



Northern Ireland
Assembly

The Northern Ireland Assembly Commission Annual Equality Progress Report

1 April 2013 - 31 March 2014



EQUALITY COMMISSION FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

Public Authority 2012 – 2013 Annual Progress Report on:

- Section 75 of the NI Act 1998 and
- Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Order (DDO) 2006

This report template includes a number of self-assessment questions regarding implementation of the **Section 75 statutory duties** from *1 April 2013 to 31 March 2014 (Part A)*.

This template also includes a number of questions regarding implementation of **Section 49A of the DDO** from the *1 April 2013 to 31 March 2014 (Part B)*.

Please enter information at the relevant part of each section and ensure that it is **submitted** electronically (by completing this template) and in hardcopy, with a signed cover letter from the Chief Executive or, in his / her absence, the Deputy Chief Executive to the Commission **by 31 August 2014**.

In completing this template it is essential to focus on the application of Section 75 and Section 49. This involves progressing the commitments in your equality scheme or disability action plan which should lead to outcomes and impacts in terms of measurable improvement for individuals from the equality categories. Such outcomes and impacts may include changes in public policy, in service provision and/or in any of the areas within your functional remit.

Name of public authority (Enter details below)

NORTHERN IRELAND ASSEMBLY COMMISSION

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Part A: Section 75 Annual Progress Report 2013 - 2014

Executive Summary

The Northern Ireland Assembly Commission (the Commission) continues to progress the equality agenda throughout all areas of its business. This annual report records the activities and actions undertaken by the Commission in furtherance of its statutory obligations. It covers the period 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2014. Below is a 'snapshot' of developments during this reporting period.

Disability Issues

Accreditations

In November 2013 the Commission was notified that it had maintained its autism accreditation through the National Autistic Society. The Commission's 12 autism champions underwent certified training with Autism NI in December 2013.

During the reporting period the Commission also retained its 'Louder than Words' accreditation through Action on Hearing Loss. The reassessment process will take place in June 2014 in order to be awarded the accreditation for a further year.

Signed Tours

A British and Irish signed version of the tour of Parliament Buildings has been filmed and is currently being placed onto a computer tablet so that a person with hearing loss can utilize the tablet throughout their tour of Parliament Buildings. In addition, the signed tour has been placed on the Assembly website to help engage external/remote users.

Building Works (as detailed in Disability Action Plan 2012-2016)

Improved visual signage.

Pictorial signage continues to be monitored to ensure quality; braille signage has been produced for public areas and will be erected within the next reporting period.

Accessibility to Parliament Buildings.

The Assembly Commission has recently completed a range of physical works aimed at improving access via the front door of Parliament Buildings. The work included new access ramps to each side of the front portico, raising the portico floor level to eliminate the step at the threshold, replacement of the existing front steps and handrails, automation of the double entrance doors and the replacement of areas of cobble stone paving with smooth granite walkways. All of the work was designed to complement the existing façade of the listed building and to comply with all relevant legislation. Members of the external Disability Advisory Group, who represent a range of disability organisations, joined with the Speaker to mark its opening.

Assembly Chamber

The Assembly Commission is always mindful of opportunities to improve accessibility and has carried out a range of improvements to Parliament Buildings for that purpose.

The Assembly Chamber was originally designed to cater for a 52 Member parliament and modifications, within the constraints of the listed building status, have been made throughout the history of the building to take account of the changing needs.

Previously the Assembly Commission undertook a major project to modify and refurbish the Chamber, including a range of significant improvements to accessibility.

- (i) On the floor of the chamber, level access has been provided from both the main Members' entrance and from the Speaker's Table end of the chamber. Ramped access to the voting lobbies is also available from the floor of the chamber.
- (ii) For visitors to the Public Gallery, improvements include the installation of a platform hoist to the gallery and the creation of a viewing area suitable for wheelchair users. In addition, there is a small area for wheelchair users in each of the side galleries (accessible from the west side of the building).
- (iii) There is level access from the Speaker's Table end of the chamber to each of the official's boxes. Space constraints would make further specific improvements to this facility difficult to achieve. Wheelchair users could be accommodated in the immediate vicinity of the official's box should that be required.

Access Audit Implementation

The implementation of access audits completed by RNIB, Disability Action and Action on Hearing Loss regarding a programme of works, and the prioritisation of recommendations, has continued during the reporting period.

Website

The Assembly website remains AA compliant of the W3C web content accessibility guidelines 1.0.

Mental Health Week

During the reporting period the Speaker of the Northern Ireland Assembly, William Hay MLA launched an art exhibition to mark the beginning of Mental Health Week. The exhibition promoted mental health through art and art therapy and has been developed in association with Action Mental Health and Seacourt Print Workshop.

<http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/News-and-Media/Press-Releases/Art-therapy-can-play-a-positive-part-in-promoting-good-mental-health/>

Roof Project - Exploration of upgrading lifts

Building Services Branch met staff with the Fire Safety Officer to discuss the possibility of upgrading one or more of the existing lifts in Parliament Buildings, to make them available for use in an emergency evacuation. However, it was concluded that the size of the existing lifts and associated upgrade costs meant this was not a viable solution and that the current system of using evacuation chairs was more practicable.

The roof refurbishment project, due to start in April 2014, will not impact directly on the passenger lifts but the project team will consider options to improve disability access to the 4th Floor of Parliament Buildings.

Disability Action Plan

Continued implementation of Disability Action Plan

<http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/ABOUT-THE-ASSEMBLY/Corporate-Information/Policies/Disability-Action-Plan-2012-2016/>.

Braille Tour Guide

A braille tour guide manual was developed and made available to all visually impaired visitors detailing historical and general information on Parliament Buildings and the Northern Ireland Assembly.

Five Year Review of Disability Action Plans

On 12 November 2013 the Commission submitted its five year review of Disability Action Plans to the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland. In its response the Equality Commission reported that it “..acknowledges the considerable progress made by the Northern Ireland Assembly and we welcome the commitment to continue to strive to sustain the improvements already achieved and to implement new initiatives.” The full review can be found on the Assembly website at <http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/ABOUT-THE-ASSEMBLY/Corporate-Information/Policies/Disability-Action-Plan1/>

Table 1

Disability Action Measures/Activities Achieved 2008-2013

Disability Action Plan	Total Number of Action Measures/ Activities	Fully Achieved	Not Achieved	Reason for non-achievement of action measures
2008-2011	32	31(97%)	Produce a three year review of the Disability Action Plan in conjunction with the review of the Northern Ireland Assembly Equality Scheme.	It was agreed with the Equality Commission that this would be a 5 year audit to bring it in line with the revised guidance for Equality Schemes.

2011-2012	24	23(96%)	Provide Briefing Guides for staff on the practical day-to-day implementation of DDA.	Carried over from 2011-2012 DAP due to establishment of an Internal Disability Group taking longer than envisaged.
2012-2016	16	14 (87.5%)	Provide Briefing Guides for staff on the practical day-to-day implementation of DDA Review Accessible Publications Policy.	The plan runs to 2016 and the outstanding actions are due to be completed prior to the end of this period.

Reasonable Adjustments

Reasonable adjustments continue to be put in place as required. For example, at a recent Assembly Community Connect 'Get Involved' event held in March 2014, in the Lagan Valley constituency, all training and presentational documents were made available, as requested, in braille. In addition adjustments were made in terms of resource materials.

Assembly Community Connect (ACC) Connecting People with Disabilities with the Assembly

Westminster Outreach Meeting

The Assembly Outreach Manager met with Sharon Stanley, who delivers training to adults with learning difficulties at Westminster on 24th March 2014. This meeting presented a good opportunity to discuss the development of ACC training structures already in place in order to enhance the current programmes and to extend training to adults with learning difficulties.

Autism Training

Two of the Assembly Community Connect staff have been trained in assisting people with autism.

External Disability Action Group

The Outreach Manager attended a meeting of the External Disability Advisory Group where training courses and the work of ACC were discussed.

Annual Disability Audit for Staff

In December 2013 Human Resources Office of the NI Assembly conducted the Annual Disability Audit for staff.

Guaranteed Interview Scheme

A guaranteed interview scheme was introduced for disabled applicants in external recruitment.

Guidance

New guidance for Managing Disability in the Workplace was developed and publicized to staff within the reporting period.

Men and Women Generally

Gender Action Steering Group

On 12 June 2013, at the request of the Clerk/Chief Executive, a group of senior staff (including senior female staff) met to discuss how the Secretariat might examine the existence of any barriers, whether perceived or actual, in relation to gender within the Northern Ireland Assembly Secretariat and to consider what actions might be necessary.

Since this meeting a Gender Action Plan Steering Group has been set up. The Group aims to:

- Examine gender action plan models used by other Parliaments/Assemblies and organisations.
- Oversee research to investigate whether there are issues which are having a detrimental effect in terms of gender equality within the Secretariat and, if necessary, develop a Gender Action Plan to address such issues.

In late 2013 a questionnaire was developed by the Gender Action Plan Steering Group in consultation with the Equality Commission and the Internal Communications Group. The questionnaire was also sent to the Senior Management Group (SMG) for information. On 17 February 2014 this questionnaire was circulated to Secretariat staff with a closing date of 3 March 2014. In total, 192 respondents participated in the survey. Responses will be considered by the Gender Action Plan Steering Group at their next meeting on 2 April 2014.

Older People

Pensioner's Parliament

On 21 January 2014, in co-operation with the Age Sector Platform and on behalf of the 300,000 pensioners living in Northern Ireland, 90 individuals from across the province gathered in the Senate Chamber for a debate centered on three motions which emerged from last year's Pensioners Parliament.

The event, which was presided over by the Speaker and involved four Ministers, provided an excellent opportunity to encourage older people to learn about the procedures of plenary, to participate in the process and to have their voice heard by key decision makers.

Assistance and expertise was provided from the Business Office and it is hoped that the event will encourage more robust engagement by older people with the legislative processes of the NI Assembly.

Young People

Education Service

During the reporting period there was continued delivery of the education service to stakeholders and further engagement of younger people. See school report video <http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/News-and-Media/Assembly-Extra/Bitesize/>

Education Service Numbers

The Education Service participant figures broken down by school type for the reporting period can be found at Annex 1. Figures are available by constituency upon request.

NICCY

NICCY (Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People), with the Education Service held a joint teacher training event for Key Stage 3/4 teachers in December 2013 and 32 teachers participated. Joint project work for 2014 is currently being developed.

An Education Service Officer attended the NICCY Participation Forum Meetings in May and November 2013. These were also attended by Departmental Children's Champions and representatives from organisations working on behalf of children and young people. This was an opportunity for all those involved to keep up to date with the Children/Youth Sectors and to develop relationships with a view to joint initiatives.

Video Conferences

The Education Service is currently working with C2k to organise video conferences with schools. This has been delayed as C2k launched a new online learning portal in schools in September 2013.

Female Suffrage Competition

The Education Service ran a Female Suffrage Competition in spring 2013. The service promoted the issue of Female Suffrage during 2013 through posters in the Education rooms and discussion with visiting groups in relation to the importance of voting and women's roles in politics.

Assembly Christmas card competition

In September 2013 the Northern Ireland Assembly launched an art competition. Children enrolled in primary schools across Northern Ireland were asked to design the official Northern Ireland Assembly Christmas card.

A staggering 3,000 entries were received, but it was nine-year old Emma Isherwood from Edwards Primary School, Castlederg who claimed the top prize with her festive drawing of a robin.

Speaking after the awards ceremony the Speaker of the Northern Ireland Assembly, William Hay MLA said "Parliament Buildings belongs to all of us and what better way to get that message across than to display the art created by our local children".

<http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/News-and-Media/Press-Releases/Local-Children-Deck-The-Great-Hall-With-Festive-Cheer/>

Northern Ireland Assembly Business Trust (NIABT)

On 31 March 2014, the NIABT held an event for the Young Directors Forum, Institute of Directors which was attended by 33 young Directors.

Youth Assembly

In March 2013, the Commission decided to seek joint funding from the Executive for a pilot youth assembly model. Following talks with OFMdfM, and reflecting the concerns about cost, a review was undertaken to see where savings could be made. A revised model has been developed and is currently being considered. In the coming year, work will be undertaken to move the project forward to a position where a youth assembly can be launched in 2015-16, subject to availability of funding.

Women

"Perspectives On...." Series

The Speaker of the Northern Ireland Assembly, Mr William Hay MLA, hosted an event in Parliament Buildings as part of the "Perspectives On..." series agreed by the Assembly Commission to mark the decade of centenaries. The event, entitled 'Perspectives on Female Suffrage', featured a lecture by Dr Margaret Ward, author of 'Women's History'.

In addition to MLAs, guests at the event included elected Members and a range of women's organisations.

The Speaker said: "I am delighted that I have been able to host this event in Parliament Buildings to recognise the importance of the female suffrage movement. The campaign for women's right to vote is a significant milestone in the history of democracy. This important movement is one of a number of centenaries that the Assembly is marking as part of its "Perspectives On" series". <http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/News-and-Media/Press-Releases/Speaker-Hosts-Lecture-on-Perspective-on-Female-Suffrage/>

Women's Suffrage Exhibition

On 30 April 2013 the Speaker of the Northern Ireland Assembly, Mr William Hay MLA, marked the women's suffrage movement with a special exhibition of student artwork at Parliament Buildings.

Between 1912 and 1914, women of all backgrounds, from across all sections of society campaigned for women to have the right to vote. To mark this campaign, the Northern Ireland Assembly invited post-primary students to create a piece of work celebrating female participation in the democratic process. Competition winners were awarded prizes, and their work was displayed in the Great Hall of Parliament Buildings.

International Women's day

From 8 March to 5 April 2013 the Great Hall of Parliament Buildings was home to a selection of paintings from local women artists to mark International Women's Day. The exhibition comprised work from diploma holders and the prize winner of the Ulster Society of Women Artist's 2012 exhibition.

The Speaker of the Assembly, William Hay MLA said: "I am delighted to host this wonderful art exhibition from the Ulster Society of Women Artists to mark International Women's Day. This is a way for the Assembly to contribute to the international celebrations for this special day and I am very pleased to be a part of it. It also provides a unique occasion to showcase artwork from local women artists, which demonstrates the talent we have here in Northern Ireland".

Assembly Community Connect Connecting Women with the Assembly

International Women's Day

The ACC Chair noted that, at previous Advisory Group meetings, the challenges of engaging women with politics had been discussed and that these discussions had concluded with the view that it would be more beneficial to mark International Women's Day by building multiple, strong long term relationships than by hosting a one day event.

The Outreach Manager provided the Group with an overview on the recent delivery of training to and engagement with local women's groups (see Table 2 below). She highlighted the fact that, in order to include as diverse a range as possible in this work, engagement had taken place in both rural and urban settings, for example:-

Shankhill Women's Centre

Assembly Community Connect was invited to deliver a presentation to Shankhill Women's Centre on 6 March 2014. This presentation was warmly received with a high level of interest and engagement. To complement the presentation on the Assembly, the Electoral Commission also attended on this date to provide information to the group on the pre-election side of the process.

Rural Women's Network Event, Cookstown

On 13 March 2014 Assembly Community Connect were invited to host an exhibition stand at the Rural Women's Network celebration of International Women's Day. This cross community event, funded by the Community Relations Council included over 130 members of NIRWN and its support organisations. Guest speakers included Anne O'Reilly, NIRWM Chairperson, Michelle O'Neill MLA, Minister for Agriculture and Rural Development, Clíodhna Geraghty of South Armagh Rural Women's Network and Mary McSorley from the Equality Commission.

The theme of the conference was Inspiring Change, a theme echoed through the inspiring and poignant words of the speakers. Delegates at this event shared stories and information with many participating groups and organisations, reinforcing existing links and forging new ones.

Women and Peace Building: Sharing the Learning Event – Odyssey Arena

Assembly Community Connect has been invited to host an exhibition stand at the forthcoming Women and Peace Building: Sharing the Learning Event. This event, which aims to attract over 300 attendees, includes keynote speakers Professor Monica McWilliams, Commissioner Kathryn Stone, OBE of the Victims Commission and Diana Dodds MEP. It is hoped again that, as with the Rural Women's Network event, this event will prove to be a very productive networking opportunity for Assembly Community Connect

Connecting Women with the Assembly

The objective of the ACC strategy on this matter was to formulate plans which would specifically encourage more women from the community sector to become involved in the political spectrum without duplicating the work of other organisations.

The Houses of Parliament Outreach staff had launched a "Women in Parliament" outreach programme designed to support women's engagement with Parliament and were currently seeking partners to help deliver a range of activities and resources in respect of the same.

On 9 December 2013 ACC staff had attended a "Women in Parliament" session at Greenway Women's Centre to investigate if there were any elements of the programme that could be adopted for use by ACC.

ACC subsequently hosted a focus group involving local women's groups and Westminster outreach staff to discuss options of adapting this programme to meet the needs of this sector in Northern Ireland.

The conclusion reached at the focus group was that, whilst the positive work of "Women in Parliament" was highly commendable, similar work was already being delivered by organisations in Northern Ireland and that, rather than develop a reflective policy, it was considered more valuable that ACC should instead provide support to the work already being conducted here.

A representative from Politics Plus attended the meeting in order to assess the main barriers perceived by women as preventing them from entering the political arena.

It was requested that women's groups should be afforded greater access to engage with MLAs, an area of work which ACC would aim to progress.

The outcome of these discussions led to the following recommendations:

- a) Participation in International Women's Day
- b) ACC to target specific women's groups and to develop channels of support conducive to facilitating the work they currently undertake.
- c) ACC to support the educational element of the Political Pop-Up Academy.
- d) In conjunction with Politics Plus, ACC to investigate the possibility of developing mentoring opportunities between MLAs and women in the community.
- e) ACC to liaise with Department of Social Development in respect of three key groups identified by ACC for support in 2014.

Table 2

Assembly Community Connect – 30th March 2013 – 1st April 2014			
Engagement with Women's Groups			
Date	Event	Participation	Place
10-09-13	Foyle Women's Information Network	Exhibition Stand	Derry/ Londonderry
11-09-13	Women in Leadership Programme.	Facilitating	Parliament Building
09-12-13	Women in Parliament – Greenway Women's Centre	Discussion Session	Cregagh Estate
09-12-13	Claire Mullin Westminster– Meeting with Local Women	Discussion Session	Parliament Buildings
05-03-14	Footprints Women's Centre	Presentation	Poleglass
6-03-14	Shankhill Women's Centre	Presentation	Shankhill Road
13-03-	NI Rural Women's Network	Exhibition Stand/ Conference	Cookstown
20-03-14	Women and Peace Building	Conference	Titanic Belfast

Race

Chinese New Year

ACC staff hosted an exhibition stand at the Chinese New Year celebrations at the Belfast City Hall on 2 February 2014.

A Chinese New Year Exhibition, featuring images of China (traditional and modern), was displayed in the Great Hall from the 4-6 February 2014. This exhibition was in association with the Confucius Institute.

Get Involved

In association with the Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities, a 'Get Involved' training event will take place on 2 June 2014 for Black and Ethnic Minority (BEM) communities.

Ethnic Minorities Parliament 30th April 2014

In order to provide a forum for the increased participation of ethnic minority communities in political life in Northern Ireland, the Northern Ireland Centre for Ethnic Minorities (NICEM) had proposed the establishment of a Black and Minorities Ethnic (BME) Parliament. The Speaker had been very supportive of this initiative regarding it as a strong example of participative democracy and will host an Ethnic Minorities Parliament on 30 April 2014. It is hoped that this event will increase the confidence of BME community members to speak up, to improve their knowledge of rights and entitlements and to develop their awareness of, and familiarity with, the political institutions and processes in Northern Ireland.

Event Engagement with Ethnic Minorities Communities		Table 3
Belfast Mela Festival	Exhibition Stand	Botanic Gardens
NI Council for Ethnic Minorities – Study Visit	Presentation	Parliament Buildings
Chinese New Year	Exhibition Stand	Belfast City Hall

Equality and Good Relations

Policy EQIA on the Flying of the Union Flag at Parliament Buildings

At the Commission meeting of 20 November 2013 a paper was presented to Members, following consultation with Assembly Parties, regarding the number of days on which the Union Flag flies from Parliament Buildings and detailed a range of options and how a process of public consultation could be carried out.

Commission Member, Ms Ruane MLA, stated that she and her party were opposed to addressing the matter at the Commission which she felt was fundamentally anti-

democratic. Following discussion, it was agreed that a further paper would be provided to the Commission Meeting in January 2014 detailing additional information on the consultation process including timeframes.

On 29 January 2014 a paper was presented to Members detailing information on the consultation process and included timeframes and 'the way forward' concerning the motion on the flying of the Union Flag.

The Speaker called a vote on the recommendations proposed, namely:

Recommendation 1: That the Commission consider procuring an independent person/organisation to conduct the EQIA and associated consultation process.
The proposal was agreed.

Recommendation 2: That the Commission agrees timings for EQIA and consultation to commence as outlined within paper AC2713.
The proposal was agreed.

In order to progress the agreed proposals, the Commission/Chief Executive's Office prepared the following documents:

- Business Case
- Terms of Reference
- Specification
- Risk Management Strategy and related actions
- Draft Invitation to Tender
- Implementation timeline
- Consultancy checklist
- Pricing Schedule
- Prepared stage 1 of the EQIA (Background and current policy)
- Held an initial Evaluation Panel Meeting

It is anticipated that the invitation to tender will be issued on 27 May 2014.

Assembly Oral Questions (AQOs)

The Secretariat continue to support Members in responding to questions for oral answer.

Assembly Written Questions (AQWs)

When responding to AQWs, Assembly Commission Members do so on behalf of the Assembly Commission and within the relevant policies and decisions of the Commission.

At the Assembly Commission meeting on 7 May 2013, following a proposal from Commission Member Ms Ruane, MLA to respond to AQWs to the Assembly Commission in Irish, a vote was taken. The proposal was lost.

It was therefore agreed that responses to questions to the Assembly Commission for Written Answer would continue to be in English only.

Language

The Assembly Commission does not yet have an agreed Language Policy. However, draft Language Guidance has been under consideration by the Assembly Commission. The views of all Parties have been sought following a meeting of the Assembly Commission on 27 February 2013 and will be considered at a future meeting of the Commission.

Artefacts

At a Commission meeting on 29 January 2014, it was agreed that Members would receive full details on Assembly Artefacts both on display and in storage.

At a later Commission meeting, on Wednesday 26 February 2014, Ms Ruane, MLA requested that the audit of artefacts held within Parliament Buildings which she had sought at the last meeting be considered in more detail at the Commission meeting in April 2014.

Exhibitions

At a Commission meeting on 29 January 2014, Ms Ruane, MLA requested that an exhibition on the 'Irish Language' be considered in the future and Ms Cochrane, MLA highlighted the work being undertaken in East Belfast on the Irish Language. It was agreed that a further discussion would be held at a future Commission meeting to explore an Irish language initiative including looking at other existing projects on the Irish language.

'Recognition of Individuals' policy

At its November meeting, the Assembly Commission agreed to establish an artwork or other method to commemorate Seamus Heaney and CS Lewis within Parliament Buildings. In parallel to developing that project, the Commission agreed to consider a policy framework for recognising significant historical individuals within Parliament Buildings before any further proposals would be accepted. It was agreed that Members would consult with their parties in relation to the wording; criteria, processes and forms of recognition proposed within the draft policy and forward any comments to explore whether a policy could be agreed at a future Commission meeting.

'Perspectives on the Dublin Lock-out and the Rise of the Labour Movement'

On 16 September 2013 the Speaker of the Northern Ireland Assembly, Mr William Hay MLA, hosted an event in Parliament Buildings as part of the 'Perspectives On...' series agreed by the Assembly Commission to mark a decade of centenaries. The lecture - entitled 'Perspectives on the Dublin Lock-out and the Rise of the Labour Movement' - was delivered by Dr Emmet O'Connor, senior lecturer in history at the University of Ulster.

MLAs from a range of parties and trade union representatives attended.

The Speaker said: "It was a great pleasure to host this lecture in Parliament Buildings to mark this important event. The Dublin lock-out is a significant event in our labour history,

and one that had far-reaching consequences for the labour movement. The lecture highlighted the role that trade unions have played over the past 100 years and, indeed, continue to play in society today”.

"This is one of a number of anniversaries that the Assembly is marking as part of its 'Perspectives on...' series. It is important that we take time to reflect on the events that have shaped our history; it is through this reflection that we gain an understanding of the many different perspectives on events that have played a defining role in our past".
<http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/News-and-Media/Press-Releases/Speaker-Hosts-Lecture-on-the-Dublin-Lock-out/>

Assembly Community Connect (ACC) – formal launch

On 21 May 2013 the Speaker of the Northern Ireland Assembly, William Hay MLA, launched an important new initiative aimed at encouraging the local community and voluntary sector to become more involved with the work of the Assembly and its MLAs.

The night's colourful and interactive event consisted of a series of mini talks from MLAs and local community representatives. These were designed to stimulate new ideas and dialogue on how the Assembly and local groups can forge new and effective working links.

Following the launch, the Speaker of the Northern Ireland Assembly said: “I have always been mindful of the vital role played by the community and voluntary sector in advocating for and supporting local people. The Assembly too has worked hard in recent years to open Parliament Buildings to local people and to encourage and foster a greater understanding of, and participation in, the local democratic process.

Assembly Community Connect is a wonderful opportunity to bring MLAs and community representatives together to share ideas, knowledge and experience. I firmly believe that by working together, we can do much to strengthen and invigorate our local communities and to enhance opportunities for all who live in them”.

Assembly Community Connect will provide a range of introductory and advanced training and educational programmes and is open to organisations across the local voluntary and community sector. Further information can be found on the Northern Ireland Assembly [website](#).

Since April 2013, over 7000 people have either engaged with Secretariat staff at an ACC event or participated in an ACC training programme.

Speaker's Art Group – exhibitions held during the reporting period

The schedule for exhibitions in the Great Hall for 2014 is as follows:

- a) February 2014. Chinese New Year;
- b) April- May 2014. Europe Day;
- c) May 2014. Giro d'Italia;
- d) September 2014. Literary Initiative by the Assembly Commission; and

e) November – December 2014. Assembly Christmas Competition.

Visitors Survey

Visitor numbers to Parliament Buildings for the period 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2014 were 9242. During 2013 a visitors' survey was developed and was agreed by the Senior Management Group (SMG) at their meeting of 18 April 2013. The questionnaire aims to collect and compare data from visitors relating to the area of good relations across a range of service provisions. This questionnaire is required to assess the outcomes of the Good Relations Strategy in order to ensure that they are effective and do not create any adverse impacts.

It was agreed with the relevant Directorates that the visitors' survey would be conducted three times a year to elicit more information on good relations.

2013 Community Relations Week

To mark Community Relations Week 2013 (20 May – 26 May 2013) the Assembly hosted a number of events on behalf of the Community Relations Council. In addition, on 21st May and as part of Community Relations Week, Assembly Community Connect was launched. This new initiative was developed to enable the Community and Voluntary Sector to share knowledge and experience with MLAs in order to help them develop a better mutual understanding of each other's work. Assembly Community Connect provides education and outreach via free training events which not only take place here at Parliament Buildings, but at venues across Northern Ireland.

Good Relations Action Plan 2012-2016

During the reporting period there was continued implementation of the Good Relations Action Plan which can be found at Annex 3 or accessed online at the following address <http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/Documents/Corporate/Commission/Commission-Good-Relation-Strategy.pdf>. Six monthly monitoring reports were completed and discussed at Senior Management Group (SMG) meetings.

Sustainable Development

The Assembly retained its Platinum level award in the annual Arena Network Awards.

Knowledge Exchange Seminar Series

"Promoting evidence-led policy and law-making within Northern Ireland" – that is the underlying aim of the Knowledge Exchange Seminar Series (KESS). KESS is the first of its kind in the United Kingdom, formally partnering a legislative arm of government – the Assembly - with academia. Aiming to encourage debate and improve understanding, KESS provides a forum to present and disseminate research findings in a straightforward format, across the Programme for Government; making those findings easily accessible to decision-makers such as MLAs and Assembly committees, as well as the wider public sector.

KESS is jointly delivered by the Research and Information Service of the Assembly (RaISe), in partnership with all three universities located in Northern Ireland (NI) – the

Queen's University of Belfast (QUB - co-founder in 2011), the University of Ulster (Ulster - in 2012) and The Open University (OU - in 2013).

The Series presents networking opportunities, attracting a broad spectrum of attendees. These include: MLAs and their staff; Assembly staff; public and private sector employees; academics; voluntary and community groups; and members of the public.

Seminars to date have covered the areas of;

- Dealing with suicide
Transforming Adult Social Care in Northern Ireland
- Reviewing the EU Rural Development Programme
- Fiscal Devolution Debates and the Future of the Barnett Formula
- Shared Future
- Justice
- Public Service Reform
- Environment
- Migration
- Older Persons and Care
- Mental Health
- Public Health

Assembly Community Connect Fellowships

In order to assist MLAs to gain an insight into and a better understanding of how community and voluntary groups deliver their programmes, the Assembly Community Connect Fellowship Programme was developed during the reporting period.

The aim of this programme was to provide opportunities for MLAs to spend time experiencing the full range of activities and services that the organisation provided, to meet with the policy and decision makers and to discuss how best to engage with the Assembly.

ACC and Corrymeela Community Group

Corrymeela recently received funding from the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) in Dublin for a programme called "Stop Peace Unravelling", the objective of which is to promote anti-sectarianism by supporting participants in the advancement of tolerance, cultural diversity and the construction of a shared sense of identity.

As an integral part of this programme, and in association with Corrymeela, the NI Assembly will be delivering 13 workshops to participants from 5 target groups. The groups identified are:

- Primary
- Post -primary
- Young people (16 – 25)
- Community/ women's groups
- Churches

Oral and Written Questions

During the reporting period draft answers to Assembly oral and written questions to the Assembly Commission regarding equality and good relations issues continued to be provided.

Employee Supported Volunteering

Employee supported volunteering initiatives continued throughout the reporting period. 51 staff took part in volunteering, contributing to 46.5 days of volunteering.

Committee Activities

COMMITTEE	DATE	EVENT
Culture, Arts and Leisure	30/04/13	Hosted the launch of the Loughborough University Report into grassroots football in Northern Ireland which particularly looked at young people's participation.
	04/06/13	The Replay Theatre Company was at Parliament Buildings for a discussion about their BLISS project which looks at providing a theatre experience for upper primary and secondary aged pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties. Wheelchair / Special access was required.
	Sept-Oct 2013	Investigation into Gaps in Child Protection and Safeguarding. The remit was to seek gaps in Child Protection and Safeguarding, to identify examples of best practice in this area and, by comparing these, make recommendations to the Minister with respect to highlighting any gaps and suggesting how they might be mitigated. A stakeholder event for school aged young people was facilitated by Wayne Denner of BeattheCyberbully. He is a specialist working with young people providing advice and assistance against cyber bullying. Twenty two recommendations were made. <i>For the purpose of the investigation, 'Vulnerable groups' was a generic phrase which should be taken to include <u>all</u> children and young people, including those with disabilities, special needs or other vulnerabilities; and including adults with disabilities, special needs or other vulnerabilities and those with greater exposure to risk of harm.</i>
	09/12/13	CAL Committee hosted an Arts for All / Arts Ekta textile project in Parliament Buildings highlighting the valuable contribution women made to Belfast's economy through the linen industry.
	23/01/14	CAL Committee visited the Crescent Arts Centre. The Centre encourages visits and attendance from all communities, and has provided excellent opportunity for cross-community work.
	26/03/13	The Chair of the CAL Committee Michelle McIlveen MLA opened

		the Ulster –Scots conference on ‘Ulster Scots Contributions to a shared Inheritance’.
Education	03/07/13	Joint oral briefing from Guide Dogs NI, Angel Eyes, Royal National Institute for Blind People and Jordanstown School on education services for visually impaired school children.
	11/09/13	Oral briefing from Parents Outloud on School Starting Age
	September 2013	Written submission from Early Years Organisation to the Committee’s Inquiry into the Education and Training Inspectorate and the School Improvement Process
	23/10/13	Oral briefing from the Principal of Tor Bank School (as part of a delegation from the General Teaching Council NI) on the Committee’s Inquiry into the Education and Training Inspectorate and the School Improvement Process
	06/11/13	Parent-Teachers Association NI participated in an evening stakeholder event on the Common Funding Scheme
	08/01/14	Oral briefing from Parents Outloud on the Committee’s Inquiry into the Education and Training Inspectorate and the School Improvement Process
	11/03/14	Oral briefing from the Principal of Tor Bank School (as part of a delegation from the General Teaching Council NI) on the Committee’s Inquiry into the Education and Training Inspectorate and the School Improvement Process
Employment and Learning	13/11/13	Learning Disabilities Work Experience Event. The event was organised to enable a group of 50 young people with varying degrees of learning disabilities the opportunity to have a behind the scenes look at various work areas within the Northern Ireland Assembly. Section 75 was complied with by facilitating ease of access to the building by arranging upper car park access, a Member of the Education Service with specific training facilitated the event.
	05/03/14	Visit to Glenveagh Special School – Post Special Educational Needs Inquiry - Persons with a disability
	05/03/14	Visit to Ulster Supported Employment Ltd – Post Special Educational Need Inquiry - Persons with a disability
	04/17/12-16/10/13	The Committee conducted an Inquiry into Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance in Northern Ireland in which it

		consulted with a wide number of organisations and carried out an online survey with young people to which over 8000 responses were received.
	15/01/14	The Committee is currently conducting an Inquiry into Post Special Educational Needs in Northern Ireland and has consulted with a large number of stakeholders and carried out some visits (detailed above) as part of this inquiry.
Enterprise, Trade and Investment	20/03/14	The Committee visited Willowbank Community Resource Centre in Dungannon to hear of the work that it carries out. Willowbank Ltd is a “not for profit” voluntary organisation, based in Dungannon providing day opportunities, training and support for adults with a physical disability and/or a sensory impairment.
Health, Social Service and Public Safety	November 2013	An event was organised to gather evidence on the Committee’s review of the health inequalities experienced by people with a learning disability. It took place in Carrickfergus Town Hall. People with learning disabilities, their carers, and various charities were invited to the event where they held discussions with Committee members on the issues they face in terms of accessing healthcare. Reasonable adjustments were made in terms of a suitable venue (some attendees were in wheel chairs) and written material was produced prior to the event for the participants with a learning disability in a user friendly format.
	02/10/13	Evidence session with Bardnardo’s NI on sexual exploitation of children and young people (age – children)
	May 2013	Informal meeting with the Commissioner for Older People NI (age – older people)
	11/09/13	Informal meeting and visit to premises of NIAMH in Dungannon (suicide prevention and bereavement service, including people with mental health issues – disability)
	09/10/13	Informal meeting with PPR Project (mental health rights group – people with a disability)
	27/11/13	Informal meeting with the Commissioner for Children & Young People (age - children)
Regional Development	26/06/13	The Committee received a briefing from Guide Dogs NI on Audio Visual Information on public transport. The briefing took place in Parliament Buildings and we arranged upper car park access for the representatives. The Committee also ensured the Loop System was operational and provided water bowls for the guide dogs.

Social Development	11 April 2013	The Committee held a large stakeholder event regarding Department of Social Development's Housing Strategy which was well attended by groups including Section 75 groups.
	06 June 2013	The Committee held a large stakeholder event regarding Repossessions which was well attended by groups including Section 75 groups.
	July 2013	During the Committee stage of Pavement Cafés Bill, the Committee invited stakeholders, including section 75 groups, to submit a written submission to the consultation on the Bill. Written submissions were received from stakeholders including IMTAC & Guide Dogs for the Blind.
	17/10/13	Guide Dogs for the Blind were invited to give oral evidence to the Committee. Reasonable adjustments were the provision of upper car park access for those with visual impairment and accommodation of guide dogs in the Committee meeting room.
	March 2014	In advance of its Strategic Away Day, the Committee sent a request to a large number of stakeholders, including Section 75 groups, to raise issues that they would wish to see the Committee address. Seven responses were received from various stakeholders, including Section 75 groups.

- What are the main initiatives planned in the coming year to ensure the authority improves outcomes in terms of equality of opportunity and good relations for individuals from the nine categories covered by Section 75?

Main planned Initiatives for the period 1 April 2014- 31 March 2015	
1	In March 2013, the Commission decided to seek joint funding from the Executive for a pilot youth assembly model. Following talks with OFMdfM, and reflecting the concerns about cost, a review was undertaken to see where savings could be made. A revised model has been developed and is currently being considered. In the coming year, work will be undertaken to move the project forward to a position where a youth assembly can be launched in 2015-16, subject to availability of funding.
2	Conclusion of the Policy EQIA on the flying of the Union Flag at Parliament Buildings.
3	Staff Survey: It is proposed to issue a staff survey to all staff before the end of September 2014.
4	Participate in Community Relations week. As part of Community Relations Week 2014, the Assembly will be hosting a 7 a side football game in the Pavilion. A team of seven MLAs will be playing against members of the World United team, an inter culture football team based in Belfast. The purpose of this event is to help promote community relations/good relations by raising awareness of Cultural Relations Week and in particular the World United Project.
5	Publish findings of the Gender Action Plan Steering Group with recommendations as to whether a secretariat gender action plan is required.
6	Continued implementation of the Assembly Community Connect programme (ACC).
7	Digital First Strategy EQIA to be progressed.
8	Continue to deliver equality scheme and a programme of policy screening.
9	To maintain Action on Hearing Loss 'Louder than Words' accreditation.
10	To maintain autism accreditation from the National Autistic Association.
11	Continued implementation of Good Relations Action Plan http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/Documents/Corporate/Commission/Commission-Good-Relation-Strategy.pdf
12	Continued implementation of Disability Action Plan http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/ABOUT-THE-ASSEMBLY/Corporate-Information/Policies/Disability-Action-Plan-2012-2016/
13	Continued provision of draft answers to Assembly oral and written questions to the Assembly Commission regarding equality and good relations issues.
14	Completion and implementation of Engagement Strategy.
15	Completion of Recognition of Individuals Policy.
16	Continued implementation of Knowledge exchange seminars.
17	Continued delivery of the education service to stakeholders and further engagement of younger people. See video http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/News-and-Media/Assembly-Extra/Bitesize-/ and school report video http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/News-and-Media/Assembly-Extra/Bitesize-/
18	Continued hosting of events across Section 75 Categories.
19	Continued implementation of the 'Perspectives On... Series' to include the First World War.
20	Continuation of 'roof project' and consideration of disability access on the 4 th floor of Parliament Buildings.

21	Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) Parliament to host a debate at Parliament Buildings on 30 April 2014. This debate will follow the procedures in place for plenary debate. This initiative will increase the opportunities for ethnic minority voices to be heard and will help connect BME community members to key decision makers in government.
22	Exploration of signing up to Diversiton's Diversity Champions Award Programme.
23	Continued hosting of Pensioners' Parliament.
24	Continue to mainstream equality issues within the Secretariat and in partnership with relevant agencies.
25	Continuing good relations inputs into a range of Secretariat initiatives and activities.
26	External Disability Advisory Group continues to assist with the implementation and further development of the Disability Action Plan.
27	Ongoing training and development in relation to equality, diversity and good relations issues.
28	Approve the 2015 schedule for exhibitions for the Great Hall.
29	Continue all relevant forms of data collection.
30	Continuation of Employee Supported Volunteering Programme.
31	Annual disability audit of staff to be conducted.
32	Assembly Community Connect to host 'Get Involved' events in the following constituencies: September 2014 – South Down November 2014 – Fermanagh and South Tyrone February 2015 – Strangford April 2015 – East Londonderry
33	Assembly's Charity of the Year to be appointed.
34	Monday 2 nd June 2014 – Ethnic Minorities "Get Involved" event (Parliament Buildings).
35	Wednesday 15 th October – "World Rural Women's Day" event (Parliament Buildings).
36	On 15 May 2014 the Northern Ireland Business Trust (NIABT) will sponsor an event with Women into Business and the International Business Women's Conference which will be attended by approximately 40 people.

New / Revised Equality Schemes

- Please indicate whether this reporting period applies to a new or revised scheme and (if appropriate) when the scheme was approved?

The Commission's revised Equality Scheme was submitted to the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland in February 2012. The Commission received formal notification that the revised Equality Scheme was approved on 28 March 2012.

Section 1: Strategic Implementation of the Section 75 Duties

Our vision is of an Assembly which builds a better future for the people of Northern Ireland through fostering a peaceful, stable and prosperous society.

Our vision is to best serve the Assembly in that task by being at the forefront of providing outstanding and progressive parliamentary services.

To fulfil our vision and achieve our aims we will work in a way which demonstrates the following values:

Public Service – which is demonstrated by:

- An attitude of service to the Assembly, its Members and visitors
- Behaving with impartiality and integrity at all times
- Being open and transparent

Professionalism – which is demonstrated by:

- Commitment to excellence
- Commitment to good governance
- Appropriate confidentiality and discretion
- Personal responsibility and accountability

One Team – which is demonstrated by:

- Team working
- Respect for others
- Working to the common purpose

To deliver on our vision the Corporate Plan sets out three strategic aims:

Strategic Aim 1: Provide outstanding parliamentary services;

Strategic Aim 2: Influence, enable and deliver change;

Strategic Aim 3 To be an efficient and progressive organization

The Corporate Plan is our key strategic planning document and refers to our statutory responsibilities but it should be read in conjunction with Directorate Business Plans which contain equality and good relations objectives.

In addition, Annex 3 outlines the progress made in developing and meeting good relations outcomes during the reporting period and Part B of this document highlights progress made in relation to the ‘disability duties.’

Throughout the reporting period continued visible support by Management to equality has been apparent in the issues considered at Senior Management Group (SMG) and Commission meetings.

Continued mainstreaming of Equality and Good Relations has taken place through various programmes of work.

Furthermore, continued equality proofing of policy and practice has taken place and, in line with our Equality Scheme commitments, has been placed on our website each quarter.

Equality continues to form part of staff's mandatory induction processes and we continue to adhere to legislative requirements and best practice.

Section 2: Examples of Section 75 Outcomes / Impacts

Given the renewed focus of Section 75 aiming to achieve more tangible impacts and outcomes and addressing key inequalities; please report in this section how the authority's work has impacted on individuals across the Section 75 categories.

The Commission is committed to promoting equality and good relations. Within the Executive Summary we have identified work carried out across the range of Section 75 categories during the reporting period.

In addition, the Commission has activities outlined within specific action plans/areas of research which address gender, disability, race, women and good relations.

Gender: The work of the Gender Action Plan Steering Group is detailed at page 7. The work undertaken during the reporting period, and progress to be made within the next reporting period, is detailed below.

Step 1	Establish a steering group	Mid November 2013
Step 2	Review composition of the workforce and decision making structures	End of December 2013 – end of March 2014
Step 3	Discuss possible research questions and methodology e.g. qualitative questionnaire, interviews or combination	Mid-January 2014
Step 4	Agree questions and methodology	Early February 2014
Step 5	SMG and Internal Communications Working Group to have sight of Questionnaire before distribution to staff (for informational purposes)	Early February 2014
Step 6	Arrange data collection by agreed methodology	Mid February 2014
Step 7	Qualitative data collection and focus groups. Report on composition of the workforce and decision making structures	End of March 2014
Step 8	Examination of the questionnaire themes and comments against policies to make a determination whether there is a policy or implementation issue.	End of March 2014
Step 9	Consider draft report on findings and implications for draft action plan	End of April 2014
Step 10	Agree final report and begin development of draft action plan (if required)	End of May 2014
Step 11	(If required) Draft action plan to be agreed and approved by SMG	End of June 2014
Step 12	Draft plan Consultation	July – September 2014

Disability: Referenced in Part B – Disability Duties
Race: See Executive Summary and Planned Activities Sections.
Women: See Executive Summary and Planned Activities Sections.
Good Relations: Referenced in Annex 3

- Please give examples of changes to policies or practices using **screening or EQIA**, which have resulted in **outcomes or impacts for individuals**. If the change was a result of an EQIA please indicate this and also reference the title of the relevant EQIA.

Policy outcomes

As Equality has become more mainstreamed across directorates, Section 75 obligations are being considered from the outset when developing policies, and so issues are often resolved before screening is commenced. This has led to the majority of policies being screened out, and not requiring amendment following screening.

1. The Good Relations Strategy 2012-2016 and associated Action Plan follows on from work carried out through the 2010-2011 Good Relations Action Plan which outlined a comprehensive programme of good relations work. The policy will enable the Assembly Commission to put in place measures which will promote good relations when it is providing the property, staff and services required for the Assembly to carry out its work.

The Good Relations Strategy and Action Plan aims to promote equality of opportunity for people of different religious, political and racial backgrounds through engagement in a variety of actions which focus on service delivery, training, dialogue and specific projects between staff and all users of Parliament Buildings.

The Commission recognises that none of the Section 75 categories operate as silos and that people have multiple identities. It is also recognised that where issues have been raised, or may in the future be raised, that we will revisit our action plan and amend as necessary.

2. A new policy for the Management of Deputising & Temporary Promotion Arrangements confirms to managers and staff the procedures which must be followed when considering the need to fill vacancies on a temporary basis.

The Policy is procedural in nature and will be applied to all staff irrespective of Section 75 category and has no specific impact on good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group.

3. As Parliament Buildings hosts a large number of events and visitors each year, it has a significant opportunity to play a leading role in the encouragement of dialogue, shared learning and mutual respect for different faiths and cultural backgrounds.

One way of taking forward this area of work has been to develop an **Exhibitions Policy** in order to provide a governance framework to regulate the use of exhibitions in Parliament Buildings. The Exhibitions Policy was screened by a panel and was extensively consulted on with Members, staff and other interested parties.

The Policy has a minor impact on a number of Section 75 categories – religious belief, racial group, age, and disability. The impact will be addressed through engagement with under-represented groups generally and through using new and existing channels as part of the Engagement Strategy. Where MLA sponsored events/exhibitions take place under the three signature policy, they must be sponsored by at least 3 MLAs reflecting cross party support.

4. The **Policy for the Use of IT Resources (MLAs and non-Secretariat Staff)** derives from a recommendation contained in the “Report on the Unauthorised Disclosure of a Draft Report of the Public Accounts Committee” produced by the Interim Assembly Commissioner for Standards and published by the Committee on Standards and Privileges on 20th June 2012. The policy exists in order that the monitoring of the use of Assembly email services by all users, including Members, may be undertaken.

The policy applies to all Assembly Members, Members’ support staff and Party support staff fairly and consistently, irrespective of which equality group they belong to. The policy has no specific impact on good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group.

5. In December, the HR office revised the **Redeployment Protocol** to include provision for AG5 staff to make application to move to another post within the Secretariat for development purposes. The protocol outlines the processes which exist to redeploy staff to other posts within the Assembly Secretariat and demonstrates the transparent and open approach in which the Assembly Commission will manage redeployment in order to support its commitment of no compulsory severance programmes in achieving future staff complement targets during the period of the Spending Review.

The Policy is procedural in nature and will be applied to all staff irrespective of Section 75 category. The policy has no specific impact on good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group.

6. In January, the HR office revised the **Flexible Working and Partial Retirement Procedures** to reflect all relevant legislation pertaining to flexible working and the partial retirement provisions set out in the Principle Civil Service Pension Scheme (NI). The only change made to the procedures is to clarify for staff that changes to the place of work, as well as hours of work, may be requested.

The Policy is procedural in nature and will be applied to all staff irrespective of Section 75 category. The policy has no specific impact on good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group.

- Please give examples of ***outcomes or impacts on individuals*** as a result of any **other Section 75 processes** e.g. consultation or monitoring:
 - Improved awareness of Good Relations, Equality and Disability Issues
 - Improved disability access
 - Improved awareness of Assembly policies
 - Improved consultation and engagement
 - More opportunities for learning through events
 - Better information gathering

Section 3: Screening

Title of policy subject to screening	What was the <i>screening decision</i>? E.g. screened in, screened out, mitigation, EQIA...	Were any <i>concerns raised about screening by consultees</i>; including the Commission?	Is policy being subject to EQIA? Yes/No If yes indicate timeline for assessment.
Management of Deputising and Temporary Promotions Arrangements	Screened out	No	No
Exhibitions Policy	Screened out	No	No
Policy on the use of IT resources (MLAs and non-secretariat staff)	Screened out	No	No
Good Relations Strategy and Revised Good Relations Action Plan	Screened out	No	No
Redeployment Protocol	Screened out	No	No
Flexible Working and Partial Retirement Procedures	Screened out	No	No
Engagement Strategy	Screening ongoing		

All screening reports for the reporting period can be found at <http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/ABOUT-THE-ASSEMBLY/Corporate-Information/Publications/Equality-Screening-and-Equality-Impact-Assessments-EQIAs/>

Section 4: Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA)

Please provide an update of policies subject to EQIA during 2013-14, stage 7 EQIA monitoring activities and an indicative EQIA timetable for 2014-15.

- EQIA Timetable: April 2013 - March 2014

Title of Policy EQIA	EQIA Stage at end March 2014 (Steps 1-6)	Outline adjustments to policy intended to benefit individuals and the relevant Section 75 categories due to be affected.
Policy on the flying of the Union Flag at Parliament Buildings.	Step 1	

Where the EQIA timetable for 2013-14 (as detailed in the previous annual S75 progress report to the Commission) has not been met, please provide details of the factors responsible for delay and details of the timetable for re-scheduling the EQIA/s in question.

- Ongoing EQIA Monitoring Activities: April 2013- March 2014

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

Please outline any proposals, arising from the authority's monitoring for adverse impacts, for revision of the policy to achieve better outcomes the relevant equality groups:

2014-15 EQIA Timetable

Title of EQIAs due to be commenced during April 2014 – March 2015	Revised or New policy?	Please indicate expected timescale of Decision Making stage i.e. Stage 6
Digital First Strategy	New	

Section 5: Training

Course Title	Date	Attendees
Autism NI Accreditation	22.10.13	13
Child Protection Awareness	15.04.13	21
Dignity at Work	02.05.13	368
Equality Law Update	09.08.13	1
Harassment Contact Officers	20.08.13	6
Equality Law Update	30.04.13	1
Understanding and supporting individuals with Autism	25.09.13	1
Equality Commission Courses		
Managing Disability in the Workplace	March 2014	4
Sex and Equality	March 2014	2
Recruiting Fairly	December 2013	1
Introduction to DDA	January 2014	1

Section 6: Communication

During the reporting period we communicated progress on the delivery of Section 75 through various methods:

1. Commission Members are advised via reports tabled at their monthly Commission meeting on the actions which are being undertaken to ensure compliance with S75 of the Northern Ireland Act. Commission minutes are available on our website.
2. Clerking teams continue to engage with the public by holding meetings outside of Parliament Buildings and by consulting with the public on Bills.
3. Clerks and Assistant Clerks are routinely involved in presenting as guest speakers at NI Assembly Community Outreach programmes such as ***How the Assembly Works; Get Involved; and Insight Into***. The role of Clerks and Assistant Clerks at these events is to present to community, and interest groups and members of the public on the work of committees in the Assembly and how the public can engage better with those committees.
4. Annex 2 details oral questions answered on the progress of Section 75 duties and related policies which were discussed on the floor of the house.
5. On 24 May 2011 the “Louder than Words” charter mark was awarded to the Northern Ireland Assembly following a lengthy audit process, during which the organisation was required to demonstrate a commitment to improving access and services to deaf and hard of hearing people. The ‘Louder than Words’ award included methods of communication utilized as part of its underlying principles. The Northern Ireland

Assembly became the first legislature in the United Kingdom to be awarded the prestigious Action on Hearing Loss “Louder than Words” best practice charter mark. Some Assembly staff has undergone training in deaf awareness and communication tactics to ensure that they are able to recognise and facilitate the very particular needs of deaf and hard of hearing visitors. One of our tour guides is proficient in sign language and twenty members of staff recently attended basic sign language training. New equipment such as an upgrade to the hearing loop system, additional signage and the introduction of whispering tour equipment has been introduced. The Assembly undergoes an audit process each year in order to retain this charter mark. Since its first award the Assembly has retained this charter mark.

6. Details of the screening of policy outcomes were placed on our website every quarter and communicated to consultees.

7. The Communications team keeps up to date lists of stakeholders (including Section 75) groups and ensures that these groups are informed about all events/Committee work.

8. When Committees are undertaking any events/inquires/ evidence sessions that would be of interest to hard to reach groups, including Section 75 groups, the Communications team ensures that these groups are informed through a range of means including, email, phone calls, twitter, audio packages and media operational notices.

9. During the reporting period a five year review of Disability Action Plans (DAPs) was published by the Northern Ireland Assembly Commission. This covered the period 15 December 2007 – 31 March 2013.

This can be found on our website at:

<http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/Documents/Corporate/Disability%20Action%20Plan/Five-Year-Review-of-Disability-Action-Plans.pdf>

10. The newly established Assembly Community Connect (ACC) Programme will provide the framework for engagement and communication between the Third Sector and the Northern Ireland Assembly. Throughout the year Assembly Community Connect has communicated and engaged with Third Sector stakeholders through a wide variety of ways. The regular training sessions taking place in Parliament Buildings have been well supported with high attendance figures and excellent feedback. Staff have travelled to identified constituencies presenting to many groups and organisations, at their request, sharing knowledge about the Assembly and highlighting the channels available to help support them in their work. In addition we have, at the request of Third Sector organisations, travelled to many venues across the country to provide an Assembly conference exhibition stand, distributing Assembly literature and liaising with fellow delegates to learn about their work and to share with them the work of the Assembly.

11. Parliament Buildings was the first public building in the UK to achieve formal accreditation through the National Autistic Association for its autism Initiative. An autism page continues to be made available and upgraded on our website providing

information for those visiting Parliament Buildings <http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/Visit-and-Learning/Visiting/Autism-and-the-Assembly/>

12. Equality training continued in reporting period.

13. In the reporting period, one request was received by the Publications Office to produce material in a braille format for event attendees. This request was completed.

14. A disability audit and gender questionnaire was issued to staff during the reporting period.

15. There was continued communication and implementation of equality and good relations via Directorate Business Plans.

16. An article in relation to the upgraded disability access at Parliament Buildings appeared in the Disability Action newsletter.

Section 7: Data Collection & Analysis

The Commission continues to collate information gained through policy screening, meetings, focus groups, consultation practices and monitoring processes. Staff surveys have also provided supplementary information such as the questionnaire issued by the Gender Action Plan Steering Group.

During the reporting period a centralised research proforma and visitor survey were put in place to address identified data deficits as detected through the Good Relations screening process.

Section 8: Information Provision, Access to Information and Services

1. Education Service – Accessible Information: Some materials on the Education Programme have been provided in Irish, German, French and Spanish. Pictorial information is provided to students who require literacy support and audio visual material is available on the education website which also includes animation and subtitles.

2. Prior to a group coming to visit the Assembly a process is in place whereby information is sought in relation to special requirements. This covers any access issues e.g. physical or educational. Programmes are amended to suit the needs of the student. The education service accommodates the needs of students from schools across Northern Ireland.

3. Assembly Community Connect developed a website presence on the Assembly website and made use of social media to enhance connections between the Assembly and the Community and Voluntary sector through education and outreach. <http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/Visit-and-Learning/Connecting-With-Community/>

4. A page for those with Autism was created on the Assembly website providing information for those visiting Parliament Buildings.

5. Outreach: Reasonable adjustments continue to be put in place as required. For example, at a recent Assembly Community Connect ‘Get Involved’ event held in March 2014, in the Lagan Valley constituency, all training and presentational documents were made available, as requested, in braille. In addition adjustments were made in terms of resource materials.

6. The Assembly maintained its hearing loss ‘Louder than Words’ accreditation which includes an assessment on access to information and services.

7. The Assembly maintained its autism accreditation from the National Autistic Association. Access to information and services formed part of the assessment process.

8. The Assembly website remains AA compliant of the W3C web content accessibility guidelines 1.0.

9. The Commission has continued to make changes to its facilities regarding its programme of work identified through access audits carried out by RNIB, Disability Action and Action on Hearing Loss.

Section 9: Complaints

No Section 75 complaints were received in the period 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2014. No complaints were referred to the Equality Commission.

Section 10: Consultation and Engagement

Please see details above of consultation exercises undertaken during the reporting period.

In addition to the consultation exercises above, the Secretariat has also continued to meet with groups representing all of the Section 75 groups on a regular basis, through various activities it has undertaken for example, education service, outreach, Assembly Community Connect, events, disability advisory group etc. See Annex 4 and 5 in relation to events and exhibitions held.

The Speaker held two events to engage with groups during the reporting period. These were:

Christmas Event (December 2013). The Speaker's Christmas event recognized the contribution of people who are actively involved in dealing with the impact of poverty in Northern Ireland and further afield.

St. Patrick's Day Event (March 2014). The Speaker's St Patrick's Day event recognized the contribution of people who assisted the Emergency Services in a voluntary capacity in Northern Ireland.

Section 11: The Good Relations Duty

The Commission's Good Relations Guide was used in the development of the Good Relations Strategy, associated screening and in the development of underpinning policies. The Good Relations monitoring report can be viewed below at Annex 3.

Part B: 'Disability Duties'
Annual Report 1 April 2013 / 31 March 2014

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

19

0

2

Fully
Achieved?

Partially
Achieved?

Not
Achieved?

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

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

Level	Public Life Action Measures	Outputs ¹	Outcomes / Impact ²
Regional ³	To continue quarterly meetings of the external disability advisory group	2 meetings held within the reporting period.	Input into issues such as access, policies, signage and tours.
Local ⁴			

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

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

³ **Regional:** Situations where people can influence policy decision making at a middle impact level

⁴ **Local :** Situations where people can influence policy decision making at lower impact level e.g. one off consultations, local fora.

2(b) What **training action measures** were achieved in this reporting period?

	Training Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
1	Provide autism training to staff as part of our Autism NI accreditation.	Training sessions delivered by the National Autistic Society to 13 staff.	Updated understanding and application to work area.
2	Provide Dignity at Work training in relation to Secretariat policy.	Training sessions delivered by Bray Leino to 368 staff.	Updated understanding and application to work area.
3	Provide anti-harassment training.	Training session delivered by Bray Leino to 6 harassment contact officers staff.	Updated understanding and application to work area.
4	Understanding and supporting individuals with Autism.	Attendance by 1 staff member to National Autistic Association Conference.	Updated understanding and application to work area.
5	Provide 'Managing Disability in the Workplace' training.	Training session delivered by Equality Commission to 1 staff member.	Updated understanding and application to work area.
6	Provide 'Introduction to DDA' training.	Training session delivered by Equality Commission to 1 staff member.	Updated understanding and application to work area.

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

	Communications Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
1	Accessible tours	<p>To develop a signed online tour through the mediums of Irish and British sign language.</p> <p>To make available a computer tablet, for those who are deaf or hearing impaired, which provides a signed version of the current tour script in Irish and British sign language for use in Parliament Buildings.</p>	<p>Completed. A signed tour of Parliament Buildings is now available on the Assembly website.</p> <p>The signed tour has been filmed and all production is complete. We are currently in the process of uploading content onto the computer tablet.</p>
2	Monitor for adjustments made.	Quarterly monitoring of reasonable adjustments made and sharing of any learning as required.	Materials (Leaflets, 3 powerpoints and documents) were made available in Braille in March 2014 at a 'Get Involved' event as part of the Assembly Community Connect Programme.
3	Improve visual signage	Monitor of current braille signage and other (pictorial) signage to ensure quality and compliance with legislation.	Pictorial signage continues to be monitored to ensure quality; braille signage has been produced for public areas and will be erected within the next reporting period.
4	To retain accreditation from the National Autistic Society	<p>Full audit conducted.</p> <p>Autism champions trained and in place.</p> <p>Other relevant staff trained.</p>	Accreditation retained

		Pre-visit pages on website updated and audio video in place. Quiet room in place.	
5	To retain Action on Hearing loss accreditation	Full audit conducted.	Accreditation retained
6	Record staff with a disability on annual survey and conduct interviews with staff with disabilities as required.	Complete. Audit undertaken.	Individual measures put in place as necessary.
7	Implement a Northern Ireland Assembly guaranteed interview scheme.	Complete.	Scheme approved and implemented.
8	Assembly website	Monitor the number of complaints based on disability access to site.	No complaints received during the reporting period.
9	Continue implementation of access audits completed by RNIB, Disability Action and Action on Hearing Loss in programme of works and in prioritisation of recommendations.	2 portable ramps were purchased to allow access to the Chamber lobbies. Toilet signage in braille was also purchased (these will be erected on the pillars in the Great Hall after the Giro d'Italia event concludes).	Works completed.

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

	Encourage others Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
1	To make Parliament Buildings accessible to all.	<p>Raise awareness of accessibility at Parliament Buildings.</p> <p>Complete work on the installation of ramps and changes to the façade of the front entrance to Parliament Buildings.</p>	<p>Article completed and distributed by Disability Action to their users groups through their e-newsletter.</p> <p>All works complete.</p>

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

	Action Measures fully implemented (other than Training and specific public life measures)	Outputs	Outcomes / Impact
1	Ensure Parliament Buildings is accessible to all.	To investigate whether a lift with Parliament Buildings can be fireproofed and widened for use in the event of an evacuation to enable those with mobility requirements, wheelchair users, those with dependants and those with other disabilities that require assistance to evacuate from the first floor public areas.	Building Services Branch met staff with the Fire Safety Officer to discuss the possibility of upgrading one or more of the existing lifts in Parliament Buildings, to make them available for use in an emergency evacuation. However, it was concluded that the size of the existing lifts and associated upgrade costs meant this was not a viable solution and that the

		Potential changes to the lift and lift shaft to be investigated.	current system of using evacuation chairs was more practicable.
2	5 year review of Disability Action Plans.	Completion of a five review of disability action plans covering the period 15 December 2007 – 31 March 2013.	Report completed and issued to the Equality Commission. Full report is available on the Assembly Website.

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

	Action Measures partly achieved	Milestones ⁵ / Outputs	Outcomes/Impacts	Reasons not fully achieved
1				

4. Please outline what **action measures have not been achieved** and the reasons why?

	Action Measures not met	Reasons
1	Continue quarterly meetings of the internal disability group.	This group has agreed to meet on theme based issues instead of quarterly. The group is progressing the production of briefing guides for staff on the practical day to day implementation of the DDA. These guides are due for completion at the end of 2014.
2	Review of Accessible Publications Policy	The Accessible Publication Policy will no longer be published in its current form as the majority of its content will be subsumed within the new Digital First Strategy currently being drafted. It is anticipated that

⁵ **Milestones** – Please outline what part progress has been made towards the particular measures; even if full output or outcomes/ impact have not been achieved.

		the Digital First Strategy will undergo an Equality Impact Assessment before being implemented.
3		

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

(a) Qualitative

- Feedback from tours and educational visits
- Staff suggestion boxes comments
- Disability Advisory Group feedback on policies and actions
- Screening of policies feedback
- Annual review of accreditations feedback
- Consultation meetings

(b) Quantitative

- Measuring website and new traffic
- Customer feedback forms
- Annual disability audit

6. As a result of monitoring progress against actions has your organisation either:

- made any **revisions** to your plan during the reporting period or
- taken any **additional steps** to meet the disability duties which were **not outlined in your original** disability action plan / any other changes?

Please delete: Yes

If yes please outline below:

	Revised/Additional Action Measures	Performance Indicator	Timescale
1	Assembly Roof project	The roof refurbishment project, due to start in April 2014 and will consider options to improve disability access to the 4 th Floor of Parliament Buildings.	Start date April 2014.

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

No

Annex 1

Education Service Figures for Reporting Period 1 April 2013- 31 March 2014

Report By School Type

<i>School Type</i>	<i>Totals</i>	<i>Numbers:</i>
Controlled Grammar	20	798
Controlled Grammar (External Outreach)	1	60
Controlled Primary	68	2198
Controlled Primary (External Outreach)	2	116
Controlled Secondary	55	2180
Controlled Secondary (External Outreach)	1	80
Further & Higher Education	10	213
Integrated Primary	1	38
Integrated Secondary	14	440
Maintained Primary	47	1637
Maintained Primary (External Outreach)	1	24
Maintained Secondary	66	2568
Maintained Secondary (External Outreach)	5	399
Special Secondary	4	77
University	4	91
Voluntary Grammar	62	2152
Voluntary Grammar (External Outreach)	7	500
Voluntary Primary	4	170
<i>Grand Total</i>	372	13741

Annex 2

Assembly Questions

Ref No	Member	Question	Tabled	Answered	Index Terms
AQO 4347/11-15	Mrs Dolores Kelly (SDLP - Upper Bann)	<p>To ask the Assembly Commission for an update on the Irish Language Strategy.</p> <p>The Assembly Commission does not yet have an agreed Irish Language Strategy. However, draft Language Guidance has been under consideration by the Assembly Commission and the views of all Parties were sought following a meeting of the Assembly Commission held on 27 February 2013. The Assembly Commission is planning to hold a further meeting to discuss Good Relations issues which will include consideration of the draft language guidance.</p>	06/06/2013	Answered	Northern Ireland Assembly Commission; Irish language; Policy
AQO 4348/11-15	Mr Jim Allister (TUV - North Antrim)	<p>To ask the Assembly Commission what progress has been made in increasing the number of days on which the Union flag can be flown at Parliament Buildings.</p> <p>View Official Report for AQO 4348/11-15</p>	06/06/2013	Answered	Northern Ireland Assembly Commission; Flags; Parliament Buildings
AQW 24550/11-15	Mr Jimmy Spratt (DUP - South Belfast)	<p>To ask the Assembly Commission, in relation to Thyssenkrupp Elevator UK Ltd, to detail (i) all work carried out in the past six months at Parliament Buildings; and (ii) costs associated with this work.</p> <p>I can confirm that in the past 6 months Thyssen Krupp attended Parliament Buildings on 13 occasions to address breakdowns of the passenger lifts and 5 times to carry out planned preventative maintenance. They were also here on 2 occasions to carry out maintenance work on the food service lifts. The total cost of this work was £3,849.53 (excl. Vat). Thyssen Kruup carried out major refurbishment of the north and west lifts in Parliament Buildings last year and we are planning for them to refurbish the east lifts during this summer recess. I hope that the above information provides the detail that you sought. However, should you require any supplementary information, I would be very happy to assist with your enquiry</p>	21/06/2013	Answered	Lifts; Repairs and maintenance; Parliament Buildings; Expenditure
AQW 24907/11-	Mr Cathal Ó hOisín	To ask the Assembly Commission whether one of its Members can	02/07/2013	Answered	Assembly

15	(SF - East Londonderry)	<p>respond to a Question for Written Answer in Irish and English if they wish; and for a breakdown of any vote taken on the subject. <i>[Priority Written]</i></p> <p>When responding to AQWs, Assembly Commission Members do so on behalf of the Assembly Commission and within the relevant policies and decisions of the Commission.</p> <p>At the Assembly Commission meeting on 7 May 2013, following a proposal from a Commission Member to respond to AQWs to the Assembly Commission bilingually, a vote was taken. The Assembly Commission voted as follows :-</p> <p>For :- Ms Ruane and Mrs Cochrane = 37 votes.</p> <p>Against :- Mr Weir, Mr Cree, Mr Ramsey = 67 votes.</p> <p>The proposal was lost.</p> <p>It was therefore agreed that responses to questions to the Assembly Commission for Written Answer would continue to be in English only. At its meeting on the 5 June 2013, the Assembly Commission further discussed the issue of bilingual responses to Written Assembly Questions. The Speaker proposed that the responses now issue in the format agreed by the Commission on 7 May 2013. The Assembly Commission voted as follows:-</p> <p>For :- Mr Weir, Mr Cree, Mr Ramsey and Mrs Cochrane = 75 votes.</p> <p>Against :- Ms Ruane = 29 votes.</p> <p>The proposal was agreed.</p>			<p>questions; English language; Irish language; Northern Ireland Assembly Commission</p>
AQO 5073/11-15	Ms Megan Fearon (SF - Newry and Armagh)	<p>To ask the Assembly Commission to outline the steps it is taking to ensure it meets its statutory obligations under Section 75.</p> <p>Schedule 9 (4) (1) to Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 requires the Assembly Commission, as a designated public authority, to set out how it proposes to fulfil its Section 75 duties through its Equality Scheme.</p> <p>The Assembly Commission's current Equality Scheme was approved on 28 March 2012 and is based on a model equality scheme promulgated by the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland. It meets both the legal requirements of Schedule 9 of the 1998 Act and recommendations contained within the Equality Commission's "Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 – A Guide for Public Authorities" which was issued in 2010.</p>	07/11/2013	Answered	<p>Equality; Northern Ireland Assembly</p>

		<p>The Assembly Commission's Equality Scheme is a statement of the arrangements for fulfilling the statutory duties and it also the plan for their implementation. The arrangements for assessing the compliance with the statutory duties are outlined in relevant parts of the Equality Scheme. For example, it includes arrangements for monitoring, for undertaking Equality Impact Assessments, for dealing with complaints, and for ensuring access to information and services. Indeed the Commission recently received a very positive endorsement, in relation to its Section 75 Progress report for 2012/13, from the Equality Commission.</p>			
AQO 5069/11-15	Mr Jim Allister (TUV - North Antrim)	<p>To ask the Assembly Commission for an update on increasing the number of days on which the Union Flag is flown from Parliament Buildings.</p> <p>At a meeting of the Assembly Commission held on 5 February 2013 the Commission tasked officials to: consult with Parties to review the number of days upon which the Union Flag flies from Parliament Buildings, to detail a range of options, and to set out how a process of public consultation could be carried out and arrangements for completing an Equality Impact Assessment.</p> <p>On 6 March 2013 Parties were invited to submit written statements on this issue, with a closing date for comments of 10 April 2013. Seven Parties submitted written responses. A paper on the motion was listed for initial consideration at the Commission meeting on 26 June 2013. However, it was agreed that it would be brought back to the Commission following the summer recess. A paper, detailing a range of options, will be considered at the Assembly Commission meeting to be held on the 20 November 2013. This will be the first meeting of the Commission since June 2013.</p>	07/11/2013	Answered	Flags; Parliament Buildings
AQO 5061/11-15	Mrs Karen McKeivitt (SDLP - South Down)	<p>To ask the Assembly Commission for an update on the Outreach and Education programmes across constituencies.</p> <p>View Official Report for AQO 5061/11-15</p>	07/11/2013	Answered	Northern Ireland Assembly; Visits; Education; Voluntary organisations
AQW 31349/11-	Mr Stephen	To ask the Assembly Commission what plans it has to scatter poppy seeds	25/02/2014	Answered	Anniversaries;

15	Moutray (DUP - Upper Bann)	<p>in the grounds of Parliament Buildings to commemorate the The Great War 1914 - 1918 following the launch of the Royal British Legion 2014 Commemorative Poppy Seed Campaign.</p> <p>The Assembly Commission has no plans to scatter poppy seeds in the grounds of Parliament Buildings to commemorate The Great War 1914-1918. In April 2012, the Assembly Commission agreed a policy on how anniversaries during the decade of centenaries would be handled by the Assembly Commission including a set of principles and a process for agreeing events and initiatives. The list of agreed anniversaries within the "Perspectives On..." series includes the outbreak of the First World War.</p> <p>The Assembly Commission agreed earlier this year that an event on the First World War will be held in the Senate Chamber in September 2014 in a similar format to the "Perspectives On..." events held to commemorate the centenaries of the Ulster Covenant, the women's suffrage movement and the Dublin Lockout. Under the terms of the policy, any further proposals for official Assembly events or initiatives to commemorate the First World War within Parliament Buildings and its precincts would have to be considered by the Assembly Commission and agreed by consensus.</p>			World War I; Charities; Parliament Buildings
AQW 31686/11-15	Ms Rosaleen McCorley (SF - West Belfast)	<p>To ask the Assembly Commission for an assessment of the Committee of Experts of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages report regarding the unavailability of Irish simultaneous interpretation in the Assembly and to detail any plans to fulfil its obligations under the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages.</p> <p>The Assembly Commission has not given any consideration to the Committee of Experts of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages Report nor was the Assembly contacted to provide information on its procedures which were subsequently mentioned in the report. The Commission considered legal advice in May 2013, which indicated that until such time as the European Charter on Regional and Minority Languages is translated into domestic law and given direct legal effect in Northern Ireland, it creates no rights or obligations on the Commission.</p> <p>Draft Language Guidance has been under consideration by the Assembly Commission. The views of all Parties were sought</p>	04/03/2014	Answered	European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages; Interpreters; Irish language; Parliament Buildings

		<p>following a meeting of the Assembly Commission held on 27 February 2013 and will be considered at a future meeting of the Commission. However, this is an area on which the Commission has been unable to reach political agreement.</p>			
AQO 5813/11-15	Mr Dominic Bradley (SDLP - Newry and Armagh)	<p>To ask the Assembly Commission for an update on its policy on the use of the Irish language.</p> <p>The Assembly Commission does not yet have an agreed Irish Language Policy. However, draft Language Guidance has been under consideration by the Assembly Commission. The views of all Parties have been sought following a meeting of the Assembly Commission held on 27 February 2013 and will be considered at a future meeting of the Commission.</p>	06/03/2014	Answered	Policy; Irish language; Northern Ireland Assembly Commission
AQO 5811/11-15	Ms Bronwyn McGahan (SF - Fermanagh and South Tyrone)	<p>To ask the Assembly Commission whether it has any plans to review the voting mechanism in its meetings to mirror the cross community voting mechanism used in plenary sessions.</p> <p>The Assembly Commission operates a system of weighted voting, which was formally agreed at a meeting on the 10 December 1999. The Assembly Commission has always endeavoured to obtain decisions by consensus but on occasions it has been necessary to call a vote on certain matters for progress to be achieved. You may also wish to note that the Commission Handbook details the background and context of the Commission along with the key procedures governing the conduct of Commission business. One of these procedures relates to the issue of voting, with each of the Commission Members having a voting strength equivalent to the number of elected Members in the party to which they belong. This does not preclude individual Members of these Parties or Parties and Independent Members not represented on the Commission from allocating their vote to a Commission Member from another Party, emphasising the principle that the Commission's role is to serve the Assembly and not individual Parties. There is no requirement within Section 40 or Schedule 5 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 for cross community voting within the Assembly Commission, and it is for the Assembly Commission itself to determine its own procedures. However, this is a matter which has been discussed and debated by the Commission and we</p>	06/03/2014	Answered	Voting methods; Northern Ireland Assembly

		recently took part in a corporate governance review session in February 2014 looking at all of our governance arrangements. Following that session it was agreed that further work would be undertaken in relation to voting mechanisms operating within other legislatures and public bodies. We will then consider the information as part of our next Commission meeting in April 2014.			
AQO 5808/11-15	Mr Pat Sheehan (SF - West Belfast)	To ask the Assembly Commission to outline the steps it is taking to ensure its members can answer both Written and Oral Assembly Questions in Irish. View Official Report for AQO 5808/11-15	06/03/2014	Answered	Assembly questions; Irish language
AQO 5803/11-15	Ms Rosaleen McCorley (SF - West Belfast)	To ask the Assembly Commission what steps it is taking to make Parliament Buildings more inclusive. View Official Report for AQO 5803/11-15	06/03/2014	Answered	Parliament Buildings; Planning; Community relations; Public access
AQO 5799/11-15	Mr Raymond McCartney (SF - Foyle)	To ask the Assembly Commission for a breakdown of school visits to Parliament Buildings from each constituency since January 2014. View Official Report for AQO 5799/11-15	06/03/2014	Answered	Schools; Location; Visits; Parliament Buildings; S
AQO 5805/11-15	Mrs Karen McKevitt (SDLP - South Down)	To ask the Assembly Commission to outline the criteria used to determine the level of support provided by the Childcare Allowance Scheme to Members and Assembly staff. View Official Report for AQO 5805/11-15	06/03/2014	Answered	Children; Allowances; Members; Staff; Parliament Buildings
AQO 5804/11-15	Mr Chris Lyttle (ALL - East Belfast)	To ask the Assembly Commission to outline its policy on the use of lighting on the exterior of Parliament Buildings to raise awareness of charitable organisations. View Official Report for AQO 5804/11-15	06/03/2014	Answered	Charities; Parliament Buildings; Lighting; Advertising
AQO 5807/11-15	Mr Michael Copeland (UUP - East Belfast)	To ask the Assembly Commission to outline the reasons why the lift at the east side of Parliament Buildings has been frequently out of operation.	06/03/2014	Answered	Lifts; Parliament Buildings;

		View Official Report for AQO 5807/11-15			Repairs and maintenance; Disability
AQW 31958/11-15	Lord Morrow of Clogher Valley (DUP - Fermanagh and South Tyrone)	<p>To ask the Assembly Commission to outline what internships are available through the Assembly for people with disabilities.</p> <p>Although the Assembly Commission does not operate specific internships that are solely available for people with disabilities, it does operate the following work based programmes which are available to people with disabilities. They are:- The Assembly's work experience programme for schools is organised by the Education Service. The programme runs from January to the start of Easter Recess. Applications are accepted from all schools for approximately 30 places per year. The Assembly's Bursary Programme which is a partnership with Queen's University Belfast for student placements. The Assembly awards approximately 7 bursaries per year.</p>	12/03/2014	Answered	Training; Disability; Northern Ireland Assembly
AQW 32162/11-15	Mr Jim Allister (TUV - North Antrim)	<p>To ask the Assembly Commission whether it has given any consideration to holding an exhibition of art and other materials owned by the Assembly which are currently being held in storage.</p> <p>The Assembly Commission's current Exhibition Policy requires the Assembly Commission to agree an annual schedule for exhibitions in the Great Hall at its first meeting of each year with all other exhibitions in Parliament Buildings being covered by the signature of 3 Members. The Assembly Commission agreed the 2014 exhibition schedule in January of this year which includes a Commission initiative marking local writers. The 2014 schedule does not include an exhibition of art and artefacts held in storage by the Assembly but this can be considered in the preparation for the 2015 exhibition schedule which will commence after a review of the current exhibition policy.</p>	19/03/2014	Answered	Arts; Parliament Buildings; Exhibitions; Northern Ireland Assembly Commission
AQW 32534/11-15	Mr Pat Sheehan (SF - West Belfast)	To ask the Assembly Commission to list all the schools from West Belfast that has visited the Assembly in the last 12 months.	31/03/2014	Awaiting Answer	Belfast West; Visits; Schools; Parliament Buildings

Annex 3
Good Relations Monitoring September 2013 – March 2014

Aim 1: Dialogue and Consultation

Action	Directorate	Outcome	*Date	Progress
Implementation of Policy and Action Plan	Commission and Corporate Support Unit (CCSU)	Good Relations Policy and Action Plan	September 2012	Complete. Policy and Action Plan publically consulted upon and approved by the Assembly Commission
Communication of Policy and Action Plan to all staff			September 2012	Complete. Email issued to all staff and copy of approved policy, plan and consultation responses placed on website
Staff training updated to cross-reference with Policy and Action Plan			October 2012	Complete.
Continued meetings discussing equality and good relations issues	CCSU	Equality and Good Relations Working Group	2013	Ongoing. Equality and Good Relations continue to be discussed at Senior Management Group Meetings and Assembly Commission Meetings. Groups have been initiated to address specific areas of work e.g. Speakers Art Group, historic anniversaries etc.
The production of a series of actions on how to take forward good relations within the NI Assembly, under the responsibility of the Commission	CCSU	The Commission engages with Holywell consultants to discuss outcomes arising from the internal good relations audit research	April 2012	Complete. Two Commission meetings were held on 19/04/12 and 08/05/12 with Holywell consultants to discuss the findings of the internal good relations. The internal audit is available on the NIA website and formed the basis for the inclusion of issues in the current good relations action plan.
Good Relations Action Plan is updated to include additional relevant actions	CCSU	Compliance with Section 75 of the NI Act 1998	Ongoing	Ongoing. Updated position. At the Commission meeting of 20 November 2013 the Commission further tasked officers to table a paper detailing information on the EQIA consultation process to

				<p>include timeframes and ‘the way forward’ concerning the motion on the flying of the Union Flag at Parliament Buildings. This paper was tabled at the Commission meeting held on 29 January 2014. The Commission agreed the Following recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) to procure an independent person/organisation to conduct an EQIA and associated consultation process, and b) the indicative timings for the EQIA and consultation process to commence. <p>In addition the Information and Outreach Directorate has added an the following action:</p> <p><i>“The Assembly focuses on engagement with disenfranchised groups”.</i></p>
To present a yearly plan to the Commission, for approval, of exhibition in the Great Hall	Office of the Speaker	Speaker’s Art Group: Development of an Exhibition Policy and yearly exhibitions schedule	May 2012 and annual schedule thereafter	Complete. 2014 schedules approved. Ongoing. Screening of exhibitions policy.
Officials to explore availability of existing art works/artefacts for long term loan for consideration by the Commission, before giving any consideration to procurement of new items	CCSU	Consider art works/artefacts which symbolize the diverse nature of our society	Ongoing	Ongoing. To be considered at a future Commission meeting.
A list of historic anniversaries to be marked is agreed	Office of the Speaker	The Speaker, assisted by the Speaker’s Engagement and Liaison	April 2012 and annually	Complete. Policy and Screening form completed. Complete. The annual list of historic anniversaries was recommended to Assembly

An annual programme of events is agreed by the Commission to mark historic anniversaries.		Group, makes proposals to the Commission on the marking of historic anniversaries	thereafter	Commission as per the date agreed. The 2014 list is confirmed.
A range of events and initiatives to promote Parliament Buildings will have been undertaken to target under-represented groups and the wider public	Office of the Speaker	The Commission to agree a range of events and initiatives to promote the 80 th anniversary of the construction of Parliament Buildings	November 2012 and annually thereafter	Complete. Events held and data gathered on range of users.
To respond to questions within one week	Outreach	To answer Assembly Questions for written and oral answer applicable to equality and good relations	Ongoing	Ongoing.
Identification of equality and good relations issues to be addressed Issues arising to be addressed or forwarded to the appropriate Directorate for consideration	Information and outreach	To conduct a staff survey every two years which includes questions regarding equality and good relations issues	Every two years, as proposed by Internal Communications Working Group (ICWG) and Senior Management Group (SMG)	Ongoing. Draft paper to be tabled at SMG at their April 2014 meeting. A timetable for implementation if set out within the paper where it is proposed that staff will receive a copy of the questionnaire w/b 29 September 2014.
To organize three teachers' conferences per year for teachers	Information and Outreach	Increase in Youth Workers knowledge of the way the Assembly works	Ongoing. Two conferences held to date in November and December 2013.	Ongoing. Programmes were also delivered to youth workers and to the Association of History Teachers from ROI.
Establish a community link networking body	Information and Outreach	A better understanding will be created on the work of the NI Assembly by	April 2012 and on-going after establishment	Complete. The Assembly Community Connect Advisory Group has been established. The Group is made up of representatives from each of the

		community and voluntary organisations Information is gathered from the community and voluntary sector to inform the work of the NI Assembly and contribute to our thinking on good relations as appropriate		five Parties represented on the Assembly Commission, the Director of Clerking and Reporting, the Director of Information and Outreach, the Equality Manager, CEO of NICVA, CEO of Community Foundation NI and CEO of Rural Community Network.
The Assembly delivers its education programme in a format which provides for schools from different backgrounds to learn together	Information and Outreach	Schools from different backgrounds will have had the opportunity to learn together and about each other	Ongoing	Ongoing. 5 Let's Talk youth events aimed at youth from different backgrounds have been delivered. An outreach event in the Strabane learning community is also planned for the end of February 2014.
The Assembly focuses on engagement with disenfranchised groups	Information and Outreach	Assembly Community Connect (ACC) will target its activities to women, minority ethnic groups and people with a disability.	Ongoing	Ongoing. <u>Women:</u> ➤ Implement strategy to engage women's groups with a focus on women from rural areas. <u>Ethnic Minority Groups:</u> ➤ Ethnic Minorities Parliament; ➤ Ethnic Minorities 'Get Involved'; ➤ Attend MELA & other Ethnic Minority Events <u>People with Disabilities</u> ➤ Train ACC staff to deliver training to groups/people with disabilities; ➤ Tailored 'How the Assembly Works' programmes delivered to individuals with autism, sight impairment and hearing impairment; ➤ Every ACC event outside Parliament Buildings held in a venue with

				disabled access.
Participate in the Balmoral Show	Information and Outreach	People from rural backgrounds and the agricultural sector will have had the opportunity to discuss political issues	Action removed	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Given the number of surveys completed (25); it was recommended that the Assembly does not conduct research at the next Balmoral Show. 2) Due to the lack engagement by young people it was recommended that the Assembly does not have a dedicated education slot at future Balmoral Shows. 3) Only two Committees stated an interest in attending the Balmoral Show, but unless four Committees could commit to participation, then it was recommended that the Assembly did not take a stand as the cost and the resources required to staff the stand outweighed the benefits. 4) It is also important to note that the European elections are due to take place on 22nd May 2014 (the week after the Balmoral Show). Therefore, there was some concern that it may be difficult to schedule MLAs to take part on the stand as they may be committed to their Party stand or that they may use the stand for Party Political purposes.
To participate in the Northern Ireland Assembly and Business Trust (NIABT)	Information and Outreach	People from different backgrounds in the business sector will have had the opportunity to learn together and share opinions on issues of mutual interest. The good	Ongoing	Ongoing: During the last 12 months the business membership has grown by 10% to 170 members. In 2013/14, the Business Trust held 43 events which were attended by almost one thousand people. The Trust now has businesses represented in every constituency. Recruitment plans are in place to ensure diversity within

		relations duty will have been considered and factored in as a qualifying/high priority criterion for membership		NIABT membership.
Hold focus meetings with sectoral and voluntary groups to inform committee business	Information and Outreach	Development of a database to register voluntary and community organisations by sector. The database will be used to gather information to inform committee business	Ongoing	Ongoing. The Assembly Community Connect data has grown from under 500 in May 2013 to over 1500. A focus group meeting was organised for the Health Committee for the impact of 'Transforming your Care' on people with learning difficulties.
Legal Services continue to provide advice on an ongoing basis	Legal and Governance Services	Provide legal advice to the NI Assembly Commission, and to staff, in relation to obligations under S75(2) of the NI Act 1998	Ongoing	Ongoing.

Aim 2: Promotion of Good Relations

Action	Directorate	Outcome	Date	Progress
The display of Speaker's gifts within public areas in Parliament Buildings	Office of the Speaker	Public display of Speaker's gifts	Ongoing	Ongoing.
Participation and inclusion of external groups in identified events held at Parliament Buildings	Office of the Speaker	Participation of external groups in Speaker's events within Parliament Buildings	Ongoing	Ongoing.
Consider the good relations resource requirements	Assembly Commission	Agreement has been reached regarding the resource requirements needed for the delivery of this four-year action plan	November 2012	Complete.

Identification of good relations champions (Commissioners and staff members)	Secretariat wide	A core team is formed to ensure good relations is central within the working of the Assembly	2013	Not complete For consideration at a future Commission meeting.
Training and development of good relations champions	CCSU	Ongoing good relations learning takes place	2013	Not complete For consideration at a future Commission meeting.
Refresher good relations training is offered to all staff	CCSU	Mainstreaming of good relations is understood and its impact on the organisation	2013	Complete.
Ensure good relations training is made available to Party staff	CCSU	The impact of good relations are understood	2013	Ongoing. Learning and Development are currently identifying providers.
Provide advice and guidance to the NI Assembly Commission, and to staff, on how to incorporate equality and good relations into Directorate Business Plans	CCSU	Promotion of good relations into secretariat Directorates	New Directorate Plans covering the 2013-2014 period and subsequent Directorate Business Plans	Complete. All 2013-2014 Directorate Business Plans incorporate reference to Section 75(2) compliance.
To develop a Language Policy	CCSU	Development of a clear and concise policy with measurable standards	During the current mandate	Ongoing. A policy and guidance document has been developed and has been discussed by the Assembly Commission. Further discussions on this issue will take place at future Commission meetings.

Aim 3: Equality of Service Provision

Action	Directorate	Outcome	Date	Progress
Continue to utilise	CCSU	Commission policies	Ongoing	Ongoing.

applicable codes and guidance from the Equality Commission NI as it relates to the recruitment of staff		continue to reflect best practice in recruitment and continue to ensure equality of opportunity for all potential job applicants		
Develop of a NI Youth Assembly	Information and Outreach	To encourage greater engagement of young people in the work of the NI Assembly To make the Assembly more accessible to young people and to give young people of NI an opportunity to have their voices heard on issues being considered by the NI Assembly	Ongoing	Ongoing. Work is continuing on this project.
Develop opportunities for shared learning and space e.g. exhibitions/displays/ Education/Youth Assembly	Cross-Directorate	Opportunities to promote good relations as part of public engagement	Ongoing	Ongoing. An exhibition schedule for 2014 has now been agreed and guidance has been developed for organisations wishing to host an exhibition in the Long Gallery and 115.
To develop a visitors policy to Parliament Buildings	Facilities/Keeper of the House	A protocol is in operation for access to Parliament Buildings	September 2012	Complete. Policy and screening form developed and consulted upon. Policy and Screening available on the Assembly Website.
Identify best practice from other sources and adopt practice following consultation with section 75 groups and internal stakeholders	CCSU	Best practice implemented and communicated	Ongoing	Ongoing. The Equality Manager continues to attend meetings of the Equality Practitioners Group and Interdepartmental Charter Group and engages with the Inter-Parliamentary Equality Network.
Advertisement of committee stage of Bills in each of the main daily newspapers offering	Clerking and Reporting	Improved access opportunities for people to contribute to policy development and legislative	Ongoing	Ongoing.

opportunities to all sections of the community to submit evidence		scrutiny processes		
Plans in place to encourage Committees to actively engage with the community by meeting regularly outside of Parliament Buildings	Clerking and Reporting	Improved opportunities for all sections of the community to contribute to policy development and legislative scrutiny processes	Ongoing	Ongoing.
Establishment of a charities policy	Information and Outreach	Commission chooses charity for 2012-2013 period	2013 and annually thereafter	Complete. Policy agreed.
Use exhibition spaces to reflect the multi-cultural aspects of Northern Ireland society	Information and Outreach	Display work undertaken by various groups and in particular minority ethnic groups	Ongoing.	<p>Ongoing.</p> <p>Human Trafficking Exhibition –sponsored by Lord Morrow MLA; Peter Weir MLA and Pat Ramsey MLA in the Long Gallery From 14 -25 October 2013 in the Long Gallery Hard hitting photographic pieces examining how human trafficking affect the daily lives of those involved. Part of Anti-Slavery day.</p> <p>Wheelworks sponsored by Junior Ministers in the Long Gallery From Friday 1st November – Thursday 14 November 2013 Launched Tuesday 5th November 2013 WheelWorks is a youth arts organisation working with children and young people aged 4 – 25 who may not otherwise have access to high quality artistic activity. We work in partnership with all types of communities throughout Northern Ireland to provide taster workshops and issue based programmes which help young people learn new skills and express themselves through traditional and digital art.</p>

			<p>‘Images of Mongolia’ – sponsored by the OFMDFM Committee in the Long Gallery From 18 November – 29 November 2013; Launched Monday 18th November 2013 An exhibition to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of Diplomatic Relations between the United Kingdom and Mongolia.</p> <p>‘My Shoes Might Fit You’ sponsored by Anna Lo MLA; Robin Swann MLA; Pat Ramsey MLA in the Long Gallery From 30th November – 13th December 2013 Launched 2nd December 2013 Inclusion and Diversity team within the BELB worked alongside the Romania Roma Community Association in particular with young Roma males aged 13-16 yrs from south Belfast on a photography project called 'My shoes might fit you' and it features a variety of photographs that show the community in which these young people live as well as some of their hopes and ambitions, many photographs cover the variety of activities that these youth have participated in with other local Northern Ireland teenagers.</p> <p>‘Children’s Book Ireland’ Friday 28th February - Friday 14 March 2014 Children’s book’s illustrators from across Ireland showcasing their work. Launch will explain context of exhibition and celebrate the work that is done by illustrators for children</p> <p>‘The Quiet Peacemakers’ Saturday 22 March - Friday 4 April 2014 A series of paintings of individuals (mainly religious individuals from across all churches) who have worked in the background to bring peace to N.I. They worked tirelessly, quietly and often secretly, in many</p>
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				dangerous and unforgiving environments for the greater good of Northern Irish society. They remained humble and clear sighted through the decades.
Target 16-24 year olds as noted in Engagement strategy. Working with providers through established relationships	Information and Outreach	Continued operation of a work experience programme	2013-2014	Complete. From Sept 2013 – March 2014, 18 Sixth Form students from 13 post primary schools successfully took part in the work experience programme. Five Let's Talk events took place (Fermanagh, Derry/L'Derry and Belfast) and over 500 students aged 16 – 20 took part in these events.
Continued operation of a pilot alternative placement programme with Stranmillis College (Primary school level)	Information and Outreach	To allow the Assembly to ensure that its current education programmes continue to be compatible with teacher training best practice	January 2014.	Complete. Two trainee teachers from Stranmillis College worked with the Education Service for two weeks during January 2014.

Aim 4: Training and Development

Action	Directorate	Outcome	Date	Progress
Personal Development Plans include equality issues/updates	Corporate Services Directorate (HR and CCSU)	Ongoing learning in relation to equality takes place	2014	Ongoing.
Induction training monitored and reported on	Corporate Services Directorate	Monitoring of mandatory staff training which includes the promotion of good relations as part of the induction process for any external appointment that occurs	Ongoing	Ongoing.

Aim 5: Management Information and Data

Action	Directorate	Outcome	Date	Progress
Develop and implement a programme plan system to collect and collate data across Directorates	CCSU	A structure and common approach to data collection and monitoring developed	October 2012	Complete. Two systems of data collection have been implemented as agreed by the Senior Management Group (SMG).
To conduct a Good Relations Screening/EQIA	CCSU	Screening/EQIA to be completed and consultation to have taken place.	2013	<p>Complete.</p> <p>Screening has been completed for the Good Relations Strategy 2012-2016 and is available on the NIA website at http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/ABOUT-THE-ASSEMBLY/Corporate-Information/Publications/Equality-Screening-and-Equality-Impact-Assessments-EQIAs/April-2013---June-2013/</p> <p>The current Good Relations Strategy 2012-2016 incorporates recommendations arising from the Internal Good Relations Audit, conducted by Holywell Consulting, as recommended for inclusion by the Assembly Commission at its meeting of 19 April 2012.</p> <p>In the development of the current Good Relations Strategy a pre-consultation was also conducted by the Commission and Corporate Support Unit with all Directorates across the Secretariat.</p> <p>A draft version of the Good Relations Strategy, which contained the Commission's Good Relations Policy and its second Good Relations Action Plan, and which spans a 4 year period in line with the Assembly's Corporate Strategy was approved by the Commission for issue for public consultation at its meeting of 8 April 2012.</p> <p>Public consultation lasted for a 13 week period. The consultation document made clear that the Commission wished to consult as widely as possible and with this objective in mind, the following actions were taken:</p>

				<p>(a) A postmaster email was issued to all Secretariat staff, MLA's and party support staff detailing information about the consultation document, signposting staff to the document and detailing how to respond. A link to the document was distributed directly to the Commission's Section 75 consultees and was made available to the public;</p> <p>(b) A copy of the document was placed on the Assembly website;</p> <p>(c) Advertisements were placed in the three main regional newspapers inviting the public to comment on the consultation report. These advertisements indicated how to access the consultation document and that it could be made available in alternative formats on request.</p> <p>(d) Consultation meetings were held with the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, the NI Community Relations Council and the Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities (NICEM).</p> <p>All comments received through the process of consultation were analyzed and the Commission issued responses to consultees through its Good Relations Strategy 2012-2016 Consultation Results publication http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/Documents/Corporate/Commission/Commission-Good-Relation-Strategy.pdf</p> <p>The Good Relations Strategy 2012-2016 and associated Action Plan was approved by the Commission at its meeting held on 25 September 2012.</p> <p>The Clerk/Director General approved the establishment of a 'Good Relations Screening Panel' in order to complete the associated screening form relating to the Good Relations Strategy. Nominees came from across all Directorates. The work of the panel was managed by the Equality Unit.</p>
Continue to hold meetings with representatives from the LGBT sector	CCSU	Information is provided to the Commission in order to inform appropriate strategies and policies	Ongoing	Ongoing.
Revise Commission and Senior	CCSU	Submit proposals to Senior	April 2012	Complete.

<p>Management Group template submissions to include screening forms as a mandatory criterion</p> <p>Draft and circulate screening guidance to staff</p> <p>Direct staff to screening training</p>		<p>Management Group and Assembly Commission</p>	<p>May 2012</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Complete.</p> <p>Ongoing.</p>
<p>Continued use of 'social media' to engage with people of NI and hear their views on the Assembly and political issues</p>	<p>Information and Outreach</p>	<p>We will have listened to the people of NI and provided different groups with a democratic understanding and the opportunity to develop mutual positions in a shared (cyber) space</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Ongoing.</p> <p>Separate social media strategies are in place for Assembly Community Connect (ACC) and the NI Assembly Business Trust (NIABT), targeting messages to the voluntary, community and business sectors. Followers for NIABT have increased from under 300 in June to 1060 and ACC from 0 to 700.</p>
<p>Continue to consider opportunities for the Assembly Bursary</p>	<p>Information and Outreach</p>	<p>The in-house resource of university students will have been used</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Ongoing.</p>

Programme, through the Master's Degree programme with Queens University Belfast, to assist in the development of Assembly policies.		in a way which can provide closer stakeholder input to shape and inform Assembly policies and the delivery of our services		
To monitor user comments collected from feedback processed in place for all engagement activities	Information and Outreach	Feedback is used, where appropriate, to help inform decisions and build the promotion of equality and good relations into the delivery of services	Ongoing	<p>Ongoing. Feedback is gathered for all engagement activities. For example: Visitors are surveyed when they have a tour of Parliament Buildings. Over the last four years visitor satisfaction has been increasing, with 98% of people stating their visit met or exceeded their expectations in 2013. Feedback from functions is also high, with the events office receiving on average 4.8 out of 5 for their service.</p> <p>After the Get Involved seminars (smaller groups of targeted high value engagement) 94% of people said their knowledge of the Assembly was improved and 96% said they were more likely to engage with the Assembly in the future.</p>
Continued implementation of fully compliant procurement policies and practices	Corporate Services	Commission policies continue to reflect best practice in public procurement, and in doing so, provides opportunities for economic and social well-being of the community	Ongoing	Ongoing. SMG and Commission submission papers amended to include screening forms.
Maintain an inventory and	Facilities	An assurance that all artefacts	1 April 2012 and	Ongoing.

monitor the condition of all artefacts belonging to the Assembly		belonging to the Assembly are kept and maintained in an appropriate manner	annually thereafter	
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* The heading 'date' refers to the commencement of the activity.

**Good Relations Action Monitoring Breakdown
September 2013 – March 2014**

Status of Actions	Number
Complete	20
Ongoing	32
Not complete	02
Total Actions	54

Annex 4

Relevant exhibitions held during the reporting period.

Location	Dates	Title	Description
Room 115	21/06/13-05/07/13	'Forces of Nature'	Armed Forces Day – Exhibition called 'Forces of Nature' which consisted of images of wildlife that live in countries that the British Armed Forces are currently serving
Long Gallery	06/09/13-20/09/13	'Lighthouse Project'	Suicide Prevention week – Exhibition called 'Lighthouse Project' which consisted of images taken by people recovering from losing someone who took their own life or by those who survived a suicide attempt
Long Gallery	14/10/13-25/10/13	'Human Trafficking'	Hard hitting photographic pieces examining how human trafficking affect the daily lives of those involved. Part of Anti-Slavery day
Long Gallery	01/11/13-14/11/13	'Wheelworks'	WheelWorks is a youth arts organisation working with children and young people aged 4 – 25 who may not otherwise have access to high quality artistic activity. We work in partnership with all types of communities throughout Northern Ireland to provide taster workshops and issue based programmes which help young people learn new skills and express themselves through traditional and digital art.
Long Gallery	18/11/13-29/11/13	'Images of Mongolia'	An exhibition to commemorate the 50 th Anniversary of Diplomatic Relations between the United Kingdom and Mongolia.
Long Gallery	30/11/13-13/12/13	'My Shoes Might Fit You'	Inclusion and Diversity team within the BELB worked alongside the Romania Roma Community Association in particular with young Roma males aged 13-16 yrs from south Belfast on a photography project called 'My shoes might fit you' and it features a variety of photographs that show the community in which these young people live as well as some of their hopes and ambitions, many photographs cover the variety of activities that these youth have participated in with other local Northern Ireland teenagers.
Long Gallery	24/01/14-07/02/14	'Thalidomiders in Action'	Exhibition is in conjunction with the Welcome Foundation which either displays art work created by those affected by thalidomide or art work showing the effects of thalidomide. Some of these pieces may be 'hard hitting' and if necessary, the organiser has agreed that certain pieces can be removed following the exhibition launch.
Long Gallery	14/02/14-28/02/14	'Tracing your Mourné Roots'	History of the area of Mourné and asks people from that area to become more interested in their Mourné history and encourages local people to share their memories or stories.
Long Gallery	28/02/14-14/03/14	'Children's Book Ireland'	Children's book's illustrators from across Ireland showcasing their work. Launch will explain context of exhibition and celebrate the work that is done by illustrators for children
Long Gallery	14/03/14-22/03/14	Politics Plus Exhibition	Exhibition highlighting National Science and Engineering week – School Outreach Project
Long Gallery	22/03/14-04/04/14	'The Quiet Peacemakers'	A series of paintings of individuals (mainly religious individuals from across all churches) who have worked in the background to bring peace to N.I. They worked tirelessly, quietly and often secretly, in many dangerous and unforgiving environments for the greater good of Northern Irish society. They remained humble and clear sighted through the decades.

Annex 5

Events held during the reporting period.

NAME OF EVENT	DATE HELD
Kinship Care Event	08/04/13
Action on Hearing Loss - Launch of 'Hearing Matters' Report.	10/04/13
Fixers – Launch of a new Young People's Charity	11/04/13
Ben Clark Foundation	25/04/13
Launch of MS Week 2013 & Celebrating 60 years of MS Society	25/04/13
NI Schools Debating Final	03/05/13
Youth Justice Agency Award Ceremony	08/05/13
Barnardos - Launch of "Realising Ambition"	09/05/13
Early Years	10/05/13
Human Rights & Equality in NI	14/05/13
Launch of Community Relations Week	14/05/13
Alzheimers Society	23/05/13
Listen Hear - launch of new Speech and Language project.	23/05/14
Vasculitis Ireland	28/05/13
Diabetes UK	10/06/13
Action Duchenne	17/06/13
Cystic Fibrosis Trust	17/06/13
UK Youth Parliament	26/06/13
ThinkSpace - Project encouraging young people into computer programming.	04/09/13
Niamh Louise Foundation	10/09/13
Launch of the Praxis Care World Mental Health Day	25/09/13
NI Youth Forum	07/10/13
Moneyreagh & District Action Cancer Anniversary	16/10/13
Celebration of Kindercare's role in fostering in NI	04/11/14
Launch of WheelWorks - youth arts organisation	05/11/13

Confucius Institute	29/11/13
Royal National Institute for the Blind – RNIB	02/12/13
Diabetes UK exhibition	03/12/13
Buttle UK – Presentation of Kinship Care Study	16/09/13
Charis Cancer Care	13/01/14
Destined - provides training sessions and skills for people with learning disabilities.	21/01/14
Barnardos - Celebration event marking the 10 years of Peaceful Schools International. It is a conflict resolution and anti-bullying programme in schools.	27/01/14
Special Olympics – ‘On Yer Bike’	27/01/14
ME Group Reception	04/02/14
Department of Justice and National Autistic Society	05/02/14
Human Trafficking Event	13/02/14
One World Creative	13/02/14
Alzheimers Society	26/02/14
Ovarian Cancer Charity	03/03/14
Castlereagh Youth Council	06/03/14
Commonwealth Day	12/03/14