



**General Teaching Council  
for Northern Ireland**

Promoting Teacher Professionalism

# GTCNI Equality Scheme

**Updated: September 2024**

**Next Review Date: October 2028**

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

***Approved by the Equality Commission for NI  
on: 20 December 2024***

## Version Control

Date	Summary of Changes	Comments
September 2024	Updated Equality Scheme	Sent to Equality Commission for Review
October 2024	V1.12 Equality Scheme	Updated post Equality Commission Review
November 2024	V1.13	Final draft for review by Equality Commission
December 2024	V1.13	Final draft approved by Equality Commission
February 2025	V1.14	Final version published on website

## Foreword

In our Equality Scheme we set out how the General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland (GTCNI) proposes to fulfil its Section 75 statutory duties.

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 Act.

We will commit the necessary resources in terms of people, time and money to make sure that the Section 75 duties are complied with, and that the Equality Scheme is implemented effectively, and on time. GTCNI has committed the necessary resources to implement this scheme and 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.

GTCNI is committed to the development and delivery of a planned programme of communication and training for staff on the Equality Scheme and commitments made and will ensure that staff are trained in the duties and that the scheme is correctly implemented.

On behalf of GTCNI 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 NI Act 1998 and taking into consideration Equality Commission guidelines.

Signed by the Accounting Officer:

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Ian Gallagher". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

**Ian Gallagher**

**Interim Chief Executive Officer / Registrar**

**Date: 17/02/2025**

Please note: The Foreword and Annexes II and III form part of the Equality Scheme.

## Contents

1.	About GTCNI .....	1
2.	Our Equality Scheme .....	4
3.	Statutory Duties .....	4
3.1.	Section 75(1) Duties In carrying out its functions .....	4
3.2.	Section 75(2) Duties .....	4
3.3.	Schedule 9 4. (1) .....	5
4.	Arrangements for Assessing Compliance with Section 75 Duties .....	5
4.1.	Responsibilities and Reporting .....	5
4.2.	Consultation Arrangements .....	6
5.	Assessing, Monitoring and Publishing the Impact of Policies .....	8
5.1.	Screening .....	9
5.2.	Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) .....	10
5.3.	Publishing the Assessment of the likely Impacts of Policies .....	10
5.4.	How will the Information be Published .....	11
5.5.	Where will the Information be Published .....	11
6.	Arrangements for Monitoring any Adverse Impact of Adopted Policies on Equality of Opportunity .....	11
7.	Training for GTCNI Staff .....	12
7.1.	Commitment to Staff Training .....	12
7.2.	Awareness Raising and Training Arrangements .....	12
8.	Monitoring and Evaluation of Training .....	13
9.	Timetable for Measures Proposed in our Equality Scheme .....	14
10.	Arrangements for Ensuring and Assessing Public Access to Information and Services .....	14
10.1.	Access to Information .....	14
10.2.	Access to Services .....	15
11.	Complaints Procedure .....	15
12.	Publication of the Equality Scheme .....	16
13.	Review of the Equality Scheme .....	17
14.	Table of Annexes .....	18
14.1.	ANNEX I – Section 75 Category Groups .....	18
14.2.	ANNEX II Potential List of Consultees .....	19
14.3.	ANNEX III Timetable for Proposed Measures .....	24
14.4.	ANNEX IV Glossary of Terms .....	25

## Contact Information

If you have any questions or comments regarding our Equality Scheme, please contact in the first instance our HR Officer at the address given below and we will respond to you as soon as possible.

The General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland  
4th Floor Albany House  
73 - 75 Great Victoria Street  
Belfast BT2 7AF  
Tel: 028 9033 3390  
Email: [info@gtcni.org.uk](mailto:info@gtcni.org.uk)

If you require a copy of our Equality Scheme in an alternative format (large print, Braille, audio format, easy read or another language), please contact us as above.

## 1. About GTCNI

The General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland (GTCNI) has been promoting teacher professionalism in Northern Ireland since 2002.

As the professional body for teachers in Northern Ireland we are dedicated to enhancing the status of teaching and promoting the highest standards of professional conduct and practice.

Our small, dedicated team deliver professional registration services to over 28,000 registered teachers and applicants to the register to help maintain public confidence and trust in the profession.

We are funded by teacher subscription fees, at a level that has remained unchanged for over 20 years, and, therefore, have a clear line of accountability to teachers on how we spend their money.

The aims of GTCNI are to:

- represent the professional interests of teachers;
- provide authority on education matters reflecting the experience of practising teachers; and,
- work with other bodies on matters affecting the well-being of teachers to improve teachers' working lives.

The Department of Education (DE), responsible for setting policy and strategy and the central administration of education and related services in Northern Ireland, has a wide complex range of functions, including being responsible and accountable for the quality of education in grant-aided schools, and leading on the delivery of the Executive's Children and Young People's Strategy and its Childcare Strategy. The Department is supported in delivering its functions by a range of Arm's Length Bodies (ALBs), each of which is accountable to the Department.

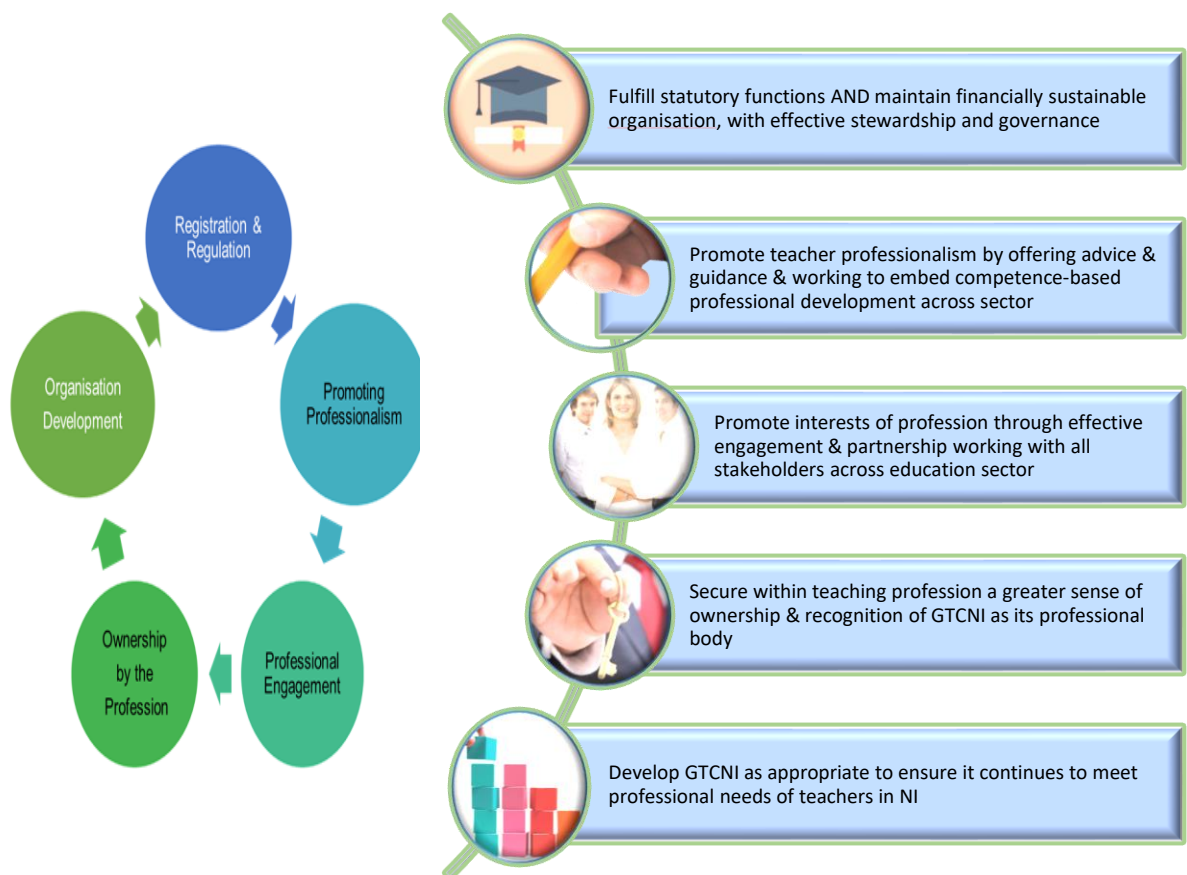
GTCNI, as one such ALB, is the statutory, professional and regulatory body for the teaching profession in Northern Ireland established by the Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1998, as amended by the 2003 and 2006 Education (NI) Orders.

GTCNI's responsibilities and purpose is to work in collaboration with the teaching profession and key stakeholders across the education sector in Northern Ireland as an independent and respected professional body representing teachers by:

- establishing and maintaining a register of teachers to support the registration of all teachers in grant-aided schools;
- the approval of qualifications for the purposes of registration;

- ensuring that everyone wishing to teach in Northern Ireland schools is appropriately qualified, registered and regulated;
- advocating the highest standards of professional conduct and practice;
- providing advice to DE and employing authorities on all matters relating to teaching including the standards of entry to the profession; the training, career development and performance management of teachers and standards of teaching and teachers' conduct;
- promoting career-long professional development and providing government and employing authorities with recommendations for enhancing teachers' career-long professional development; and
- being an authoritative voice on behalf of the profession.

GTCNI is led by its Corporate Plan, which is set in the context of DE's own Corporate Plan "Every Child" (2023-2028), with a number of key strategic priorities:



GTCNI is responsible for ensuring that the aims and objectives agreed upon with DE, and approved by the Minister for Education, align with and promote the efficient, economic and effective use of staff and other resources by GTCNI.

The Interim Chief Executive Officer/Registrar is designated as GTCNI's Accounting Officer by DE's Accounting Officer and is personally responsible for safeguarding the

public funds for which he has charge; for ensuring propriety and regularity in the handling of those public funds; and for the day-to-day operations and management of GTCNI.

GTCNI's Senior Management Team (SMT) will support the Interim Chief Executive Officer / Registrar in discharging his responsibilities, including the delivery of GTCNI's functions.

GTCNI is committed to the discharge of its Section 75 obligations in all parts of our organisation and we will commit the necessary available resources in terms of people, time and money to ensure that the Section 75 duties are complied with and that the Equality Scheme is implemented effectively.



## 2. Our Equality Scheme

GTCNI's Equality Scheme outlines our arrangements for assessing our compliance with Section 75 statutory duties;

- assessing and consulting on the likely impact of internal policies (relating to people who work for GTCNI), as well as external policies (relating to those who are, or could be, served by GTCNI);
- monitoring any adverse impact of GTCNI policies on the promotion of equality of opportunity and how we will consult with those likely to be affected by them (known as screening);
- publishing the results of such assessments;
- training our staff, and
- ensuring and assessing public access to information and services provided by GTCNI.

## 3. Statutory Duties

Section 75 of the NI Act 1998 (the Act) requires GTCNI to comply with two statutory duties:

### 3.1. Section 75(1) Duties In carrying out its functions

GTCNI is required to have due regard of 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; and
- Persons with dependants and persons without.

### 3.2. Section 75(2) Duties

Without prejudice to the obligations above, in carrying out its functions GTCNI is 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 authority. This includes employment and procurement functions.

In addition:

### 3.3. Schedule 9 4. (1)

Schedule 9 4. (1) of the Act requires GTCNI 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.

## 4. Arrangements for Assessing Compliance with Section 75 Duties

GTCNI's arrangements for assessing compliance with the Section 75 statutory duties are outlined in this Equality Scheme.

GTCNI is committed to the discharge of its Section 75 obligations in all parts of our work and we will commit the necessary available 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.

GTCNI will liaise closely with the Equality Commission to ensure that progress on the implementation of our Equality Scheme is maintained. We are committed to the fulfilment of our Section 75 obligations in all parts of our work.

### 4.1. Responsibilities and Reporting

Responsibility for the effective implementation of the Equality Scheme lies with the Interim Chief Executive Officer / Registrar, as Accounting Officer. GTCNI's Head of Corporate Services, supported by the HR Officer, is accountable to the Interim Chief Executive Officer / Registrar, and in turn, to DE's Permanent Secretary, for the development, implementation, maintenance and review of the Scheme, including any good practice or guidance that has been or may be issued by the Equality Commission.

Objectives and targets relating to the statutory duties will be integrated into GTCNI's Annual Business Plan and reflected in job descriptions and performance plans of relevant staff. By 31 August each year GTCNI submits an Annual Progress Report to the Equality Commission on the implementation of the statutory duties and section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Order (NI) 2006. The latest report is available on our [website](#).

GTCNI has developed Diversity and Disability Action Plans as well as an Equality Action Plan. The Equality Action Plan details how GTCNI will promote equality of opportunity and good relations through its business functions.

Plans are developed on the basis of audit information as well as feedback on annual monitoring exercises by the Equality Commission.

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.

GTCNI will inform the Equality 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.

#### 4.2. Consultation Arrangements

**(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.**

**(Schedule 9(9)(2) in making any decision with respect to a policy adopted or proposed to be adopted by it, a public authority shall take into account any such assessment and consultation as is mentioned in paragraph 4(2)(b) carried out in relation to the policy.**

GTCNI recognises the importance of consultation in all aspects of the implementation of our statutory equality duties. GTCNI will consult with relevant stakeholders on its Equality Scheme, Equality Action Plan, Equality Impact assessments and other matters relevant to Section 75 statutory duties.

We are committed to carrying out consultation with the following principles (as contained in the Equality Commission's guidance 'Section 75 of the NI Act 1998 - A Guide for Public Authorities (April 2010)').

All consultations will seek the views of those directly affected by the matter / policy, the Equality Commission, representative groups, voluntary and community groups, our staff and Trade Unions and such other groups who have a legitimate interest in the matter, whether or not they have a direct economic or personal interest.

In the matter of policies adopted / to be adopted (new policies), GTCNI shall take into account any such assessment and consultation carried out into the likely impact on the promotion of equality of opportunity and good relations in relation to the policy.

Consultation with relevant stakeholders (see Annex 2) will begin as early as possible and will consider format and accessibility needs in order to remove barriers to engagement.

We will 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 qualitative or quantitative data.

Initially, relevant consultees (see Annex 2), will be notified as a matter of course, (by email) of the matter / policy being consulted upon to ensure they are aware of all consultations. Thereafter, to ensure the most effective use of 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.

If needs be, GTCNI will ask consultees what their preferred consultation methods are and will give consideration to these. Methods of consultation that will be considered include:

1. Face-to-face meetings, including Teams.
2. Focus groups.
3. Written documents with the opportunity to comment in writing.
4. Questionnaires.
5. Information / notification and / or documents by email.

Additional consultation methods that will be considered are:

6. Internet discussions or
7. Telephone consultations.

This list is not exhaustive and is reviewed on an annual basis to ensure it remains relevant to our functions and policies. We may develop additional methods of [consultation](#).

As GTCNI is a very small organisation, currently using a hybrid working approach, the use of Microsoft Teams and the sharing of consultation and documents by email has proved successful in the past and continues to be a preferred approach. That said, GTCNI will always give due consideration to the accessibility and format of every method of consultation used in order to remove barriers to the consultation process.

Initial approaches will also provide for an opportunity to opt in / opt out of any consultation.

For face-to-face meetings, particularly those involving a wider group of stakeholder consultees, GTCNI will take cognisance of the fact that affected individuals and representative groups may have different needs. GTCNI will take appropriate measures to ensure full participation in any meetings that are held. GTCNI will consider for example the time of day, the appropriateness of the venue, whether a venue 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. Information will be made available, on request, in alternative formats, in a timely manner, usually within 4 weeks.

The consultation period for this scheme and other equality consultations will last for a minimum of 12 weeks.

There may be exceptional circumstances when these timescales are not feasible (for example implementing legislation, meeting Health and Safety requirements, addressing urgent public health matters or complying with Court judgements). Timescales may be shortened to eight weeks or less to include the date of final

policy implementation. We may continue consultation thereafter and will review the policy as part of our monitoring commitments.

In making any decision with respect to a policy adopted or proposed to be adopted, GTCNI will take into account any assessment and consultation carried out in relation to the policy.

Specific training is provided to those facilitating consultations to ensure that they have the necessary skills to communicate effectively with consultees.

Except for exceptional circumstances, consultation will always precede and inform any change of policy proposed by GTCNI. If a policy must be implemented immediately, however, it will be reviewed and consulted on as part of the ongoing monitoring process, and comments received will be taken into consideration.

GTCNI also undertakes to provide feedback to consultees in a timely manner. This can take the form of feedback by email / Microsoft Teams in relation to a draft document or a more formal feedback report to include summary information on the policy consulted upon, a summary of consultees' comments and a summary of GTCNI's consideration of and response to consultees' input and will be done so in formats suitable to consultees.

## 5. Assessing, Monitoring and Publishing the Impact of Policies

**The 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)).**

**The 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)).**

In the context of Section 75, 'policy' is broadly defined meaning that it essentially encompasses all the ways in which GTCNI currently carries out, or proposes to carry out its functions, in relation to this jurisdiction.

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', 'final'. In making any decision with respect to a policy adopted or proposed to be adopted, GTCNI will 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.

GTCNI applies screening and equality impact assessment tools, using standard templates derived from the Equality Commission's best practice templates, to assess the likely impact of a policy on the promotion of equality of opportunity and good relations:

- Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 – A Guide for Public Authorities (April 2010) and
- Practical Guidance on Equality Impact Assessment (February 2005).

### 5.1. Screening

The purpose of screening is to identify which policies are likely to have a minor/major impact on equality of opportunity and/or good relations. This is completed at the earliest opportunity in the policy development/review process. GTCNI Corporate Services, ordinarily responsible for the development of the policy, will lead the screening process and involve other colleagues, and, where relevant, possible key stakeholders in the process.

The Screening Template used by GTCNI has been adopted from the Equality Commission's guides.

For all new or updated policies, as well as collating information on policy scoping, implementation factors, stakeholders likely to be affected, details of other related policies, other available evidence and needs, experiences and priorities, the following questions are applied as part of the screening process:

1. 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)?
2. Are there opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity for people within the Section 75 categories?
3. To what extent is the policy likely to impact on good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group (minor/major/none)?
4. Are there opportunities to better promote good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group?

A copy of GTCNI's Equality and Human Rights Policy Screening Template can be found [here](#).

The completed screening template will list the reasons to support the decisions, any proposed changes, amendments and the likely impact of a policy in respect of one, or more, of the equality of opportunity and / or good relations categories i.e.

- the policy has been 'screened in' for equality impact assessment; or
- the policy has been 'screened out' with mitigation or an alternative policy proposed to be adopted.

Mitigation is where an assessment (screening in this case) reveals that a particular policy has an adverse impact on equality of opportunity and / or good relations. GTCNI must consider ways of delivering the policy outcomes which have a less adverse effect on the relevant Section 75 categories, or

- the policy has been 'screened out' without mitigation or an alternative policy proposed to be adopted.

If the 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, GTCNI will review and may decide to proceed with an equality impact assessment (depending on the policy) or 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 mitigation occurs, GTCNI will outline in the screening template the reasons to support this decision together with the proposed changes, amendments or alternative policy.

If the 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, GTCNI will normally undertake an equality impact assessment.

If the 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, GTCNI may decide to screen the policy out. If a policy is 'screened out' as having no relevance to equality of opportunity or good relations, the completed screening template will give details of the reasons for the decision taken.

As soon as possible following the completion of the screening process, the screening template will be made available on GTCNI's [website](#).

In response to any concerns, including by the Equality Commission, that might be raised in relation to a screening decision, based on the supporting evidence GTCNI undertakes to review its screening decision.

## 5.2. Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA)

An equality impact assessment (EQIA) is a thorough and systematic analysis of a 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 can also be an opportunity to demonstrate the likely positive outcomes of a policy and identify opportunities to more effectively promote equality of opportunity and good relations. It involves a thorough and systematic analysis of a policy, whether that policy is formal or informal, and irrespective of the scope of the policy.

If policy screening has identified that an EQIA is necessary, GTCNI will carry it out in accordance with Equality Commission guidance. The EQIA will be carried out as part of the policy development process, before the policy is implemented.

Consultation, as described earlier, will be undertaken in relation to the EQIA.

Completed EQIAs will be made available on GTCNI's [website](#).

## 5.3. Publishing the Assessment of the likely Impacts of Policies

Publication	Frequency	Details
Screening Reports	Annually	List of Policies screened



Publication	Frequency	Details
		Aims of Policies screened Screening Decisions Any mitigation Any EQLAs
Screening Templates	Annually	Current template in use
Equality Impact Assessments	Annually	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 Decision taken Future monitoring plans

#### 5.4. How will the Information be Published

All information GTCNI publishes is accessible and will be made available in alternative formats on request. Contact details for enquiring about same are provided at the beginning of this document.

#### 5.5. Where will the Information be Published

The information will be made available on request and will be periodically uploaded onto GTCNI's website as above.

Where GTCNI considers it appropriate, it will inform the general public about the availability of this material through communications such as press releases / website messaging etc.

## 6. Arrangements for Monitoring any Adverse Impact of Adopted Policies on Equality of Opportunity

### (Schedule 9(4)(2)(c))

Monitoring Section 75 information (e.g. race/ethnic origin, sexual orientation, political opinion, religious belief, etc) involves the processing of sensitive personal data.

In order to carry out monitoring in a confidential and effective manner, GTCNI follows guidance from the Information Commissioner's Office and the Equality Commission.



How we collect and process information in line with legislation and guidance is detailed in our [Privacy Notices](#).

GTCNI will monitor any potential adverse impact of policies adopted on the promotion of equality of opportunity and will seek to monitor more broadly to identify opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity and good relations in line with Equality Commission guidance. For internal policies, this will involve gathering of evidence from internal staff surveys, performance system and appraisal feedback and staff surveys. For policies impacting on the wider stakeholder group, this will include monitoring of complaints, related information requests under FoIA / SAR and other feedback sources, surveys including staff surveys, team meetings etc.

If, over a two-year period, monitoring and evaluation indicates that a policy results in greater adverse impact than expected, or if opportunities arise which would allow for greater equality of opportunity to be promoted, GTCNI will ensure that the policy is revisited and revised, where possible, to determine if better outcomes can be achieved for the relevant equality groups.

We will review EQIA monitoring and publish information as part of as part of GTCNI's Section 75 annual progress report, which will be made available on GTCNI's website, or other format on request, following Equality Commission feedback. This will be carried out on an annual basis.

## 7. Training for GTCNI Staff

### **Schedule 9(4)(2)(e)**

#### **7.1. Commitment to Staff Training**

GTCNI recognises that training staff on the significance and impact of equality in the delivery of public services is crucial to the effective implementation of its Section 75 responsibilities.

Our Interim Chief Executive Officer / Registrar wishes to positively communicate the commitment of GTCNI to the S75 statutory duties, both internally and externally.

GTCNI, is committed to the promotion of equality and implementation of its Section 75 statutory duties. To this end, GTCNI will develop an effective communication and training programme for all staff and will ensure that GTCNI's commitment to Section 75 statutory duties is clear in all publications.

#### **7.2. Awareness Raising and Training Arrangements**

GTCNI will draw up a training plan for its staff based on business objectives and personal training requirements agreed with line managers to:

- make its Equality Scheme available to staff via our Human Resources for Staff shared folders;

- provide staff with a briefing on the Equality Scheme and ensure that any queries or questions from staff are addressed effectively within two months of its approval;
- provide staff with training on their Section 75 statutory duties and issues experienced by Section 75 groups to complement periodic diversity and disability training annual and also supplemented by JAM training and development;
- ensure performance management and personal training and development plans for all staff include a requirement to refresh such training periodically as mandated by GTCNI;
- include equality training as part of induction training for new staff;
- keep staff up to-date on Section 75 developments, and
- provide those staff involved in assessing policies; complaints; consultations; and implementing and monitoring the scheme with the necessary skills and knowledge.

GTCNI is supported in this training by a suite of training programmes developed by NICSHR Learning and Development on the LInKS System.

This training will include measures to raise the general awareness of all staff about:

- anti-discrimination legislation (including Section 75 and Schedule 9);
- the commitments within this Equality Scheme; and,
- the role that staff have in implementing the scheme.

Specific tailored training will be provided to key staff tasked with carrying out the drafting and implementation of tasks associated with bringing the Equality Scheme into practice including:

- assessing policies (screening and drafting the EQIA);
- addressing complaints in relation to compliance with GTCNI's Equality Scheme;
- the consultation processes, and
- implementing and monitoring the Equality Scheme.

## 8. Monitoring and Evaluation of Training

GTCNI's training programme will adhere to the following monitoring and evaluation arrangements:

- evaluating staff skills and knowledge necessary to achieve the above objectives;
- evaluating feedback from staff on the quality and effectiveness of the training, and identifying further training needs (this will include LInKS course feedback); and

- reporting the extent to which training objectives have been met as part of GTCNI's Section 75 Annual Progress Report, which will be submitted to the Equality Commission.

## 9. Timetable for Measures Proposed in our Equality Scheme

### **(Schedule 9, paragraph 4(3)(b))**

Annex III 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.

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 is listed in the timetable of measures at Annex III.

## 10. Arrangements for Ensuring and Assessing Public Access to Information and Services

### **(Schedule 9 (4)(2)(f))**

GTCNI is committed to ensuring that information issued by the organisation is fully accessible to the public. These arrangements will be kept under review to ensure that this remains the case.

GTCNI recognises that some groups may 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;
- People without formal education who cannot read and have no IT skills may require a different medium than the printed word;
- People whose physical location may restrict physical access e.g. those in rural areas;
- Members of ethnic minority groups, whose first language is not English, may have difficulties with information provided only in English, and
- People without access to a computer will not be able to avail of internet based dissemination.
- Children and young people who may not be able to access or fully understand information.

### 10.1. Access to Information

To ensure equality of opportunity in accessing information, GTCNI will, where assessed to be practical, provide information in alternative formats on request. If

such a request cannot be satisfied in full, GTCNI will seek an acceptable reasonable alternative. Alternative formats requested 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.

GTCNI will respond to requests for information in alternative formats in a timely manner, usually within 20 working days. If it is expected that this target cannot be met e.g. because of the complexity or volume of material requested, GTCNI will write out providing the reason(s) for the delay and an estimated response date.

Where appropriate, GTCNI will take account of relevant existing and developing good practice such as the Equality Commission's "Let's Talk Let's Listen" and guidance issued by the Participation Network etc.

## **10.2. Access to Services**

GTCNI services, in the main, are to those who apply to the Register of Teachers and their employers / potential employers, as well as to other teaching regulators. Within its regulatory functions, GTCNI indirectly services a wider stakeholder group including children and their guardians. Within its employment and procurement functions, GTCNI services are to those employed or who wish to work with us as well as to the providers of goods and services.

GTCNI is committed to ensuring that the services provided are fully accessible to relevant users in the community across the Section 75 categories.

GTCNI is also bound by the relevant provisions of current anti-discrimination legislation (including the relevant provisions of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995). Assessing public access to information and services, GTCNI monitor access to information and services, across all our functions, through such things as the monitoring of complaints and satisfaction surveys.

Annually we monitor and review delivery across all business areas/functions, in relation to access to information and services, to ensure equality of opportunity and good relations are promoted. This will be reported in our annual review.

GTCNI are committed to ensuring that facilities are designed to the requirements of all our customers.

## **11.Complaints Procedure**

A person wishing to complain that GTCNI has failed to comply with its Equality Scheme should contact:

HR Officer, Corporate Services  
The General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland  
4th Floor Albany House  
73 - 75 Great Victoria Street

Belfast BT2 7AF

Tel: 028 9033 3390

Email: [mailto:GTCNI Complaints Officer <complaintsofficer@gtcni.org.uk>](mailto:GTCNI.Complaints.Officer@gtcni.org.uk)

GTCNI will respond in accordance with its [Complaints Policy](#).

Under certain circumstances, due to the complexity of the matter, if a longer period is required, GTCNI will send an interim reply explaining the reasons and how the matter will be progressed.

If a complaint has not been resolved within a reasonable timescale, the complaint can be taken to the Equality Commission and GTCNI will co-operate fully in any subsequent investigation by them.

## 12. Publication of the Equality Scheme

### **(Schedule 9(4)(3)(c))**

GTCNI's Equality Scheme is available on our website at [www.gtcni.org.uk](http://www.gtcni.org.uk) and free of charge in print form and alternative formats from:

The General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland

4th Floor Albany House

73- 75 Great Victoria Street

Belfast BT2 7AF

Telephone: 028 9033 3390

E-mail: [info@gtcni.org.uk](mailto:info@gtcni.org.uk)

Text Relay: 18001 028 9033 3390

The following arrangements are in place for the publication of our Equality Scheme to ensure equality of access:

- GTCNI will make every effort to communicate the existence and content of our Equality Scheme. This may include press releases, prominent advertisements in the press, the internet and direct mail to relevant user groups representing the Section 75 categories;
- GTCNI will email a link to our approved Equality Scheme to relevant consultees on our consultation lists. Other relevant consultees without e-mail facilities will be notified by letter that the scheme is available upon request. We will respond to requests for alternative formats in a timely manner, usually within 20 working days.

- GTCNI's Equality Scheme will be made available upon 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.

## 13. Review of the Equality Scheme

### **Schedule 9 (8)(3)**

GTCNI will review the Equality Scheme within five years of submission of the scheme to the Equality Commission, or within a shorter timeframe to allow alignment with review of other planning cycles.

The review will evaluate the effectiveness of the Scheme in relation to the implementation of the Section 75 statutory duties relevant to our functions in Northern Ireland.

In undertaking the review GTCNI will follow guidance issued by the Equality Commission. A report of the review will be made public through our website [www.gtcni.org.uk](http://www.gtcni.org.uk) and sent to the Equality Commission.

## 14. Table of Annexes

### 14.1. ANNEX I – Section 75 Category Groups

Example of groups relevant to the Section 75 categories for Northern Ireland purposes. Please note, that this list is not exhaustive.

Category	Example Groups
<b>Religious belief</b>	For the purposes of Section 75, the term “religious belief” is the same definition used in the Fair Employment & Treatment and includes, but is not limited to, Buddhist; Catholic; Hindu; Jewish; Muslims, people of no religious belief; Protestants; Sikh; and other faiths. Religious belief also includes any perceived religious belief (or perceived lack of belief) and, in employment situations only, it also covers any “similar philosophical belief”.
<b>Political opinion</b>	Nationalist; Unionists; and members / supporters of other political parties.
<b>Racial group</b>	African, Asian, Caribbean, Caucasian, mixed ethnicities, other, Roma, Travellers.
<b>Gender</b>	Men, women, trans-gendered people, transsexual people, non-binary people.
<b>Marital status</b>	Civil partners, divorced people; married people; separated people; single people; widowed people.
<b>Age</b>	Young people; 65+ people.
<b>Disability</b>	Persons with disabilities as defined by the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.
<b>Dependents</b>	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.
<b>Sexual Orientation</b>	Bisexual people, heterosexual people; gay or lesbian people.

## 14.2. ANNEX II Potential List of Consultees

### Schedule 9(4)(2)(a)

This full consultation list, adopted from DE's full list as GTCNI's Sponsor Body, is reviewed every five years to ensure it remains relevant to GTCNI's functions and policies. Any person or organisations wishing to be added or removed from the list should contact [info@gtcni.org.uk](mailto:info@gtcni.org.uk). This is a full, but not necessarily exhaustive list. Equally, for GTCNI, an ALB who does not directly provide services to the public, this full list is not necessarily always relevant to new policy / major policy amendments and this would be identified at policy development stage and from which GTCNI will tailor any necessary Section 75 consultation accordingly.

### EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS

Agencies in Consortium for Education and Training (ACET)	Education Workforce Council (EWC), Wales	Retired Teachers Association
Association for Quality Education (AQE)	GBA NI	St Mary's University College
Association of Head Teachers in Secondary Schools (AHTSS)	GTC Scotland	Stranmillis University College
Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL)	Information Commissioner	Teaching Council Ireland
Association of Teachers and Lecturers (ATL)/ National Education Union (NEU)	Education and Training Inspectorate, DE	The National Association of Schoolmasters and Union of Women Teachers (NASUWT)
British Council NI	Integrated Education Fund	The Open University
Catholic Principals Association	Irish National Teachers Organisation (INTO)	Transferor Representatives' Council
Council for the Curriculum, Examinations & Assessment (CCEA)	Middletown Centre for Autism	Universities Council for the Education of Teachers
Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS)	National Association of Head Teachers (NI)	University of Ulster
Comhairle na Gaelsolaíochta (CnaG)	NI Commission for Catholic Education	
Controlled Schools' Support Council (CSSC)	Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education (NICIE)	
Department of Education (DE)	NI Commissioner for Children and Young Persons (NICCY)	
Department for the Economy	Irish National Teachers Organisation (INTO)	
Early Years	Primary Schools Governors Association	
Education Authority	PTA NI	
Education Committee	Queen's University Belfast	
Equality Commission for Northern Ireland	Registered Teachers	



## TARGET GROUPS

Action Mental Health	Action MS	Action on Elder Abuse Northern Ireland
Action on Hearing Loss	Advice NI	Afasic Northern Ireland
Afro-Community Support Organisation, Northern Ireland (ACSONI)	Age NI	Alliance Party of NI
Al-Nisa Association	Altram	Alzheimer's Disease Society (NI Regional Office)
Amnesty International	An Munia Tober Traveller Support Group	An Tearmann Project Ltd (Coalisland)
Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council	Ards and North Down Borough Council	Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council
Armagh Traveller Support Group Lisanally House	Artability NI Ltd	Arthritis Care (NI)
Arts and Disability Forum	Arts Council of Northern Ireland	Aspect
Aspergers Network	Association of Educational Psychologists	Association of University Teachers
Atlas Womens Centre	Autism(NI)	Aware
Bahai Community of Belfast	Ballybeen Womens Centre	Barnardos
Belfast Butterfly Club	Belfast City Council	Belfast Health and Social Care Trust
Belfast Hebrew Congregation	Belfast Islamic Centre	Belfast Pride
Belfast Solicitor's Association	Belfast Womens Aid	Belfast Youth Forum
Brainwaves NI	British Deaf Association	British Epilepsy Association
British Psychological Society (NI)	British Red Cross Society	Bryson House
Bryson Intercultural	Buddy Bear Trust	Business Services Organisation
Cancer Focus NI	Carafriend	CARE for Northern Ireland
Carers National Association Northern Ireland	Catholic Bishops of NI	Causeway Coast and Glens Council
Causeway Health and Social Services Trust	Cedar Foundation	Centre for Womens Politics
Changing Faces	Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals	Child Poverty Action Group (NI)
Childline (NSPCC)	Children in Northern Ireland	Children with Disabilities Strategic Alliance
Children's Law Centre	Chinese Welfare Association	Chrysalis Women's Centre
Church Of Ireland	Circles Network	Citizens Advice
CO3	College of Occupational Therapists	Colleges Northern Ireland
Commissioner for Older People for Northern Ireland	Committee on the Administration of Justice	Community Arts Forum
Community Development & Health Network	Community Evaluation Northern Ireland (CENI)	Community Foundation for Northern Ireland

Confederation of British Industry (Northern Ireland)	Construction Industry Training Board	Contact a Family NI
Cookstown & Western Shores Area Network (CWSAN)	Co-operation Ireland	Corrymela Community
Council for the Homeless	County Armagh Community Development (CACD)	Craigavon Travellers Support Committee
Crossfire Trust	Cystic Fibrosis Trust	Democratic Unionist Party
Derry City and Strabane District Council	Derry Well Woman	Disability Action
Disability Equality	Downs Syndrome Association	East Down Rural Community Network
Eastern Area Child Protection Committee	Elim Pentecostal	Embrace
Employer's Forum on Disability	Engineering Employers Federation	Engineering Training Council
Equality Coalition	Extern	Falls Community Council
Family Planning Association	Federation of Small Businesses (NI)	Fermanagh and Omagh District Council
Fermanagh Rural Community Network	Fibromyalgia Support NI	First Larne Presbyterian Church
Focus	Fold Housing Association	Food & Drink Training Council
Foras na Gaeilge	Foyle Women's Information Network (FWIN)	Free Presbyterian Church in Ireland
Gay & Lesbian Youth Northern Ireland (GLYNI)	Gender Jam	Gingerbread NI
GMB	Green Party	Headway Belfast
HereNI	Include Youth	Inclusive Mobility Transport Advisory Committee
Indian Community Centre	Institute of Directors (NI)	Institute of Professional Legal Studies (QUB)
Institute of Ulster-Scots Studies	Irish Congress of Trade Unions	Irish Council of Churches
Irish Sign Link Ltd.	Irish Travellers movement	Labour Relations Agency
Law Centre (NI)	Law Reform Advisory Committee	MENCAP
LGB Branch of the National Union of Students/Union of Students in Ireland	LGBT Branch of Unison Northern Ireland	Linguistic Diversity DCAL
Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council	Loughry College	Macmillan Support & Information Centre
Magherafelt Womens Group	Mediation-Network	Mencap
Mens Action Network	Methodist Church in Ireland	Mid and East Antrim Borough Council
Mid Ulster District Council	Mindwise	Multiple Sclerosis Society NI
Muscular Dystrophy Campaign	National Autistic Society	National Deaf Children's Society
National Women's Council for Ireland	Newry & Mourne Senior Citizens' Consortium	Newry, Mourne and Down District Council
Nexus	Museum of Orange Heritage	NI Association for Mental Health

NI Association of Citizens Advice Bureau	NI Chest, Heart and Stroke Association	NI Community of Refugees & Asylum Seekers (NICRAS)
NI Community Relations Council	NI Council for Voluntary Action (NICVA)	NI Law Commission
NI ME Association	NI Music Therapy Trust	NI Open College Network
NI Women's European Platform	NIACRO	NIADD Support Centre
North Antrim Community Network	North West Community Network	North West Regional College
Northern Area Child Protection	Northern Health and Social Care Trust	Northern Ireland Agricultural Producers Association NIAPA
Northern Ireland Chamber of Commerce & Industry	Northern Ireland Children's Enterprise	Northern Ireland Gay Rights Association
Northern Ireland Health & Social Services Interpreting Service	Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission	Northern Ireland Inter Faith Forum
Northern Ireland Library Authority	Northern Ireland Local Government Association	Northern Ireland Muslim Family Association
Northern Ireland Ombudsman	Northern Ireland Public Service Alliance (NIPSA)	Northern Ireland Rural Women's Network
Northern Ireland Sports Forum	Northern Ireland Union of Supported Employment	Northern Ireland Women's European Platform
Northern Ireland Youth Forum	Northern Regional College	NOW
NSPCC	NUSUSI	Omagh Ethnic Community Support Group
Omagh Forum for Rural Associations	Omagh Traveller Support Group	Omagh Woman's Network
Parent's Education as Autism Therapists	Parenting Forum	Parenting NI
Parents for Choice	Parents Outloud	Parkanaur College
Parkinson's Disease Society	PCS Proud	POBAL
Positive Futures	Positive Life	Praxis Mental Health
Praxis Care Group	Presbyterian Church in Ireland	Press for Change
QAA for Higher Education	Quakers	Queerspace
Rainbow Project	Real Network	Relate NI
RNIB	Roman Catholic Church	Rural Community Network
Rural Development Council (RDC)	Rural Network for NI	Rural Support
Sail	Save the Children	School Libraries Association
School of Law QUB	SDLP	SENAC
SENSE	SHINE	Signature (CACPD)
Simon Community	Sinn Fein	Society for the Protection of the Unborn Child
Society of Local Authority Chief Executives(SOLAS)	South Antrim Rural Network (SARN)	South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust
South Tyrone Empowerment Programme (STEP)	South West Regional College	Southern Area Child Protection Committee
Southern Health and Social Care Trust	Southern Regional College	SPEAC

Staff Commission for Education and Library Boards	Stepping Stones	Strabane & District Community Network
Survivors of Trauma	Syringomyelia Self Help Group	The British Association of Teachers of the Deaf (BATOD)
The Centre for Global Education	The Children's Advisory Service	The Deaf Association (NI)
The General Consumer Council for NI	The Good Shepherd Centre	The Green Party
The Guide Dogs for the Blind Association	The Institute of Conflict Research	The Law Society NI
The Local Government Staff Commission for NI	The Mens Project	The Omnibus Partnership
The Orchardville Society	The Prince's Trust	The Stroke Association Northern Ireland
The Ulster-Scots Agency	The Ulster-Scots Language Society	The Workers Party
The Young Farmers' Clubs of Ulster	TIDY Northern Ireland	Training for Women Network
Traveller and Gay (TAG)	Traveller Led Initiative	Triangle Housing Association
Tuar Ceatha Barnardos	Tyrone, Armagh, Down & Antrim (TADA)	Ulster Farmer's Union
Ulster Museum	Ulster Unionist Party	Ultach Trust
UNISON	UNITE	University and College Union
USEL	Victim Support	VOICE the Union
Voices of Young People in Care	Volunteer Development Agency	Wah Hip Chinese Community Association
Welcome Trust	West Belfast Partnership Board	Western Health and Social Care Trust
Willowbank Community Resource Centre	WIMPS, Public Achievement	Women into Politics
Women's Aid NI	Women's Centre	Women's Forum NI
Women's Support Network	Women's Resource and Development Agency	Working with Diversity
Youth Action	Youth Council for Northern Ireland	Youth Link Northern Ireland
Youth Net		

## INTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS

GTCNI Staff

### 14.3. ANNEX III Timetable for Proposed Measures

#### Schedule 9 4(3)(b)

These measures and their corresponding timetables will be incorporated into our business planning processes if approved. This timetable reflects possible additional commitments to the promotion of equality and good relations.

Measure	Lead Responsibility	Timetable
Reflect Section 75 objectives and targets in Corporate and Business Plan and Business Areas' plans annually	Interim CEO / Registrar, Head of Corporate Services	Annually - April
Section 75 Annual Progress Report	HR Officer	August 31 annually
Reviewing and updating consultation lists	HR Officer	Every 5 Years
Distribution of screening reports	HR Officer	Annual
Publish finalised scheme	Interim CEO / Registrar, Head of Corporate Services	Within 2 months of Equality Commission approval of scheme
Annual review of Monitoring information	HR Officer	Annually after 31 August
Publication of Monitoring Information	HR Officer	Annually after 31 August
Notify consultees of publication of Annual Report	HR Officer	Annually after 31 August
Development of overall training programme	Head of Corporate Service / HR Officer	Annually April
Evaluation of Training	HR Officer	Annually after 31 March
Assessing access to information and services	HR Officer	Annually after 31 August
Notification of approved scheme to consultees	HR Officer	Within 2 months of scheme approval
Review of Equality Scheme	Interim CEO / Registrar, Head of Corporate Services	Within 5 years
Action Plan	Interim CEO / Registrar, Head of Corporate Services	Every 1 year
Any other measures proposed in Equality Scheme	HR Officer	As required
EQIA timetable	HR Officer	As required

#### 14.4. ANNEX IV Glossary of Terms

**Adverse impact** - Where a Section 75 category has been affected differently by a policy and the effect is less favourable. If a policy has an adverse impact on a Section 75 category, a public authority must consider whether or not the adverse impact is unlawfully discriminatory. A public authority must take measures to redress the adverse impact, by considering mitigating measures and/or alternative ways of delivering the policy.

**Affirmative action** - Affirmative action is anything consistent with the legislation which is necessary to bring about positive change. It is a phrase used in the Fair Employment and Treatment Order (NI) 1998 to describe lawful action that is aimed at promoting equality of opportunity and fair participation in employment between members of the Protestant and Roman Catholic communities in Northern Ireland.

**Article 55 Review** - Under the Fair Employment and Treatment (NI) Order 1998, all registered employers must conduct periodic reviews of the composition of their workforces and their employment practices for the purposes of determining whether members of the Protestant and Roman Catholic communities are enjoying, and will continue to enjoy, fair participation in employment.

These reviews, which are commonly known as Article 55 Reviews, must be conducted every three years.

**Consultation** - 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 9 categories. Different circumstances will call for different types of consultation. Consultations could, for example, include meetings, focus groups, surveys and questionnaires.

**Desk audit** - An audit of a draft Equality Scheme to ensure that the scheme conforms with the requirements on form and content as detailed in the Equality Commission's Guidelines (the Guide).

**Differential impact** - Differential impact occurs where a Section 75 group is affected differently by a policy. The effect can be positive, neutral or negative. A public authority must determine if a policy has a differential impact and determine whether the impact is adverse based on a systematic appraisal of accumulated information.

**Discrimination** - The anti-discrimination laws prohibit the following forms of discrimination:

- direct discrimination;
- indirect discrimination;
- disability discrimination;
- victimisation;
- harassment.

Brief descriptions of these above terms follow:

- **direct discrimination** - This occurs when a public authority treats a person less favourably than it treats another person in the same or similar circumstances. A decision or action that is directly discriminatory is unlawful unless:
  - (i) in an age discrimination case, the decision can be objectively justified; or,
  - (ii) in any other case, the public authority can rely on a statutory exception that permits the action (i.e. - a genuine occupational requirement exception or a positive action exception which permits an employer to use “welcoming statements”), or to take other lawful positive action to encourage participation by under-represented or otherwise disadvantaged groups.
- **indirect discrimination** - Indirect discrimination occurs where a public authority applies a particular provision, criterion or practice to all persons and the effect of which places people who share a particular equality characteristic (e.g. the same sex, or religious belief, or race) at an unintended disadvantage. A provision, criterion or practice that is indirectly discriminatory is unlawful unless:
  - (i) it can be objectively justified: or,
  - (ii) the public authority can rely on a statutory exception that permits it.
- **disability discrimination** - In addition to direct discrimination, discrimination against disabled people may occur in two additional ways:
  - (a) disability-related discrimination occurs where a public authority, without lawful justification, and for a reason which relates to a disabled person’s disability, treats that person less favourably than it treats other people to whom that reason does not apply;
  - (b) failure to comply with a duty to make reasonable adjustments. Disability discrimination imposes a duty on employers, service providers, and public authorities to take reasonable steps to remove or reduce disadvantages experienced by disabled people.

**Victimisation** - This form of discrimination occurs where a public authority treats a person less favourably than it treats) another person, in the same or similar circumstances, because the person has previously exercised his/her rights under the anti-discrimination laws, or has assisted another person to do so. Victimisation cannot be justified and is always unlawful.

**Harassment** - Harassment occurs where a person is subjected to unwanted conduct with the purpose or effect of violating their dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. Harassment cannot be justified and is always unlawful.

**Economic appraisal** - An economic appraisal is a systematic process for examining alternative uses of resources, focusing on assessment of needs, objectives, options, costs benefits, risks, funding and affordability and other factors relevant to decisions.

**Equality Impact Assessment** - The mechanism where existing and proposed policies are assessed 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'.

**Mainstreaming equality** - The integration of equal opportunities principles, strategies and practices into the everyday work of public authorities. Mainstreaming is the process of ensuring that equality considerations are built into the policy development process from the beginning. Mainstreaming improves methods of working by increasing accountability, responsiveness and relations with the public.

**Mitigation of adverse impact** - Where an equality impact assessment reveals that a particular policy has an adverse impact on equality of opportunity, a public authority must consider ways of delivering the policy outcomes which have less adverse effects on the relevant Section 75 categories.

**Monitoring** - Monitoring consists of continuously scrutinising and evaluating policies to assess their impact on Section 75 categories. Monitoring must be sensitive to issues associated with human rights and privacy. Public authorities should seek advice from consultees and Section 75 representative groups when setting up monitoring systems.

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 1998** - The Northern Ireland Act 1998 implemented the Good Friday Agreement and received Royal Assent on 19 November 1998. Section 75 of the Act created the statutory equality duties.



**Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission** - A statutory body established under Section 68 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, which works to ensure that the human rights of everyone in Northern Ireland are fully protected in law, policy and practice.

**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.

**Positive action** - This phrase is not defined in any statute, but the Equality Commission understands it to mean any lawful action that a public authority might take for the purpose of promoting equality of opportunity for all persons in relation to employment or in accessing goods, facilities or services (i.e. health services, housing, education, justice, policing). It may involve adopting new policies, practices, or procedures; or changing or abandoning old ones. Positive action is not the same as positive discrimination.

**Positive discrimination** - differs from positive action in that positive action involves the taking of lawful actions whereas positive discrimination involves the taking of unlawful actions. Consequently, positive action is by definition lawful whereas positive discrimination is unlawful.

This is a form of discrimination that favours someone by treating them differently in a positive way (i.e. hiring someone from an underrepresented group into a role without considering whether they have right skills for the post). Positive discrimination differs from positive action in that positive action involves the taking of lawful actions whereas positive discrimination involves the taking of unlawful actions.

**Qualitative data** - Qualitative data refers to the experiences of individuals from their perspective, most often with less emphasis on numbers or statistical analysis. Consultations are more likely to yield qualitative than quantitative data.

**Quantitative data** - Quantitative data refers to numbers, typically derived from either a population in general or samples of that population. This information is often analysed by either using descriptive statistics, which consider general profiles, distributions and trends in the data, or inferential statistics, which are used to determine significance either in relationships or differences in the data.

**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.

**Schedule 9** - Schedule 9 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 sets out detailed provisions for the enforcement of the Section 75 statutory duties, including an outline of what should be included in an Equality Scheme.

**Section 75** - Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act provides that each public authority is required to give 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.

**Section 75 investigation** - An investigation carried out by the Equality Commission, under Schedule 9 of the NI Act 1998, arising from the failure of a public authority to comply with the commitments set out in its approved Equality Scheme.

There are two types of Commission investigation, these are as follows:

1. an investigation of a complaint by an individual who claims to have been directly affected by the failure of a public authority to comply with its approved Equality Scheme;
2. an investigation initiated by the Commission, where it believes that a public authority may have failed to comply with its approved Equality Scheme.