Lindsay 0 §	
Asset Management Unit		Elaine O'Haire 0 §	
Donnelly, Michael	Finance Adviser	Justine Daly 0 §	
Fearon, Jacqueline	Property Adviser	Kevin McShane 0 §	
Moore, Jonathan	Property Adviser	Stutt, Colin 0 §	
Sean McGuinness 0	Asset Manager	ISNI & Analytical Support	
Vernon, Ed ◀ 0 §	Asset Management Adviser to NI Executive	Gallagher, Johann §	Policy Adviser
Wilson, Scott	Head of AMU	O'Reilly, Maureen § 0	Economist (maternity cover)
Maze Long Kesh Development Corporation		McNeekin, Patrick	Economic Adviser
Alexander, Kyle ▶	Programme Director	McMinn, Ashley 0	ISNI Research Student
Harrison, Julie ▶ 0 §	Stakeholder Engagement Adviser	Perchival, Heather 0	DTS Administrator
SBRI Project		Spillon, Martin	Head of Investment Strategy
Cunningham, Claran ▶ 0	Communications Manager	Wishart, Mark 0	Infrastructure Economist
McVicker, Alan ▶ 0 §	POBU Director	Young, Gareth ◀ 0	GIS Consultant
Scott, Noel ▶ 0	Planning Adviser	Development Officer	
Smith, Mike ▶ 0	Commercial Contracts Adviser	O'Kane, Bronagh 0	Development Officer - Colin Town
Key:		Finance, HR, IM and Administration	
§	Part-Time Staff	Donnelly, Joanne	Finance Assistant
0	Temporary Staff	Lisa Valente §	Finance Officer
◀	Seconded to SIB	Mallon, Patricia §	Finance Manager
▶	Seconded from SIB	Rebecca Russell 0	HR Assistant
		McNeill, Helen	PA to CEO
		Monahan, Julie	HR Manager
		Karen Smith 0	Associate HR Support
		Pringle, Sam	Information & Compliance Manager
		Interns	
		Dean McBride ▶ 0	OFMDFM
		Clare Higgins ▶ 0	OFMDFM
		Kemohan, Aaron ▶ 0	DOE
		Little, Charlene ▶ 0	DOE
		Dearbhla O'Rourke ▶ 0	OFMDFM
		McConville, Shona 0	Communications Intern
		Seconded from SIB	
		Stephen Wood ▶ 0	DRD Roads Infrastructure
		Grimshaw, Adrian ▶ 0	Infrastructure Programme Manager
		Una Turmudy ▶ 0	ESA Recruitment Unit
		Helen Gallagher ▶ 0	ESA Recruitment Unit
		John Jennings ▶ 0	ESA ICT Project Manager
		Mooney, Kieran ▶ 0	Infrastructure Programme Manager

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Appendix 1b: Board of Directors (as at Nov 2012)

Dr David Dobbin, CBE

Chairman

David Dobbin is Group Chief Executive of United Dairy Farmers and is also Chairman of the North/South economic body, InterTradeIreland. He is actively involved in promoting regional economic development and serves on a number of public and private bodies including Invest Northern Ireland. David has extensive international business experience in the food and drink and packaging sectors and received a CBE in 2005 for his service to the agrifood and packaging industries.

Arthur J McFerran, CBE

Non-Executive Director

Mr McFerran (known as “Bro”) has a computer services background and since 1999 has been Managing Director of Allstate Northern Ireland (formerly known as Northbrook Technology); he was previously the owner and Managing Director of Logicom Ltd. Allstate NI is a wholly owned subsidiary of The Allstate Corporation which also has an Investment Division based in London which was opened with Mr McFerran’s assistance. Mr McFerran is currently the President of the Northern Ireland Chamber of Commerce and has participated in DETI’s Economic Development Forum. He is Chairman of the Belfast Workforce Development Forum sponsored by DEL and is a Non-Executive Director of the Northern Bank serving on its Audit Committee. Mr. McFerran was awarded a CBE in the Queen’s Birthday Honours List 2005 for services to the IT Industry of Northern Ireland. Mr McFerran lives in Belfast.

Geraldine McAteer

Non-Executive Director

Ms McAteer is a panel member of the Strategic Review of the Parading Body and is currently working with the review team to develop a framework for the resolution of the parades issue. Ms McAteer is Chief Executive of the West Belfast Partnership Board which aims to drive the economic, social and physical regeneration of West Belfast. She chaired the North and West Belfast Health and Social Services Trust from September 2006 to March 2007 and has also held office there as a non-executive director for five years. As Chairperson, she led the Trust through the major change process of its dissolution in March 2007 and subsequent merger with the new Belfast Trust.

Ms McAteer was a member of the Board of Laganside Corporation, until June 2007. Ms McAteer worked with Board members and the Executive Team to take forward the Corporation’s objectives to regenerate Laganside.

Frank Hewitt**Non-Executive Director**

Mr Hewitt is a former Civil Servant and was Deputy Chief Executive of the Industrial Development Board between 1988 and 1996. He also spent part of his career in the private sector and was Chief Executive of NI Growth Challenge and CEO of the NI Chamber of Commerce from 2002 until 2008.

He is currently non-executive Chairman of the NI Science Park (NISP), responsible for the strategic development of NISP, and non-executive chair of the Northern Ireland Committee of the Big Lottery Fund. He is also a main board member of the Big Lottery Fund. He is a non-executive Board member of invest NI, and non-executive Board member of the ILEX Regeneration Company.

Since 2002 Mr Hewitt has been German Honorary Consul.

Brett Hannam**Chief Executive**

Brett joined SIB as Chief Operating Officer in January 2006 and was appointed Chief Executive in 2012. Previously he worked for the Northern Ireland Office where he was Head of Information Systems, Director of the Causeway Programme and Chief Executive of Northern Ireland's Forensic Science Agency. Brett holds degrees from Oxford University, the Open University and Queen's University, Belfast.

Appendix 2 Example groups relevant to the Section 75 categories for Northern Ireland purposes

Please note, this list is for illustration purposes only, it is not exhaustive.

Category	Example groups
Religious belief	<p>Buddhist; Catholic; Hindu; Jewish; Muslims, people of no religious belief; Protestants; Sikh; other faiths.</p> <p>For the purposes of Section 75, the term “religious belief” is the same definition as that used in the <i>Fair Employment & Treatment (NI) Order</i>²³. Therefore, “religious belief” also includes any <i>perceived</i> religious belief (or perceived lack of belief) and, in employment situations only, it also covers any “<i>similar philosophical belief</i>”.</p>
Political opinion ²⁴	Nationalist generally; Unionists generally; members/supporters of other political parties.
Racial group	Black people; Chinese; Indians; Pakistanis; people of mixed ethnic background; Polish; Roma; Travellers; White people.
Men and women generally	Men (including boys); Trans-gendered people; Transsexual people; women (including girls).
Marital status	Civil partners or people in civil partnerships; divorced people; married people; separated people; single people; widowed people.
Age	Children and young people; older people.
Persons with a disability	Persons with disabilities as defined by the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.
Persons with dependants	Persons with personal responsibility for the care of a child; for the care of a person with a disability; or the care of a dependant older person.
Sexual orientation	Bisexual people; heterosexual people; gay or lesbian people.

²³ See Section 98 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, which states: “*In this Act... “political opinion” and “religious belief” shall be construed in accordance with Article 2(3) and (4) of the Fair Employment & Treatment (NI) Order 1998.*”

²⁴ *ibid*

Appendix 3 List of consultees

(Schedule 9 4. (2) (a))

Note: This consultation list is indicative and not exhaustive and is reviewed on an annual basis to ensure it remains relevant to our functions and policies.

1. Age NI
2. Alliance Party
3. Amalgamated Transport and General Workers Union
4. An Munia Tober
5. Association of Chief Officers of Voluntary Associations
6. Barnardo's NI
7. Belfast Butterfly Club
8. Belfast Gay Pride Committee
9. British Deaf Association NI
10. Bryson House
11. Carafriend
12. Carers NI
13. Child Poverty Action Group
14. Children's Law Centre
15. Chinese Welfare Association NI Ltd
16. Church of Ireland
17. Committee on the Administration of Justice
18. Community Relations Council
19. Confederation of British Industry
20. Counteract
21. Democratic Unionist Party
22. Department of Agriculture and Rural Development
23. Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure
24. Department of Education
25. Department for Employment and Learning
26. Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment
27. Department of the Environment
28. Department of Finance and Personnel
29. Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety
30. Department of Justice
31. Department for Regional Development
32. Department for Social Development
33. Disability Action
34. East Belfast Community Development Agency
35. Equality Commission for NI

36. Falls Community Council
37. Family Planning Association NI
38. First Division Association
39. Foyle Friend
40. Foyle Women's Network
41. Gay and Lesbian Youth NI
42. General Consumer Council for NI
43. Gingerbread NI
44. Institute of Directors NI Division
45. Labour Party
46. Law Centre NI
47. Lesbian Line
48. Library, Parliament Buildings
49. Local Government Staff Commission
50. MENCAP (Royal Society for Mentally Handicapped Children & Adults)
51. Methodist Church in Ireland
52. Multi-Cultural Resource Centre
53. National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children
54. National Union of Students/Union of Students in Ireland NI Student Centre
55. NI Anti-Poverty Network
56. NI Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders
57. NI Association for Mental Health
58. NI Committee, Irish Congress of Trade Unions
59. NI Council for Voluntary Action
60. NI Gay Rights Association
61. NI Human Rights Commission
62. NI Public Service Alliance
63. NI Unionist Party
64. NI Voluntary Trust
65. NI Women's Aid Federation
66. NI Women's Coalition
67. NI Women's European Platform
68. NI Youth Forum
69. North West Community Network
70. North West Forum of People with Disabilities (Derry)
71. North West Forum of People with Disabilities (Enniskillen)
72. Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister
73. Parents Advice Centre
76. Presbyterian Church in Ireland

77. Press for Change
78. Progressive Unionist Party
79. Public Sector Support Services Forum
80. Putting Children First
81. Queer Space
82. Relate
83. Roman Catholic Church
84. Royal Hospital
85. Royal National Institute for the Blind
86. Royal National Institute for Deaf People
87. Rural Community Network NI
88. Rural Development Council
89. Save the Children
90. Social Democratic and Labour Party
91. Simon Community NI
92. Sinn Féin
93. Staff Commission for Education and Library Boards
94. The Rainbow Project
95. The Workers Party
96. UK Unionist Party
97. Ulster Scots Heritage Council
98. Ulster Unionist Party
99. Unison
100. West Belfast Partnership
101. Women's Resource and Development Agency
102. Women's Support Network
103. Youth Council for NI
104. Youthnet

Appendix 4 Timetable for measures proposed

(Schedule 9 4. (3) (b))

Note: All actions are the responsibility of the HR Manager

	Theme		Action measures	Next target date	Frequency
1	Development of Equality Scheme	1.1	Consult on draft Equality Scheme & Equality Action Plan	Mar-Nov 2011	Once only
		1.2	Finalise Equality Scheme & Equality Action Plan	Nov 2011	Once only
		1.3	Submit to Equality Commission for approval	Nov 2011	Once only
		1.4	Prepare summary version of Equality Scheme	Following Commission approval	Once only
2	Publication of Equality Scheme	2.1	Publish on SIB website	Following Commission approval	Once only
		2.2	Inform consultees of availability of Scheme	Following Commission approval	Once only
		2.3	Brief staff and Board Members	Following Commission approval	Once only
		2.4	Inform public of availability of Scheme	Following Commission approval	Once only

	Theme		Action measures	Next target date	Frequency
3	Target setting	3.1	Integrate targets relating to Equality Scheme and Action Plan into SIB Corporate Plan	Feb 2014	Every 3 years
		3.2	Integrate targets relating to Equality Scheme and Action Plan into annual SIB Business Plan	Feb 2013	Annually
		3.3	Review targets	Jan 2013	Annually
		3.4	Report to Board on achievements against targets	Apr 2013	Monthly as appropriate
4	Annual review of progress	4.1	Conduct review of progress and prepare annual report	Jul 2013	Annually
		4.2	Submit report to Equality Commission	Aug 2013	Annually
		4.3	Publish report on SIB website	Aug 2013	Annually
		4.4	Notify consultees of availability	Aug 2013	Annually
		4.5	Include reference in SIB Annual Report	Sep 2013	Annually
5	List of consultees	5.1	Update list of consultees and publish on SIB website	Aug 2013	Annually
		5.2	Develop programme of awareness raising for consultees and stakeholders	Mar 2013	Once only
		5.3	Implement programme of awareness raising		As appropriate
		5.4	Review programme of awareness raising	Jun 2014	Annually

	Theme		Action measures	Next target date	Frequency
6	Assessment of policies	6.1	Screen all proposed new policies and revisions of existing policies		As appropriate
		6.2	Publish screening templates on SIB website and notify consultee		On completion of screening
		6.3	Publish quarterly screening reports and notify consultees	Apr 2013	Quarterly
		6.4	Conduct EQIAs as required		As appropriate
		6.5	Publish EQIA reports on SIB website		On completion of EQIA
		6.6	Notify consultees and public of results of EQIAs		On completion of EQIA
7	Monitoring	7.1	Audit of existing information systems to address any gaps	Jun 2013	Annually
		7.2	Include results of monitoring in annual progress report	Jul 2012	Annually
8	Staff training	8.1	Train all staff on Section 75 developments	Dec 2012	Annually
		8.2	Update induction module and staff briefing notes	Apr 2013	Once only

	Theme		Action measures	Next target date	Frequency
9	Access to information	9.1	Put in place arrangements to provide information in additional alternative formats	Apr 2013	Once only
		9.2	Monitor requests for information in alternative formats and request feedback from recipients		As appropriate
		9.3	Review arrangements for ensuring access to information	Apr 2013	Annually
10	Access to services	10.1	Consider appropriate arrangements to monitor public access to services to ensure equality of opportunity and good relations are promoted	Apr 2013	Once only
		10.2	Implement monitoring arrangements		As appropriate
		10.3	Review arrangements for ensuring access to services	Apr 2013	Annually
11	Review of the Equality Scheme	11.1	Conduct review of Equality Scheme and prepare review report	Aug 2016	Once only
		11.2	Submit review report to Equality Commission	Sep 2016	Once only
		11.3	Publish report on SIB website	Sep 2016	Once only
		11.4	Notify consultees of availability	Sep 2016	Once only

	Theme		Action measures	Next target date	Frequency
12	Equality Action Plan	12.1	Implement action measures set out in Appendix 6		As appropriate
		12.2	Review and update action plan as appropriate	Jun 2013	Annually

Appendix 5 Glossary of terms

Audit of inequalities

An audit of inequalities is a systematic review and analysis of inequalities which exist for service users and those affected by a public authority's policies. An audit can be used by a public authority to inform its work in relation to the Section 75 equality and good relations duties. It can also enable public authorities to assess progress on the implementation of the Section 75 statutory duties, as it provides baseline information on existing inequalities relevant to a public authority's functions.

Consultation

In the context of Section 75, consultation is the process of asking those affected by a policy (i.e. service users, staff, the general public) for their views on how the policy could be implemented more effectively to promote equality of opportunity across the nine categories. Different circumstances will call for different types of consultation. Consultations could, for example, include meetings, focus groups, surveys and questionnaires.

Equality action plan

A plan which sets out actions a public authority will take to implement its Section 75 statutory duties. It is a mechanism for the realisation of measures to achieve equality outcomes for the Section 75 equality and good relations categories.

Equality impact assessment

The mechanism underpinning Section 75, where existing and proposed policies are assessed in order to determine whether they have an adverse impact on equality of opportunity for the relevant Section 75 categories. Equality impact assessments require the analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data.

Equality of opportunity

The prevention, elimination or regulation of discrimination between people on grounds of characteristics including sex, marital status, age, disability, religious belief, political opinion, dependants, race and sexual orientation.

The promotion of equality of opportunity entails more than the elimination of discrimination. It requires proactive measures to be taken to secure equality of opportunity between the categories identified under Section 75.

Equality scheme

A document which outlines a public authority's arrangements for complying with its Section 75 obligations. An equality scheme must include an outline of the public authority's arrangements for carrying out consultations, screening, equality impact assessments, monitoring, training and arrangements for ensuring access to information and services.

Good relations

Although not defined in the legislation, the Equality Commission has agreed the following working definition of good relations: 'the growth of relations and structures for Northern Ireland that acknowledge the religious, political and racial context of this society, and that seek to promote respect, equity and trust, and embrace diversity in all its forms'.

Inequality

Where something an organisation does has a differential or unfair impact on anyone in any of the groups listed in **Section 75** definition below.

Mainstreaming

The integration of equal opportunities principles, strategies and practices into the everyday work of public authorities from the outset. In other words, mainstreaming is the process of ensuring that equality considerations are built into the policy development process from the beginning, rather than being bolted on at the end. Mainstreaming can help improve methods of working by increasing a public authority's accountability, responsiveness to need and relations with the public. It can bring added value at many levels.

Monitoring

Monitoring consists of continuously scrutinising and evaluating a policy to assess its impact on the Section 75 categories. Monitoring consists of the collection of relevant information and evaluation of policies. It is not solely about the collection of data, it can also take the form of regular meetings and reporting of research undertaken. Monitoring is not an end in itself but provides the data for the next cycle of policy screening.

Northern Ireland Act

The Northern Ireland Act, implementing the Good Friday Agreement, received Royal Assent on 19 November 1998. Section 75 of the Act created the statutory equality duties.

Policy

The formal and informal decisions a public authority makes in relation to carrying out its duties. Defined in the New Oxford English Dictionary as 'a course or principle of action adopted or proposed by a government party, business or individual'. In the context of Section 75, the term **policies** covers all the ways in which a public authority carries out or proposes to carry out its functions relating to Northern Ireland. Policies include unwritten as well as written policies.

Screening

The procedure for identifying which policies will be subject to equality impact assessment, and how these equality impact assessments will be prioritised. The purpose of screening is to identify the policies which are likely to have a minor/major impact on equality of opportunity so that greatest resources can

be devoted to improving these policies. Screening requires a systematic review of existing and proposed policies.

Section 75

Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act provides that each public authority is required, in carrying out its functions relating to Northern Ireland, to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between:-

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

Without prejudice to these obligations, each public authority in carrying out its functions relating to Northern Ireland must also have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group.

Appendix 6: Equality Action Plan

(Please note that this does not form part of the approved Equality Scheme)

	Theme		Action	New or ongoing measure	Link to strategic priorities	Timescale	Desired outcomes	Performance measures
1	Awareness	1.1	Annual workshop for SIB officers on key inequalities in NI	Ongoing	1, 5	Dec 2012 Dec 2013 Dec 2014	Increased awareness of key inequalities in NI	Self evaluation by officers
		1.2	Establish an approach to raising awareness among suppliers and potential suppliers of Section 75 obligations	New	1	Jun 2013	Increased awareness among suppliers of S75 obligations	Feedback from procurers on quality of tenders in relation to S75 issues
2	Monitoring	2.1	Establish working group to consider feasibility of equality monitoring of ISNI projects and communication of results	New	1	Jun 2013	Increased information on contribution made by ISNI projects to addressing key inequalities in NI	Monitoring system established
		2.2	Evaluate current position and opportunities	New	1	Jul 2013		

	Theme		Action	New or ongoing measure	Link to strategic priorities	Timescale	Desired outcomes	Performance measures
		2.3	Report on options	New	1	Aug 2013		
		2.4	Implement agreed option	New	1	Sep 2013 onwards		
3	Communication	3.1	Communicate monitoring information	New	1	Apr 2014 onwards	Increased awareness among government departments, agencies, S75 organisations and public regarding contribution made by ISNI projects to addressing key inequalities in NI	Feedback from recipients of information

Strategic Priorities (for information)

1. To advise the Executive in relation to the formulation and implementation of its programme of major investment projects.
2. To accelerate the delivery of major, sustainable infrastructure projects.
3. To obtain value for money for infrastructure investment.
4. To make best use of existing assets and dispose of those that are surplus to requirements.
5. To further develop the Company to ensure it continues to be capable of achieving its objectives.

Appendix 7: Report on consultation

The SIB draft Equality Scheme was made available to all organisations listed in Appendix 3 in April 2011 requesting comments and suggestions. The draft Equality Scheme included the draft Equality Action Plan and associated action measures, and the Audit of Inequalities was also made available on the SIB website for reference. It was originally intended that the consultation period should close in July but it was subsequently extended to the end of September to give sufficient time to those consultees affected by the elections to the Northern Ireland Assembly. One response (from the CRC) was received after the end of the consultation period but has been taken into account.

Responses were received from:

- Equality Commission (June 2011)
- Equality Commission (September 2011)
- Committee on the Administration of Justice (CAJ)
- Community Relations Council (CRC)
- Disability Action
- Northern Ireland Public Service Alliance (NIPSA)

(a) Equality Commission (June 2011)

The Equality Commission's comments in June 2011 related mainly to the wording of various paragraphs of the draft Equality Scheme. The Commission recommended that the wording in their Model Equality Scheme should be used in all cases. The Model Scheme states that:

“Public authorities may use this document in full if they wish to meet best practice or adapt this guidance document as a basis to develop their own equality scheme.”

SIB had therefore used the guidance document as a basis to develop its own Equality Scheme. However, it became clear from the Equality Commission's response that they would prefer all authorities to use the exact wording of the Model Equality Scheme in order to ensure consistency across the schemes of all public authorities. Other consultees also requested changes to the wording of various paragraphs to bring them in line with the Commission's Model Equality Scheme.

SIB has therefore amended the draft equality scheme to reflect the wording of the Model Equality Scheme.

(b) Equality Commission (September 2011)

The Equality Commission's comments in September 2011 related to the draft Equality Action Plan and have been addressed in that context in table 2 below.

(c) Disability Action

Disability Action stated that they were disappointed that the audit of inequalities had not accompanied the equality scheme and action plan. In fact, SIB made the audit of inequalities available as background information (but not for consultation) and it is unfortunate that Disability Action did not have an opportunity to access it. Disability Action included some comments on the audit of inequalities in their response and we assume that these are general comments, rather than ones that are specific to the SIB audit of inequalities. These comments have not been addressed individually but Disability Action's suggestions will be taken into account during the implementation of the action measure regarding the development of the monitoring system.

The rest of Disability Action's comments have been addressed individually in the tables below.

(d) NIPSA

NIPSA commented that the equality scheme did not provide sufficient detail on SIB's procurement and employment functions. We have therefore included additional information in paragraphs 1.7-1.8 of the equality scheme and have attached our Operating Strategy, which sets out our high level approach to delivering our objectives, at Appendix 8.

NIPSA went on to comment extensively on procurement, making a number of recommendations. Many of these did not relate directly to the equality scheme and appeared to be recommendations on how SIB should carry out its functions, which was not the purpose of this consultation process. These recommendations have been noted but no changes have been made to the equality scheme as a result. However, some of NIPSA's recommendations appeared to be appropriate to the development of the SIB Equality Action Plan and they have been addressed in this context. All these recommendations are listed together in table 2 below under the heading of the Equality Action Plan.

(e) Summary of responses

The tables below set out the comments received from the Equality Commission (September 2011), CAJ, CRC, Disability Action and NIPSA which relate to matters other than the wording of the Model Equality Scheme and SIB's response to each comment. Where a change has been made to the SIB Equality Scheme as a result of the comment, this is noted in the appropriate table. The changes to the wording to bring the scheme in line with the Model Equality Scheme have not been listed individually.

TABLE 1: COMMENTS ON EQUALITY SCHEME

Reference in Scheme	Comments by	Comments made	SIB response
Introduction (Chapter 1)	Committee on the Administration of Justice (CAJ)	The SIB equality scheme will be used as a point of reference for staff's application of S75 and any training provided. The equality scheme should contain clear statements on the relationship and difference between the two S75 duties.	SIB appreciates the point being made and is willing to include this issue within staff training. However, we have followed the wording of the Equality Commission's Model Scheme in paragraphs. 1.1 and 1.2 and do not intend to change these paragraphs.
	Disability Action	The contact details should include a textphone or dedicated SMS number to enable deaf people the same access as those who are hearing.	The contact details have been amended throughout the Equality Scheme to include a textphone number and an SMS contact number.
	Disability Action and NIPSA	Disability Action and NIPSA requested that the word 'available' in relation to providing necessary resources should be removed.	This word has been removed from paragraph 1.3.
	Disability Action	SIB should make direct reference to its attitude to and plans for pre-consultation.	The final version of the Equality Scheme includes a reference to the consultation undertaken before submission of the scheme to the Equality Commission (paragraph 2.14).
	NIPSA	In relation to this consultation process, it was difficult to find the consultation documents on the SIB website.	We will address this issue and ensure that future consultation documents can be easily accessed.

Reference in Scheme	Comments by	Comments made	SIB response
Introduction (Chapter 1)	NIPSA	The scheme and action plan provide insufficient detail on SIB's procurement and employment functions. Employment, service provision and procurement are among the key areas on which we expect SIB to fully implement the statutory duty.	We have included additional information on employment and procurement functions in paragraphs. 1.8 – 1.9. We have also attached our Operating Strategy, which sets out our high level approach to delivering our objectives, at Appendix 8.
Arrangements for assessing compliance (Chapter 2)	CAJ	Paragraph 2.5 of the draft Equality Scheme states that objectives and targets relating to the Section 75 duties have in the past, and will continue to be, integrated into SIB's three year corporate plan and the annual business plan, as appropriate. Action measures are different and in addition to previous S75 commitments and could not have been included in corporate and business plans in the past.	The incorporation of action measures in the Equality Action Plan into the business planning process is covered separately at paragraph. 2.13.
	NIPSA	For clarity it would be useful if the equality scheme includes examples of how compliance will actually be assessed in practice.	Chapter 2 sets out SIB's arrangements for including appropriate objectives and actions in the corporate and business plans, monitoring and reporting on progress against these objectives and publishing reports. We

Reference in Scheme	Comments by	Comments made	SIB response
			consider that this level of detail is sufficient for the equality scheme. All reports (including Board minutes) are publicly available if consultees require further information.
Consultation (Chapter 3)	Disability Action	Disability Action believes that SIB should commit to consultation on its audit of inequalities and the screening of policies.	The audit of inequalities was provided to consultees as a background document; SIB does not consider it a suitable document for consultation, although we would be happy to receive suggestions regarding additional sources of information. A reference to screening has now been included in paragraph. 3.1 of the Equality Scheme.
	Disability Action	Consultation periods should be planned to ensure that they do not take place over holiday periods and SIB should make a commitment to this in the equality scheme.	The wording in paragraph. 3.2.7 is taken from the Equality Commission's Model Scheme and allows for additional time when consultation periods coincide with holiday periods. although we will try to avoid consultations over holiday periods, it may not always be possible because of the need to meet specific deadlines.

Reference in Scheme	Comments by	Comments made	SIB response
Consultation (Chapter 3)	NIPSA	NIPSA would want the details of the systems SIB have in place for making information available in alternative formats outlined in the scheme.	This information has been added to paragraph. 3.2.9.
	NIPSA	It is important to include the website “link” in the scheme.	Appropriate links will be inserted in the final document.
Screening (Chapter 4)	Disability Action	Disability Action believe that screening decisions should be signed off by a member of the Senior Management Team.	Paragraph. 4.6 states that “The lead role in the screening of a policy is taken by the policy decision maker who has the authority to make changes to that policy.” This will always be a Senior Officer.
	Disability Action	Regarding availability of screening outcomes on the website, Disability Action believes consultees should be informed as soon as possible of results. SIB must declare a timeline.	Paragraph 4.14 has been amended to include a reference to notifying consultees of the availability of screening templates on our website. We do not anticipate that there will be any delay in publishing screening templates on the website.

Reference in Scheme	Comments by	Comments made	SIB response
Screening (Chapter 4)	Disability Action	Disability Action believes that there is a danger that policies may appear at first sight devoid of equal opportunity implications; however, such an assumption may be open to challenge if in their application they have a disproportionate or an adverse impact on any of the affected groups.	Paragraphs. 4.27-4.31 outline SIB's arrangements for monitoring of policies. If the application of a policy results in a disproportionate or adverse impact on any group, the monitoring process will identify this and appropriate action will be taken.
EQIAs (Chapter 4)	Disability Action	Disability Action believes that SIB must establish a process and provide training to enable decisions on the likely impact of a policy on equality of opportunity to be made consistently and with informed reasoning throughout the organisation.	Paragraph. 5.3 of the equality scheme includes the training objective "to provide those staff involved the assessment of policies (screening and EQIA), with the necessary skills and knowledge to do this work effectively." The intention is that this training will result in decisions on impacts being made consistently and with informed reasoning.
Training (Chapter 5)	Disability Action	Disability Action recommends that all Section 75 training should be reviewed and updated accordingly. Where training is centralised Disability Action believes that SIB must use its influence with the training provider.	The training plan will be updated to take account of the commitments in the new Equality Scheme. All training is provided in house to SIB's specification.

Reference in Scheme	Comments by	Comments made	SIB response
	Disability Action	Disability Action recommends that policy and decision makers receive general training on Section 75 and specific training on each of the nine categories.	This suggestion will be taken on board as the training programme is rolled out.
Complaints (Chapter 8)	Disability Action	Disability Action believes that the complaints procedure should outline how it will support the individual to bring his/her complaint (e.g. interpreter support, specialist transport costs, advocacy services).	These examples have been added in an additional paragraph at 8.4.

TABLE 2: COMMENTS ON EQUALITY ACTION PLAN

Comments by	Comments made	SIB response
Equality Commission	The Commission welcomes the proposed action to raise awareness among SIB staff and suggests that the publication “Equality of Opportunity and Sustainable Development in Public Sector Procurement” should be used in such sessions.	SIB will take this suggestion on board when implementing the action measures on awareness raising.
Equality Commission	The Commission welcomes the proposed action to develop a process to monitor the equality objectives and outcomes of ISNI and would welcome the opportunity to liaise with SIB and consider how they can best support SIB in developing and implementing this key action.	SIB welcomes the offer of support and will liaise with the Commission during the implementation of the action measures on the monitoring of ISNI.
Equality Commission	The Commission recommends that SIB should consider, as part of the audit of inequalities, whether key inequalities exist in relation to participation in public life for individuals or groups covered by Section 75 in addition to disabled people.	SIB will take account of the need to update the audit of inequalities as and when appropriate in order to inform the action plan and will take this suggestion into account at the next review.
Equality Commission	The Commission recommends that SIB should assess what further steps it can take in order to ensure that the obligations placed on the UK Government under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities are complied with.	This suggestion will be taken on board during the implementation of the action measure regarding the development of the monitoring system.

Comments by	Comments made	SIB response
CRC	CRC suggests that additional actions are included to demonstrate how SIB will mitigate against adverse impact on people as a result of their political opinion, religious belief, race or ethnicity.	We note this point but consider that we are not yet in a position to include such actions in the Equality Action Plan. The first step is to monitor ISNI and identify key inequalities; action to address the inequalities can then be included in future iterations of the action plan.
CRC	CRC encourages SIB to bring together those working in these fields to explore further actions that may be relevant and which would support SIB in addressing inequalities and enhancing good relations.	This suggestion will be taken on board during the implementation of the action measure regarding the development of the monitoring system.
CRC	CRC suggests that SIB work with government departments and agencies to ensure the issue of interfaces is considered on a strategic level.	This suggestion will be taken on board during the implementation of the action measure regarding the development of the monitoring system.
CRC	CRC suggests that SIB has a key role in supporting government departments and agencies to develop existing assets to create shared space, helping to address division and hostility.	This suggestion will be taken on board during the implementation of the action measure regarding the development of the monitoring system.
CRC	CRC recommends that the action plan addresses links with the Cohesion, Sharing and Integration programme.	This suggestion will be taken on board during the implementation of the action measure regarding the development of the monitoring system.

Comments by	Comments made	SIB response
CRC	CRC suggests that SIB, in working with government departments and agencies to deliver major public infrastructure work, should facilitate access to a significant amount of participatory training around community relations and equality.	SIB does not consider that the training of government departments and agencies on community relations and equality is part of our functions.
Disability Action	Action measures should be clearly linked to the functions of SIB.	The action measures set out in Appendix 6 relate to awareness, monitoring and communication in relation to infrastructure investment which link directly to the key responsibilities of SIB set out in paragraph 1.6.
Disability Action	An Action Plan should detail whether measures are new or ongoing action.	This information has been added to the action plan.
Disability Action	A cross reference of the SIB audit findings and their link to action measures should be included for ease of reference. The Action Plan must include measures to address any gaps identified.	Paragraphs 1.11-1.12 explain that SIB does not deliver services directly to the public but works closely with Ministers, government departments, agencies and the private sector to help achieve the delivery of major public infrastructure projects economically and efficiently. SIB does not have primary responsibility for developing and implementing projects and cannot take direct action to address key inequalities in Northern Ireland (as identified in the audit of

Comments by	Comments made	SIB response
		<p>inequalities). The audit of inequalities therefore identified that, although SIB is not in a position to take direct action, it does have a highly influential role and is also capable of taking an overview of the effectiveness of capital investment in Northern Ireland. These characteristics have been used to determine the approach to the SIB Equality Action Plan.</p>
Disability Action	Information must be provided on how the Action Plan measures were prioritised.	All the action measures are of equal priority.
Disability Action	The Action Plan must contain SMART objectives including timetable with expected outputs and outcomes.	The Action Plan contains a timescale, desired outcomes and performance measures. The actions make clear what the intended outputs are.
Disability Action	The review of the audit of inequalities must be an action measure.	<p>The Equality Scheme includes a commitment to monitoring progress on the delivery of our action plan measures annually and updating the action plan as necessary to ensure that it remains effective and relevant to SIB's functions and work (paragraph. 2.15). The audit of inequalities does not form part of the equality scheme but we will take account of the need to update it as and when appropriate in order to inform the action plan.</p>

Comments by	Comments made	SIB response
Disability Action	Monitoring and evaluation must be an action measure	Monitoring and evaluation is fully covered in both the Equality Action Plan (Appendix 6) and the timetable for implementation of the equality scheme (Appendix 4).
Disability Action	A full review of the action plan after 1 year should be included as an action measure.	This has been included as an action in Appendix 4.
Disability Action	The plan should include a clear outline of how it interacts with corporate and business planning measures.	The plan includes links to corporate objectives. Paragraph 2.5 makes it clear that objectives and targets relating to the Section 75 duties will be integrated into SIB's three year corporate plan and the annual business plan. It should be noted that achievements against targets will be monitored and reported to the Board as part of the monthly progress report against business objectives. Targets will be reviewed annually to reflect further objectives identified as the implementation of the Equality Scheme progresses. This includes the action measures in the equality action plan.
Disability Action	Action measures related to the SIB strategic as well as operational functions should be included.	The action measures relate to both strategic and operational functions.

Comments by	Comments made	SIB response
Disability Action	A clear statement on whether action measures are relevant to Duties 1 and 2 of Section 75 should be included.	Paragraph 2.10 makes it clear that SIB has developed a number of action measures which we are planning to take to promote both equality of opportunity and good relations.
NIPSA	It is essential that SIB commit to implementing the ECNI/CPD guidance on “Equality of Opportunity and Sustainable Development in Public Sector Procurement”.	SIB makes full use of the guidance. As suggested by the Equality Commission, the guidance will be used as a standard approach in all training sessions.
NIPSA	SIB should commit to a definition of procurement that embraces its responsibilities as purchaser or provider of services under commissioning arrangements, a purchaser of goods, supplies and utilities and purchaser of services and works.	This recommendation has been noted but no changes have been made to the equality scheme.
NIPSA	In respect of its role as a purchaser or provider of specific commissioned services, SIB should acknowledge its responsibility to ensure that commissioning documents and reviews contain a proper process of equality assessment as defined in the legislation and commit both the provider and purchaser to delivery and review of the service in the light of the equality groups in the legislation.	This recommendation has been noted but no changes have been made to the equality scheme.

Comments by	Comments made	SIB response
NIPSA	The scheme should commit to a specific and integral reporting framework by which the purchaser and provider can publicly account for the equality proofing and performance of commissioned services.	See Equality Action Plan (appendix 6), action measures 2.1-2.4.
NIPSA	The action plan lacks identified inequalities for each Section 75 group and specific actions to address these.	We note this point but consider that we are not yet in a position to include such actions in the Equality Action Plan. The first step is to monitor ISNI and identify key inequalities; action to address the inequalities can then be included in future iterations of the action plan.
NIPSA	In respect of the procurement of goods/ supplies/ utilities, where such procurement is through purchasing consortia which are also subject to the equality duty, SIB should commit to developing its partnership and influence with such bodies to ensure contracts in which it participates test at listing and award stage the competence and capability of suppliers (whether internal or external to Northern Ireland) in respect of designated equality categories within legislation.	This recommendation has been noted but no changes have been made to the equality scheme.

Comments by	Comments made	SIB response
NIPSA	SIB should also commit within the its scheme to participating with such bodies to specific initiatives to brief existing suppliers of goods/services/initiatives as to obligations and standards they need to develop and to develop awareness amongst potential (and in particular local) suppliers of equality good practice to assist them in participating in contracting, particularly when such participation would promote equality in e.g. TSN areas.	In response to this suggestion, SIB has added an additional action measure to the Equality Action Plan at 1.2.
NIPSA	Where SIB contracts directly for goods/ supplies/ utilities, it should state within the scheme a defined materiality threshold over which the competence of suppliers in demonstrating their adherence and understanding of the specified equality groups is mainstreamed into the processes of advertisement, listing, award and contract review. It should also commit to promoting suppliers' awareness and participation.	This recommendation has been noted but no changes have been made to the equality scheme.

Comments by	Comments made	SIB response
NIPSA	<p>In respect of the procurement of services and works, SIB should commit within the scheme to ensuring that any advisors/ consultants/ supervisors retained have an appropriate understanding of the legislation and the scheme; to reflecting the requirements of the legislation and the scheme in all contractual documentation; to ensuring the testing of provided equality competencies is mainstreamed into advertisement, listing, award and monitoring processes and to specifically testing employment policy, practice and provider track record against the designated equality groups, including consideration of adverse findings in the courts or at tribunals over statutory factors.</p>	<p>This recommendation has been noted but no changes have been made to the equality scheme.</p>
NIPSA	<p>SIB should commit within the scheme to the full implementation within its procurement activities of future legislation from the EU and UK governments (e.g. the expanded role for assessments in procurement of race factors in the draft EU Racism Directive).</p>	<p>This recommendation has been noted but no changes have been made to the equality scheme.</p>

Comments by	Comments made	SIB response
NIPSA	SIB has a clear role in ensuring that due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity and good relations is central to the formation of the ISNI and in monitoring its impact.	The Equality Action Plan includes action measures to develop an equality monitoring system for ISNI projects and communicate the findings. This will, in turn, inform the development of future iterations of the strategy.
NIPSA	It is vital that there is a high level EQIA of ISNI in order to determine the impact of the investment on equality and on community differentials.	The ISNI was subjected to a full EQIA when it was developed in 2008. Since then each iteration has been subjected to a high level EQIA. The OFMDFM took the lead in previous years, combining the EQIAs on the Programme for Government, the Budget and ISNI. From 2011 onwards SIB will conduct the high level EQIA of ISNI as a separate exercise.
NIPSA	NIPSA recommends that monitoring progress on the delivery of the Equality Action Plan should take place at an earlier stage if new data or information is received.	Paragraph 2.15 which states that we will monitor our progress on the delivery of our action plan measures annually is taken directly from the Equality Commission's Model Scheme. SIB follows an annual business plan and considers that annual monitoring is appropriate.

Comments by	Comments made	SIB response
NIPSA	SIB must make a specific commitment to addressing key inequalities in the formulation of the investment strategy.	Paragraph 1.12 explains that SIB does not have primary responsibility for developing and implementing infrastructure projects and cannot take direct action to address key inequalities in Northern Ireland (as identified in the audit of inequalities). However, the Equality Action Plan includes action measures to develop a system for monitoring ISNI and identifying key inequalities; action to address the inequalities can then be included in future iterations of the action plan.
NIPSA	SIB have failed to accept that the statutory duty applies to the Investment Strategy for NI.	We do not agree with this comment. Action measures in the Equality Action Plan relate specifically to the ISNI.
NIPSA	To justify a proposed equality action plan which aligns with the first and fifth strategic priorities only in SIB's corporate plan is extremely worrying. The action plan lacks clear linkages between SIB's key functions and alignment with its 5 strategic priorities.	The action plan relates specifically to SIB's functions in respect of the ISNI and helping to build delivery capability. The action measures are cross referenced to SIB's strategic priorities. There is no requirement in the Equality Commission guidance that action measures in the equality action plan should align with all corporate objectives. The first and fifth objectives in the SIB corporate plan provide the greater opportunities to take equality action measures.

TABLE 3: COMMENTS ON AUDIT OF INEQUALITIES

Comments by	Comments made	SIB response
CAJ	CAJ recommends that SIB publish and or consult on its draft audit of inequalities.	The draft audit of inequalities was made available to consultees during the consultation period (for information). We regard it as a background document rather than something on which to consult. The Equality Commission has made it clear that consultation on the audit of inequalities is not a requirement.
CAJ	CAJ hopes that any data gaps identified in the audit of inequalities will be addressed and that the audit will provide a useful tool for policy makers when applying S75 beyond the scope of the action-based plan.	The audit of inequalities was drafted with this in mind and this is our intention.
CAJ	CAJ recommends that SIB commits to publish and consult on its audit of inequalities and action plan in the future.	The Equality Scheme includes a commitment to monitoring progress on the delivery of our action plan measures annually and updating the action plan as necessary to ensure that it remains effective and relevant to SIB's functions and work (paragraph 2.15). The audit of inequalities does not form part of the equality scheme but we will take account of the need to update it as and when appropriate in order to inform the action plan.

Comments by	Comments made	SIB response
Disability Action	Disability Action is disappointed that the audit of inequalities did not accompany the Equality Scheme and Action Plan.	The draft audit of inequalities was made available to consultees during the consultation period (for information). We regard it as a background document rather than something on which to consult. The Equality Commission has made it clear that consultation on the audit of inequalities is not a requirement.
NIPSA	We would want to see a commitment from SIB that the audit of inequalities is not a one off process or yearly process that the audit is a living process which requires an ongoing, full and comprehensive analysis of inequalities.	The Equality Scheme includes a commitment to monitoring progress on the delivery of our action plan measures annually and updating the action plan as necessary to ensure that it remains effective and relevant to SIB's functions and work (paragraph 2.15). The audit of inequalities does not form part of the equality scheme but we will take account of the need to update it as and when appropriate in order to inform the action plan.

Appendix 8: SIB Operating Strategy

1. SIB's operating strategy describes its high level approach to delivering its objectives and outcomes. SIB's concept of operations is –
 - to deploy resources in support of projects and the development of public sector delivery capabilities; and
 - to deploy resources to encourage a well-informed market capable of delivering projects at competitive prices.
2. SIB will deploy staff and expert advisors to work in partnerships with Departments, representative bodies and the private sector to draft annual versions of the ISNI. It will consult widely on these drafts and take proper account of the responses it receives. It will monitor progress with the implementation of the strategy and will publish regular reports to inform the decisions of Ministers and officials. SIB will fund research to monitor the capabilities of the public and private sector and will recommend amendments to the strategic investment profile where such research indicates these are necessary.
3. SIB will deploy staff in support of individual projects and programmes. It will agree the terms of engagement of its advisors with its partners and express these in formal Operational Partnership Agreements. Where this will accelerate delivery and reduce risk, SIB will use its enabling budget to part-fund expert consultancy employed by Departments.
4. SIB will continue to identify opportunities where its staff can usefully fill project and programme director posts.
5. In furtherance of the Government's reform programme, SIB will work to improve the delivery capabilities of Departments by supporting the development of Programme Delivery Support Units. It will continue to offer secondment opportunities both to senior civil servants and to more junior staff. It will work closely with the Central Procurement Directorate (CPD) to implement best practice in procurement across central government. SIB will continue to promote the use of standard contracts where these reduce costs and lead times.
6. SIB will inform the market place of the flow of projects arising from the ISNI. It will identify opportunities for public private partnerships where these offer best value.
7. SIB will continue to support the "Wider Markets" initiative by providing public sector organisations with expert advice and access to specialist support from external consultants.
8. SIB will act as a bridge between the public and private sectors to promote mutual beneficial understanding. It will continue to inform the market

of the likely flow of projects and develop contacts in private firms with the aim of encouraging their interest in Northern Ireland as a place to do business. It will do this through a marketing mix that includes sponsored conferences, sector briefings, personal meetings, magazine and newspaper articles, the SIB website and media interviews.

9. SIB will continue to develop its organisational capabilities. It will recruit and retain high-quality advisory staff by offering appropriate remuneration packages. It will invest in new IT systems where these will improve its efficiency and effectiveness. It will deploy sufficient administrative staff to ensure it meets the high standards of financial management and record keeping required by the public sector. It will develop its reporting processes to meet the need of OFMDFM and DFP. It will continue to fulfil its obligations under the Freedom of Information Act.

10. In undertaking all of the above, SIB will have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity and good relations. In particular, consultation processes will include organisations representing groups in the nine Section 75 categories and views on the equality implications of the issues under consultation will be invited and taken into account. Monitoring procedures will include arrangements for assessing the equality impacts of policies and the implementation of best practice in procurement will incorporate those elements identified as capable of better promoting equality of opportunity.

Section 75 Duties

Under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, the Strategic Investment Board Limited is required to draw up an Equality Scheme setting out how equality of opportunity will be promoted through the implementation of all functions.

Section 75 imposes a duty to promote equality of opportunity between people in nine categories and to have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between people of different religious beliefs, political opinion or racial group.

The nine categories relating to people are:

1. Religious beliefs
2. Political opinion
3. Racial groups
4. Age
5. Marital status
6. Sexual orientation
7. Men and women generally
8. People with a disability and those without

9. People with dependants and those without.

We, the Strategic Investment Board Limited, are committed to the fulfilment of Section 75 duties in all areas of responsibility. The Strategic Investment Board Limited Equality Scheme, which sets out a series of principles and an action plan to implement the new tasks identified, was approved by the Equality Commission in November 2005. This appendix summarises the Equality Scheme and sets out what we intend to do to implement it.

Consultation

A commitment to full and meaningful consultation lies at the heart of our Equality Scheme. We recognise the importance of consultation on all matters relating to Section 75 duties and we will apply best practice guidelines when carrying out consultation. In particular, we will try our best to make all consultations timely, open and inclusive.

We will consult as widely as possible and include any organisation or group which has a particular interest in our work. We will apply the following principles when consulting:

- We will begin as early as possible.
- We will aim to allow two months for all consultations, where possible.
- We will work with groups representing people in the Section 75 categories to identify the best ways to consult.
- We will use different methods of consultation for different groups according to their needs – methods might include face to face meetings, advisory groups, surveys, consultative panels and Internet discussions.
- We will make the language in our consultation documents as clear as possible.
- We will give extra consideration to the needs of young people and people with learning disabilities.
- We will provide sufficient information so that those we consult can consider the full implications of our proposals.
- We will take steps to make sure there is full participation at any consultation meetings – this will include careful consideration of, among other things, the time of day, the suitability of the venue, how the meeting is run and child care arrangements.

Impact of Policies

The Equality Scheme sets out how we will assess the impact of our policies on the promotion of equality of opportunity. We will consider the impact of all our current policies through a process called “screening”. We will look at each policy in terms of whether there is:

- Higher or lower participation or uptake (by the different groups within the nine categories).

- Different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in different groups.
- Any opportunity to better promote equality of opportunity or good relations.
- Indications (in earlier consultation) that particular policies create problems for particular groups.

If a policy is likely to create any of these situations then we will consider conducting an “equality impact assessment”. This is a thorough review of a policy, including consultation with everyone affected by it, which can result in suggestions for change.

We consulted on the results of the screening during the winter of 2005/06 and completed the process by June 2006.

In future whenever we are developing a new policy – or revising an existing one – we will screen the policy at as early a stage as possible and consult on the results of the screening. If necessary, we will carry out equality impact assessments on these policies before any decision is made and take the results into account when making decisions.

Monitoring

We have put in place a system to monitor the impact of our policies on the different groups of people in Section 75. Some of the information we will need to collect is personal and so we will act sensitively at all times.

If the monitoring shows that a policy is having more negative impact on equality of opportunity than we thought, we will revise the policy to reduce or remove the negative impacts. If the monitoring shows that there are new opportunities to promote equality of opportunity, we will revise the policy to take advantage of them.

We will review the monitoring results every year and report the results as part of our annual report to the Equality Commission.

Access to Information

We will publish the results of the screening of any policy, the results of any equality impact assessments and what we find out through the monitoring process. The Equality Scheme contains a list of groups which we will inform but we will also make information available to the general public. We will do this by issuing press releases, obtaining media coverage and publishing information on our website.

We will make sure that all this information is fully accessible by:

- Publishing everything in a timely manner.
- Making the language as clear as possible.
- Making documents available, on request, in alternative formats such as Braille, disk and audio cassette.
- Making documents available, on request, in minority languages for those who may have difficulties with information provided only in English.

- Giving extra consideration to the needs of young people and people with learning disabilities.

During 2006 we reviewed our arrangements for providing information to make sure that they are effective, taking account of best practice guidelines.

Staff Training

We will include targets relating to our Section 75 duties in our three year corporate plan and the annual business plan, as appropriate, and report progress in our annual report. Implementation of Section 75 duties will be included in the personal performance plans of all staff who are directly engaged in this work. In addition, a commitment to Section 75 duties will be included in all job descriptions.

All staff will be made aware of the Equality Scheme and the duties imposed by Section 75 and we will make sure that all new staff are made aware as part of their induction. We will draw up a programme for the delivery of more focused training for staff in management roles and those involved in research and data collection, policy development, service design, monitoring and evaluation. We will evaluate the effectiveness of the training programme on a regular basis.

All staff will have access to the full version of the Equality Scheme.

Review

We will review progress on implementing our Equality Scheme every year and report to the Equality Commission. We will also undertake a thorough review of the Equality Scheme after five years, or earlier if appropriate.

Contacts

The Chief Executive is accountable to the Board for developing, maintaining and reviewing the Equality Scheme. The main contact for enquiries and complaints is the Strategic Investment Board Limited HR Manager, who is:

Name	Julie Monahan
Title	HR Manager
Address	Strategic Investment Board Carleton House Floor 1 Gasworks Business Park 1 Cromac Avenue Belfast BT7 2JA
Tel.	028 9090 9459
e mail	Julie.Monahan@sibni.org
Textphone	028 9090 9472
SMS	077 9230 1647

Appendix 12 Fraud Prevention Policy

SIB's policy on fraud can be found in the "*SIB Policy and Procedures on Fraud: Including the SIB Whistle-blowing Policy and Guidance on Conflicts of Interest*" (DF1/10/190918), the introduction to which is extracted below.

There is a continuing need to raise staff awareness of their responsibility to safeguard public resources against the risk of fraud. The overall purpose of the Fraud Prevention Policy is to detail responsibilities regarding the prevention of fraud. The procedures to be followed in the event of a fraud being detected or suspected are detailed in Section 2 "SIB Fraud Response Plan" on page 13.

SIB requires all staff at all times to act honestly and with integrity, and to safe-guard the public resources for which the Company is responsible.

Fraud is an ever-present threat to these resources and hence must be a concern to all members of staff. Fraud may occur internally or externally and may be perpetrated by staff, consultants, suppliers, and contractors, individually or in collusion with others. SIB will not tolerate any level of fraud or corruption; consequently SIB policy is to investigate thoroughly all suspected frauds and allegations (anonymous or otherwise) and, where appropriate, refer to the police at the earliest juncture. SIB is also committed to ensuring that opportunities for fraud and corruption are reduced to the lowest possible level of risk.

The purpose of this document is to set out the responsibilities of staff with regard to fraud prevention, what staff should do if they suspect fraud and the action that will be taken by management in such circumstances under the following headings.

- SIB Fraud Prevention Policy, this section.
- SIB Fraud Response Plan, on page 13.
- SIB Whistle-blowing Policy on page 17.

Appendix 13 Relocation Policy

Relocation Scheme

A13.1 Purpose of Scheme

To provide financial assistance (up to £8,000) with relocation costs for moves within the UK and from overseas.

A13.2 Eligibility

The scheme is open to all newly appointed staff on appointments for two years or more moving to Northern Ireland from outside Northern Ireland. It is not eligible for people already residing in Northern Ireland.

This move must take place within one year of taking up the position (6 months after passing probationary period).

If you are not sure of your eligibility for this scheme, you *must* first seek clarification from the HR Manager.

Reimbursement is available for moves within the UK and Ireland provided your previous residence is not within reasonable daily travelling distance and as a consequence of the move you are changing your main residence rather than acquiring a second home.

Travelling and removal costs would normally include your cohabitant partner and your unmarried dependent children under the age of sixteen or in full-time education or other approved full-time training at the time of appointment.

You must claim reimbursement within HM Revenue and Customs time limits, see UK Taxation Implications paragraph.

A13.3 Allowable Expenses

Financial assistance with relocation costs up to £8,000 in any one case is available.

Reimbursement of relocation costs to include:

- Solicitors' fees in respect of sale and purchase
- Search, survey and property enquiry fees
- Mortgage arrangement/redemption fees
- Estate agents' buying/selling fees or advertising costs
- Removal costs (sea freight only for moves into the UK)
- Travel costs to port of entry for moves into the UK (at economy class rates or equivalent)
- Storage costs to a maximum period of 26 weeks
- Stamp duty
- Valuation fees
- Conveyancing

- Land registry fees
- Registration fees
- Excess baggage allowance

The following expenses would be excluded from the scheme:

- Work-related items (e.g. office).
- Removal of motor vehicle, livestock or pets
- The costs of disconnection/reconnection of electrical or other household appliances or any household cleaning
- The costs incurred in the obtaining of visas/passports

A13.4 Repayment Conditions

SIB would seek reimbursement in the event of an individual leaving employment earlier than expected, that is:

Departure during first year	100%
Departure during second year	66%
Departure during third year	33%

A13.5 Removal and Travel Costs (UK and Overseas)

Moves within the UK

You should obtain three estimates from removal firms and submit these with your claim. You are responsible for expenses incurred when travelling to new Northern Ireland residence.

If you are relocating from the mainland, you may claim reimbursement for a sea journey at tourist, car ferry or equivalent rate. You would then be responsible for travelling costs from port of entry to Northern Ireland residence.

You should pay the chosen removal firm direct for the packing, shipment and delivery of household effects to an address in Northern Ireland, or to storage, including the associated insurance. You should then submit a detailed invoice with your claim form. You will be reimbursed for the allowable expenses and up to the maximum limit of £8,000. If this arrangement would be problematic, please contact the Finance Manager.

You may seek reimbursement of one journey to the UK for you and dependent family (see Eligibility paragraph) to the port of entry only as outlined below:

Air travel

At tourist or economy class rate

Sea travel

At tourist, car ferry or equivalent rate

Rail travel

At second class rate, including the cost of sleepers, from previous home to the point of embarkation

Car travel

Cost of petrol (not mileage allowance) from previous home to point of embarkation

A13.6 Taxation Implications

From 6 April 1993, HM Revenue and Customs agreed to include as statutory tax-free concessions certain relocation expenses for persons subject to a financial limit of £8,000. See Notice IR34, available from HM Revenue and Customs, for further information.

To qualify for exemption, expenses and benefits must be eligible and must satisfy specified conditions. The qualifying expenses and benefits are listed under Allowable Expenses and on Form PD36. In accordance with HM Revenue and Customs rules, all expenses need to be evidenced by receipts or other documentation. Full details are set out in Schedule 11A of the Taxes Act 1988.

The conditions state that the employee must change their sole or main residence for reasons of starting the new employment provided their previous residence is not within reasonable daily travelling distance and their new residence is within a reasonable travelling distance. Note this does not require an employee to sell a former home, merely to change main residence

The expenses must be incurred or benefits provided before the end of the year of assessment following the one in which the employee starts the new appointment. It does not matter when the employee moves home. For example, if an employee was appointed during the tax year 2002/03 the expenses must be provided by end of tax year 2003/04. Failure to do so may result in loss of HM Revenue and Customs concessions.

Where an individual comes to the UK for employment their travelling costs and those of the spouse and family may be eligible for relief under Section 195 ICTA 1988. For further details see HM Revenue and Customs notice IR134. If eligible, these costs may be refunded tax-free, in addition to the £8,000 limit referred to above.

SIB will report the total amount paid for relocation to the local Inspector of Taxes at the end of each tax year. If that total exceeds

£8,000, the Inspector will seek payment of tax at the appropriate marginal rate on the excess. Any taxation liability over the concession limit or outside of the concessions will be the responsibility of the employee.

A13.7 Claim Procedure

Reimbursement claims should be made with receipted invoices and documents attached, and submitted to the Finance Manager. You are advised to retain copies for future reference.

SIB will not pay contractors direct or pay in advance.

Original receipted invoices and documents will be copied and returned to you. (You should retain receipted invoices and documents in case the Tax Inspector requires these.)

You will receive reimbursement against the allowable expenses and up to the maximum limit of expenditure either by cheque or through the payroll.

Appendix 14 Training Policy

A14.1 Introduction

SIB is committed to developing a workforce that continuously strives to improve the quality of services it provides and identifies how to keep up to date personally and professionally.

SIB aims to develop a 'learning organisational culture' and incorporate new and innovative ideas so as to develop improved ways of working. It seeks to do this by utilising the talents, skills and experience of its workforce and encourage employees to seek out learning opportunities at the discretion of their line management.

This policy applies to all SIB employees as well as secondees from other organisations including the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) and the Senior Civil Service (SCS).

A14.2 Corporate Training

Some training needs are clear and, in a number of cases, are mandatory to meet statutory requirements, for example Fire Safety Training. Other training, such as that provided in equal opportunities, may be aimed at ensuring that SIB staff work in accordance with legal requirements or good practice. Someone working in a professional, specialist advisory role may need to attend external seminars and workshops to ensure that they remain fully up-to-date. Beyond these basic areas of training, training needs may be identified as a result of changing work practices in SIB or the wider NICS, perhaps through the introduction of new equipment or technology.

Training in the following areas have been identified as mandatory within SIB

- **Induction Training** for all new staff: This will involve introducing staff into the SIB and its work practices and, will cover statutory obligations in relation to Health and Safety.
- **Health and Safety Training.**
- **Equal Opportunities and Diversity Training** for all staff in line with SIB Equality Scheme.
- **Training in relation and Disability Action Plan.**
- **Electronic Document and Records Management System training** – i.e. TRIM.
- **Performance Management and Appraisal Training** for managers responsible for staff.
- **Competency-based Interviewing** for those involved in recruitment panels.
- **Freedom of Information.**
- **Procurement**

A14.3 Individual Training Needs

The individual training and development needs will be identified through:

- The annual performance appraisal.
- Requests from employees.

The training and development needs identified will be met through a variety of activities depending on the nature and extent of the requirements deemed necessary after assessment.

A14.4 Annual Training Plan

Every year SIB will produce a training plan to include the cost of both Corporate Training and Individual Training. This will be approved by the Board.

A14.5 Responsibilities

The HR Manager has overall responsibility for the delivery of the Training plan. He/she will be responsible for ensuring that all staff completes their training plan as part of their annual review and that corporate training is carried out.

The HR Manager is responsible for coordinating training plans and highlighting areas of specific training need.

All staff are responsible for ensuring that they complete a training plan with their line manager as part of their annual appraisal.